



BRIZE NORTON PARISH COUNCIL

High Consequence Infectious Disease Policy

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Adopted by Full Council	Monday 6 th April 2020
Last Review	July 2022
This Review	August 2024
Next Review	August 2026 or On Government advice and updated information

INTRODUCTION

Brize Norton Parish Council actively seeks to protect the Councillors and Staff working for and on behalf of the council and its activities. As such as following any current Public Health England (PHE) and government guidelines, the following policy applies to any High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) as defined by PHE.

This policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Parish Council will follow in respect of and HCID outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Brize Norton.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

The main areas of concern for Brize Norton Parish Council with respect to HCIDs are:

- Remaining an effective council
- Safety and health of councillors, contractors, staff, volunteers and members of the public.

ACTIVATION OF THE POLICY

This policy is considered to be activated, when

- There is an active outbreak of a HCID in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Brize Norton **and**

- At least 3 councillors have requested its activation to the Chairman, and subsequently notified the clerk, or the Chairman plus 2 councillors have requested its activation to the Clerk, or its activation is resolved in a meeting of the Brize Norton Parish Council.

OR

- The Government of the United Kingdom suspends all public meetings.

DEACTIVATION OF THE POLICY

This policy is considered to be deactivated, when

- The imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Brize Norton has passed **and**
- A minimum of 4 councillors have requested public meetings be recommenced **and**
- The government of the United Kingdom reinstates all public meetings.

DEFINITION OF HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASE

A HCID is defined as

- acute infectious disease
- typically has a high case-fatality rate
- may not have effective prophylaxis or treatment
- often difficult to recognise and detect rapidly
- ability to spread in the community and within healthcare settings
- requires an enhanced individual, population and system response to ensure it is managed effectively, efficiently and safely

The current list of HClDs as defined on www.gov.uk (January 2023)

Contact HCID

Argentine haemorrhagic fever (Junin virus)

Bolivian haemorrhagic fever (Machupo virus)

Crimean Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF)

Ebola virus disease (EVD)

Lassa fever

Lujo virus disease

Marburg virus disease (MVD)

Airborne HCID

Andes virus infection (hantavirus)

Avian influenza A H7N9 and H5N1

Avian influenza A H5N6 and H7N7

Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)

Monkeypox

Nipah virus infection

Pneumonic plague (*Yersinia pestis*)

Contact HCID

Airborne HCID

Severe fever with thrombocytopenia syndrome (SFTS)	Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)*
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At any such time as a new disease is classified as a HCID, it shall be treated as if it were in the list above and this policy shall apply.

MATTERS RELATING TO STAFF – THE CLERK

Brize Norton Parish Council has no official offices, as the Clerk works from home, the public may only visit the Clerk by appointment. The handyman works in the public domain. During any active outbreak of a HCID in the UK, no appointments will be permitted. The Clerk will not come into contact with the public during working hours, at their normal place of work.

The Pavilion, or any other public location, such as the Elder Bank Hall, that is used for Parish Council meetings are the other normal places of work for the Clerk.

In the event of a HCID outbreak the National Joint Council for local government services (NJC) will issue guidance for employers which the council will follow. A summary of the most recent guidance during the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020 is detailed below

Employees who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery.

As per Part 2 Para 10.9 of the 'Green Book', if an employee is fit for work but decides, or is instructed, to self-isolate, their absence should not be recorded as sickness absence. We would expect all options for home or remote working to be explored with the employee. As they are 'well' at this stage they should stay on normal full pay for the duration of the self-isolation period until such time as they are confirmed to have contracted any such HCID, at which point they transfer to sickness absence leave and the usual provisions of the sickness scheme will apply. As the Clerk works from home, they may be able to continue their work as usual. The Handyman should be encouraged to follow the same rules as the Clerk and should not come into contact with members of the public.

In circumstances where an employee decides to self-isolate without instruction from the authorities it is not unreasonable for the employer to ask for some evidence such as an email from a holiday operator that shows the dates of the holiday, the resort location and flight details. However, it will probably not be possible in all cases for an employee to produce any evidence, so employers will need to use their discretion when trying to establish the facts behind the employee's decision to self-isolate

Following any school closures, employers should be fully supportive of employees with childcare responsibilities and consider flexible working arrangements, including adapting working patterns to care for children or dependants or taking time off, whether this is special leave, annual leave or flexible working.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

It is a requirement of the Local Government Act 1972, that Council business shall be conducted at public meetings of the council and any committees.

Councillors and other volunteers can choose not to attend public meetings. As an officer of the Council, the Clerk cannot choose to not attend meetings.

Due to the nature of Local Government and considering the Councillors and Members of Public that attend meetings, there is high percentage of attendees who would be considered “high risk” with respect to all of the HCIDs listed. As such, to protect the health of all attendees, public meetings are suspended during the active period of this policy.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY

To allow the Council to operate on a minimum requirement basis, the following items are delegated to the Clerk for the duration of the activation of this policy.

Planning applications

After consultation with a minimum of 4 councillors, a summary response will be circulated to all councillors for comment prior to submission to West Oxfordshire District Council by the Clerk.

Finance

All standard recurring payments listed as line items on the budget will be paid by the RFO at the appropriate time to prevent any late charges, such as salaries, printing costs, licences and IT services etc.

Non-recurring payments, such as one-off costs relating the community building project or expenses to be authorised by a minimum of 2 councillors by e-mail prior to payment.

All payments will continue to be formally authorised by the full Council at full Council meetings and signed by dual signatories.

Where this policy is activated over the end of the financial year, the RFO will prepare the end of year accounts in accordance with normal procedures and circulate to all of the councillors. On the acceptance of a minimum of 4 councillors, they will be signed by the RFO, Clerk and Chairman as applicable for submission to the external and internal auditors. The accounts will be accepted by resolution at the next full council meeting.

Responses to other communications

The Clerk will circulate at the earliest opportunity, any communication from any third parties which would normally be presented at a meeting for consideration by the Council. The Clerk will circulate the summary response to the full council prior to responding to the third party.

In accordance with LGA 1972, where this policy is activated during a meeting of the Council the meeting will be adjourned. Using the delegated authority, the Clerk will endeavour to close out as much of the remaining agenda, the results of which will be reported to the Council after the adjournment when the rest of the agenda is considered.