



EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

Barnham and Eastergate Parish Council

Covid-19 Response

1 Open Actions

1.1 Local Volunteers

1.1.1 Developing a list

- A list of volunteers and telephone numbers, initially based on our existing "known and trusted" socially active members (councillors, BECT volunteers, church members etc.) - and a "code of conduct" for these people.

1.1.2 Code of Conduct

- Draft attached using resources from other Parish Councils and Councillors
- Engage with WSCC proposed 'Volunteer Hub' as detail emerges (Clerk)

1.1.3 Standby Community Help Line Call Handlers

- Identify stand-by call-takers to cover permanent staff planned and unplanned absences, or to just give them a break.

1.2 Community Help Line Script

A script and references (Samaritans, pharmacy, medical services etc.) for call-takers to use, and a system to log calls, actions etc.

1.3 Publicising the Community Help Line

- Finalising the phone numbers (Assistant Clerk)
- Posters & A5 fliers (Assistant Clerk)
- Social networks
- Websites.

1.4 Scheme of Delegation

- Being developed by Clerk to enable decisions to be taken without Council meetings – extraordinary meeting will be required for approval but minimum Councillor attendance will be needed.

2 Staff

- Work from home or the community halls at their own discretion. Follow all government guidance as it emerges.
- Meetings by phone, email and video in so far as is practical (remote working).
- Primary communication media will be phone, email, social media and website. There is no BE requirement to meet with members of the public (including councillors)
- Physical meetings to be avoided. All staff, councillors and public to adopt social distancing and hand-washing protocols if meetings are deemed necessary. Attendance at any meeting is not mandatory and staff may elect not to participate.

2.1 Duty of Care and Safety

- The usual rules apply regarding planned and unplanned staff absences. BE staff must follow government guidance on isolation etc. If staff are ill, then they are not to work or be contacted.

- These are unusual times and the BE team go above and beyond their job descriptions every day. However, there must be no expectation, implied or expressed, that more and more is expected as the Covid-19 crisis deepens.

2.2 Staff Roles

- BE staff (Clerk, Assistant Clerk primarily) will be main contact for the community (see section 2 Community Help Line) but we must be careful to ensure that staff are equipped to deal with calls for help and do not become social workers, advisors, councillors or someone to talk to.
- The BE support to the community is to be advertised with telephone numbers to call. The role of the person answering the phone is:
 - To direct the caller to information and/or other organisations
 - It's OK to say "I don't know, I'll get back to you".
 - If callers are abusive terminate the call and log it.
 - Keep call logs and if there are issues that higher tier authorities should be dealing with, we will take these up on behalf of the community using the logs as evidence
 - We will develop an FAQ (Frequently asked questions) and contact details for referring people to other organisations.

3 Community Help Line, Mobilising Local Volunteers

- Two numbers will be advertised for calls to be answered between 9 am and 5 pm. (with the caveat if no response at the time of your call please leave a name and contact details and someone will get back to you). This will give us maximum flexibility to support call answering. We need to assume that volunteer support may be needed to cover staff illness (e.g. from BECT staff or volunteers)
- The Assistant Clerk has looked into the phone practicalities. Once we have the numbers we can print the posters. The numbers will be:
 - EVH Landline – Can be diverted to any other phone number. Will be generally answered 9 to 5
 - BCH Landline – If not answered will go to answerphone and this will be listened to regularly
 - The Clerk has a mobile number advertised already for normal 'contact the Clerk' calls

3.1 Local Volunteers

- We cannot put BEPC in the position where we are saying, or implying, that the volunteer that may help them with practical tasks is insured, approved, DBS checked etc. We don't have the processes to do this.
 - WSCC have now started to issue some advice and are looking to develop "a volunteer hub" quickly
 - We've had some sample Local Volunteer policies from SSALC but there is no advice on we ensure volunteers will not cause issues for the vulnerable
- David is drafting an 'amateur' volunteer scheme the risk management of which is simply founded on people we know and trust.

4 Community Halls

- They will close as soon as there is no demand or government guidance changes to close them
- Posters to be developed and displayed on conduct requirements (social distancing, hand washing etc).
- Increase cleaning.
- Establish video conferencing capabilities (webcams and screens). Provide on-line education on how it can be used. This could support virtual meetings but may also be a way of offering some social isolation support. (e.g. a virtual coffee morning).

- Develop a programme of on-line events.

5 Parish Council Meetings

The Clerk has put a deferment note across the current Public Notices to cancel the Annual Parish Assembly scheduled for 14th April

5.1 FYI

There are rules about Council meetings being held in public to ensure transparency. Notwithstanding this it is proposed that we minimise public meetings whilst remaining a transparent decision-making organisation that is accountable to the public. To enable this to happen the Council needs to approve a Scheme of Delegation (that goes beyond the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations we already have in place) to enable decisions to be taken by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council. It will also be possible for any proposed decisions to be communicated to all Councillors and the public via an email exchange and public notification in some form on the website and noticeboards.

It is anticipated that when government can find time they will look at amending current legislation in respect of the need to hold meetings in public for a period of time. However, in the meantime by agreeing a Scheme of Delegation we should still be able to function in a legal and transparent way.

5.2 Annual Parish Assembly

- Deferred (there could be the ability to hold it later in the year if appropriate legislation comes forward)
- If there are any suitable papers related to the proposed meeting that can be shared with the public they will be put on the website.

5.3 Planning and Environment Meetings

- All business to be conducted on-line and by email under existing delegated authority. Publish information on the website to be as transparent as practical.

5.4 Full Council Meetings

- Once a Scheme of Delegation has been approved at an Extraordinary Meeting to be held before the next published date for Full Council (i.e. 14th April) all meetings will be cancelled until further notice