

GRADE RUAN PARISH COUNCIL

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Measures agreed as a result of COVID-19 outbreak

Drawn up by the Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair, with authority given by Councillors via email week commencing 23rd March 2020 – Reviewed 8th June 2020 for resolution at the Council meeting of 15th June 2020.

Adopted 15th June 2020.

Context

Due to the extent of the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent government advice, the ability for the Council to function as normal has been removed.

The document details how the Parish Council will operate during the suspension of Council activities, and has been drawn up by the Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair and given approval by Councillors remotely in the week commencing 23rd March 2020. The document was updated on 8th June in preparation for resolution at the Council meeting on 15th June.

The activities of the Council remain under constant review and may be updated at future points.

For advice on the pandemic, please refer to Central Government and NHS official sources below:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Implementation date

The changes detailed in this notice apply from 23rd March 2020 effect until further notice, unless stated otherwise. The plans will be under constant review and may change.

Meetings

All Council meetings, Committee meetings, working groups, appointments, events and attendance at training shall be cancelled. The holding of electronic meetings may take place and shall be called on the authority of the Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair combined. The Annual Parish Meeting for 2020/21 shall be cancelled altogether. The Annual Council Meeting for 2020/2021 shall be cancelled altogether and all current positions on Committees, Representatives to Outside Groups and the position of Chair and Vice Chair shall remain until the Annual Council meeting in May 2021. The reinstatement of physical meetings shall only take place when this does not contradict government guidance and on the authority of the Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair combined

Planning

As per practise since 23rd March, and as per Appendix A, Councillors will be approached for individual comment on a twice-monthly basis and the Clerk shall collate, synthesise, and issue non-binding comments to all planning applications put before it. These comments will be made available to public view both on the Parish Council website (<http://www.grpc.org.uk/your-council/agenda/>), and on the Cornwall Council planning portal (<http://planning.cornwall.gov.uk/online-applications/>). The public are advised that they may make comments on any planning applications they wish on the planning portal. Cornwall Councillor Carolyn Rule may also be contacted: (<https://democracy.cornwall.gov.uk/mgUserInfo.aspx?UID=2184>).

Public Toilets

The Public Toilets at Ruan Minor, Kennack Sands and Cadgwith are managed by the Grade Ruan Community Trust. The Parish Council will ensure the Trust are aware of government instructions, and decisions on opening and cleaning shall be made by the Trust with these in mind.

Finance

The Clerk shall handle incoming invoices and payments for normal expenditure, or otherwise previously authorised expenditure, or emergencies shall be made monthly and authorised retrospectively at the next legal Council meeting (whenever that may occur).

Communications

The Clerk shall operate remotely as normal, with the best form of contact remaining by email. Councillors will confer by email and phone. The website shall be maintained as normal.

Bus Shelter Cleaning

The Council pays for regular cleaning at the former Bus Shelter in the centre of Ruan Minor. The Council will ensure that this only takes place in line with government advice, or if it becomes necessary, will suspend the work until further notice (authority given to Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair to decide).

Maintenance contracts

Council contractors will be requested to continue work (for example cutting public rights of way) in line with government advice, or if it becomes necessary, will be requested to suspend work until further notice (authority given to Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair to decide).

Ruan Minor Play Area

The Council shall adhere to government advice as it evolves. As such, the play area was closed on 24th March and remains so as at 8th June.

All other admin and clerical functions

Where possible will be performed remotely as normal practice.

Recommendation

To RESOLVE to delegate authority to the Clerk to issue make routine payments, and to delegate authority to the Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair to decide upon the other matters outlined in this document – specifically on calling electronic and physical meetings, and the continuation or suspension of contracted work.

Lee Dunkley, Parish Clerk

Appendix A – Planning response measures during suspension of Council activities - COVID-19 Outbreak

Following advice received from Cornwall Council's Acting Democratic Team Leader (Regulatory), along with previous advice received from Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC), the Parish Council will now follow the below process regarding consultation and responses to planning applications received after the Full Council meeting of 9th March 2020.

- On the first and third Monday the Clerk will create a list entitled 'Planning Applications List for Comment, Week Commencing [DATE]' (the contents would usually form part of the Council agenda.) This list will contain live applications for consultee comment and will be circulated by email. The list will be published on the Parish Council website instead of an agenda.
- Members of the Council will have until 09:00 on Friday of the same week to respond to the Clerk by email with their comments on each application.
- Member's responses must be concise and follow the format as below – selecting one of these four options:
 1. Support.
 2. Support but subject to conditions A, B, C (must be concise and specific).
 3. Object on specific material grounds quoting relevant policies if applicable (must be concise and specific).
 4. No comment.
- The Clerk will collate all responses received then produce a list entitled 'Planning Application Comments, Week Commencing [DATE]' (the contents would usually form part of the planning minutes). The following statement will be added to each application collective comment:

"Due to the restrictions placed on the Council as a result of the pandemic Coronavirus, this response represents the opinion of members of Grade Ruan Parish Council identified through a consultation process, but does not constitute a formal consultee response because the outcome was not reached at a physical meeting at which the public could be present and where Councillors can legally vote."

The list will be published on the Parish Council website instead of the minutes.
- The Clerk will submit these responses on Cornwall Council's online planning portal stating the number of votes received i.e. "X" number of Councillors who objected for these reasons.
- Each collective response will be concluded by the following statement:

"This response represents the opinion of members of the Council, but cannot legally constitute a consultee response as the outcome was not reached at a physical meeting at which the public could be present. Therefore a "5-day protocol" email should not be issued to the Council as it cannot legally respond."

For clarification please see Appendix B and C for examples of a response under this new, temporary procedure.

This procedure is under constant review and is subject to change if there is a change in law allowing Parish Councils to formally meet 'virtually' or electronically and make legal decisions, or otherwise other relevant advice is forthcoming.

Appendix B – Example of a response under the new, temporary procedure.

Due to the restrictions placed on the Council as a result of the pandemic Coronavirus, this response represents the opinion of members of Grade Ruan Parish Council identified through a consultation process, but does not constitute a formal consultee response because the outcome was not reached at a physical meeting at which the public could be present and where Councillors can legally vote.

Comments received were as follows:

6x Support (MAJORITY)

1x Support with the following conditions: splays are widened to ensure safe access and egress.

2x Object. The following grounds were cited: development in the open countryside; dangerous access and egress on to the highway; no proven need for the development.

This response represents the opinion of members of the Council, but cannot legally constitute a consultee response as the outcome was not reached at a physical meeting at which the public could be present. Therefore a “5-day protocol” email should not be issued to the Council as it cannot legally respond.

Appendix C – Example of a response under the new, temporary procedure.

Due to the restrictions placed on the Council as a result of the pandemic Coronavirus, this response represents the opinion of members of Grade Ruan Parish Council identified through a consultation process, but does not constitute a formal consultee response because the outcome was not reached at a physical meeting at which the public could be present and where Councillors can legally vote.

Comments received were as follows:

5x Object (MAJORITY). The following grounds were cited: Contrary to Local Plan Policy X. Out of keeping with the local area. Loss of public views in the AONB.

2x Support.

2x No comment.

This response represents the opinion of members of the Council, but cannot legally constitute a consultee response as the outcome was not reached at a physical meeting at which the public could be present. Therefore a “5-day protocol” email should not be issued to the Council as it cannot legally respond.