

MINUTES of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on Tuesday 17th March 2020, at 7.30 pm in the Wenningdale Room.

Present: Cllrs Marshall (Chair), Adams, Bridgeman, Burton, Hill, Stannard and Wills. The Clerk Christine Downey.

- 262 To Receive Apologies from members unable to attend
Cllrs Faraday, Handford and Swales.
- 263 To be discussed: Town hall building and procedures for opening and closing in the coming months.
RESOLVED: That the Town Hall be closed to the public immediately, until further notice.
- 264 To be discussed: Caretaker and cleaning staff working practise, hours of work, possibility of reduced hours.
RESOLVED: Not to reduce the working hours of the cleaners and caretaker.
RESOLVED: That their regular weekly hours will be spent performing a deep clean of the building while it is closed to the public.
RESOLVED: That the deep clean will be conducted room by room, with high risk areas (such as toilets) being first, followed by rooms on lower floor, then rooms on upper floor.
RESOLVED: That rooms not in use are to be kept locked.
RESOLVED: That the carpets in the Wenningdale Room and the Clerk's Office should be cleaned as part of the deep clean.
- 265 To be discussed: Future council meetings over this period; do we need any?
- 265.1 There is a legal requirement for the council to hold an Annual Parish meeting between 01/03/2020 and 01/06/2020.
The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is "communicating the concerns that councils have around their ability to hold meetings within the statutory deadlines", to the government and is seeking further advice.
RESOLVED: That this meeting is postponed indefinitely, pending further advice from the government via NALC.
- 265.2 There is a legal requirement for the council to hold an annual meeting in May 2020.
NALC are seeking further advice from the government regarding the statutory deadline.
RESOLVED: That the further advice is awaited and a decision regarding the May full council week will be taken by the third week in April.
- 265.3 Other meeting; are they necessary? And if so, how will they be conducted?
The advice from the Yorkshire Local Councils Association (YLCA) is "Where a clerk/chairman can see that it would be too risky to hold a council meeting, a common sense approach is to liaise with other councillors . . . regarding the cancellation of meetings and where necessary, simply cancel the meetings".
YLCA are awaiting information about the holding of meetings remotely and will provide further guidance on this as soon as possible.
RESOLVED: That the Open Spaces meeting scheduled for 30/03/2020 is cancelled.
RESOLVED: That the full council meeting scheduled for 06/04/2020 is cancelled.
RESOLVED: That the finance meeting scheduled for 08/04/2020 will be conducted by remote means. (Email and other as yet to be decided).

- 266 What measures need to be in place to ensure that the Council keeps running smoothly and does not incur liabilities even if meetings cannot be held?
RESOLVED: That the council empowers the clerk/RFO to do anything expedient and necessary to ensure the continuous business of the council, and to deal with mandatory undertakings in order to prevent the authority from incurring liability during the period that the delegation is applicable.
RESOLVED: That the council agrees that the officer will consult with the chairman and/or vice-chairman in the decision making but that the council acknowledges that it is the officer that is the decision maker.
RESOLVED: That responses to planning applications are covered by the powers of delegation to the clerk/RFO during the period that the delegation is applicable.
RESOLVED: That Accounts for payment will be dealt with fortnightly. The clerk will circulate copies of all invoices, together with a payment schedule, to all councillors for examination. The online payments will then be set up and approved in the normal way.
RESOLVED: That £2000 is earmarked in reserves as a fund for responses to, and assistance for, coronavirus related issues.
- 267 What emergency plan do we need to consider for the building and how best to prepare the building for this?
 Deep clean the building – dealt with at item 264.
RESOLVED: That the council is prepared to make the town hall available if needed.
RESOLVED: To think about what a “Bentham Response” could be, and the council’s role in this, and the town halls role in this.
RESOLVED: To consider making the TIP phone number available for use as the main contact number for a “Bentham Response”.
RESOLVED: Cllr Adams to investigate and/or arrange call divert facility on the TIP phone line.
RESOLVED: Cemetery to remain open.
- 268 Minor items
RESOLVED: To order the 14 new benches and instruct Thomas Brown to proceed with their installation.
RESOLVED: Clerk to reduce to working four days a week with immediate effect.
- There being no further business the meeting closed at 20:15.