
Report from Finance Advisory Group Chairman

Part 1: PROPOSAL FOR FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS TO COVER THE PERIOD DURING WHICH NEITHER VIRTUAL NOR IN PERSON COUNCIL MEETINGS ARE PERMITTED

As advised by the Clerk, no virtual Council meetings are permitted from 7th May 2021.

PROPOSED: That the financial provisions of the March 2020 Emergency Arrangements for managing Council business be re-introduced. These will enable the Council to continue to pay suppliers and staff, avoid financial penalties and to manage matters relating to the urgent business of Buckden Parish Council.

Specifically these arrangements were:

1.1 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS / FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

That Buckden Parish Council gives delegated authority to the Clerk as our Responsible Financial Officer (in consultation with any two of the Chairman/Vice Chairman/Finance lead) to suspend any relevant Standing Order or Financial Regulation as they judge to be necessary to ensure the smooth running and operation (wherever possible) of the Parish Council until public meetings of the Council start again or a further majority vote of Councillors.

The Clerk will compile and maintain a log of such suspensions and reasons; the log will be presented to a future meeting of the Parish Council for scrutiny.

1.2 BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

In respect of any emergency or Health & Safety matter to authorise an increase in the spending limit to the Clerk in consultation with any two of the Chairman / Vice Chairman/ Finance lead, with the Chairman the relevant substantive Committees and Advisory Groups from any item below £500 to any amount below £ 5,000.

In the event of the out-sourced payroll function ceasing, the Clerk will arrange payment of both estimated staff payments and HMRC, though bank transfer, in line with the normal timescales. All such payments will be reviewed, and if necessary adjusted, at the earliest opportunity.

Non-confidential Payments For Sanction (PFS) will be circulated to all Councillors and the confidential PFS will be circulated to nominated Councillors for approval in line with the process agreed by the full Council in March 2020.

PART 2: PROPOSAL TO CANCEL THE APRIL 2021 FINANCE ADVISORY GROUP

The April Finance AG meeting is usually used to review the expenditure in the previous financial year and confirm the delegated budgets for Council advisory groups and committee in anticipation of the appointment of group/committee chairmen.

PROPOSED: That the April 2021 meeting is cancelled and I&E Reconciliation for 2020-21 and the Budgets agreed for 2021-22 be circulated by email to current advisory group/committee chairmen. New chairmen will be briefed on budgets and their delegated authority after the May 2021 Council meeting.