

## WOODPLUMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

### LEGISLATION LEADING TO THE DECISION TO HOST A REMOTE MEETING ON 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2020

On 24 March 2020, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) issued a joint letter asking Local Councils to stop holding any physical meetings or gatherings during the Coronavirus outbreak. This includes full council, committee meetings, annual parish or council meetings. The letter confirmed that the Government was working on a Coronavirus Bill which will allow Council meetings to be held remotely and make decisions without the need for physically meeting.

Further to the above, the [Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) came into force on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

The 2020 Regulations enable local councils to hold remote meetings until May 2021 or earlier, if Government rules are relaxed. The Regulations also remove the requirement to hold an Annual Parish Meeting.

NALC has produced a Legal Briefing Note which interprets the 2020 Regulations and has also produced a publication **Practical Guidance for Local Councils on holding remote meetings**. The Practical Guidance has been circulated to all Members of Woodplumpton Parish Council and in accordance with the Guidance, a practice meeting was held on **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April**. The Clerk also attended a SLCC webinar on Clerking Remote meetings on the 14<sup>th</sup> April.

**In accordance with current legislation, the remote meeting must remain quorate.** It is acknowledged, that as with any other meeting, not all Councillors may be able to participate, consequently, the purpose of the practice meeting was to ensure that sufficient Members had the appropriate technology and were comfortable accessing and participating in a remote meeting.

At the practice meeting, it was **noted** that SLCC guidance suggests that the Agenda for remote meetings is kept to statutory procedures, necessary finance, **urgent items** from Members and updates on decisions taken by the Clerk under delegated authority, in accordance with Standing Orders.

Members also **noted** that remote Council meetings must still be advertised with the public having **a right to observe the meeting**. To facilitate this, the Agenda will request that members of the public email the Clerk for a weblink to view the meeting and if necessary, the Chairman will ask those viewing if they wish to ask a question during public participation.

Having considered the above points, [Members agreed that the 20<sup>th</sup> April meeting could be held remotely.](#)

Consequently, the Clerk has produced an Agenda for the meeting which seeks to

- a) **reassure Members that the Council is complying with its statutory responsibilities**
- b) **update Members on work processed under delegated authority**
- c) [detail the actions and decisions Members are required to make \(in blue\)](#)

Any background papers including the invoices to be paid, will be emailed with the Agenda both to Members and those requesting to view the meeting.

In accordance with Regulation 17 of the 2020 Regulations, the Minutes of the Remote meeting will be published on-line in accordance with the usual Minute format.