



Feering Parish Council

EMERGENCY POWERS POLICY

Version No	Date	Author	Review due	Notes
1	16/03/2021	LMC	16/03/2023	Adopted at the Parish Council meeting on 16 March

1. **Background**

- 1.1. On 4 April 2020, 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 allowing Parish Councils to hold meetings during the pandemic on a virtual basis. These regulations are only valid until 7 May 2021.
- 1.2. This Emergency Powers Policy has been written to enable the Council to continue to operate in any future emergency situation.

2. **Scope of the policy**

- 2.1. This Emergency Powers Policy has been written to enable the Council to continue to operate all our essential functions in any future emergency situation where the Council is unable to undertake meetings on a normal basis for a prolonged period. This includes, but is not limited to, situations arising from disease pandemics, severe natural disasters, foreign hostilities or terrorism.

3. **Activation of the policy**

- 3.1. This policy is considered to be activated, when:
 - 3.1.1. there is an active (or imminent) threat of an emergency situation; and
 - 3.1.2. At least 3 councillors have requested its activation, or its activation is resolved in a meeting of Feering Parish Council; or
 - 3.1.3. The Government of the United Kingdom have suspended all public meetings.

4. **Deactivation of the policy**

- 4.1. This policy is considered to be deactivated, when:
 - 4.1.1. When the actual or imminent threat has passed; **and**
 - 4.1.2. At least 3 councillors have requested public meetings be recommenced; or
 - 4.1.3. The government of the United Kingdom has reinstated all public meetings and/or made provisions for meetings to be undertaken on a virtual basis.

5. **Key Provisions of the Policy**

- 5.1. All Parish Council meetings, including the Annual Parish Council Meeting will be suspended.
- 5.2. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council will remain in post for the duration of these Emergency Powers.
- 5.3. All Powers and decision making for the Council will be delegated to the Parish Clerk (note, the law does not permit decisions to be delegated to an individual councillor).
- 5.4. The Clerk must attempt to consult with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman before any decisions are made. If the Chairman or Vice-Chairman are incapacitated and/or out of contact, then the Clerk should attempt to consult with other Councillors in lieu.
- 5.5. The Clerk should review all council activities / services / events and determine which are safe and appropriate to continue and which will be suspended.

- 5.6. Any essential payments will be paid by the Clerk, as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), including salaries. Printing costs, stationery and IT services etc, along with any essential costs relating to the emergency situation. All payments must be formally authorised by the full council when they are next able to meet.
- 5.7. In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services, Financial Regulation 4.5 permits the Clerk to authorise revenue expenditure up to £1,000. When this policy has been activated the Clerk shall be permitted to incur expenditure up to an increased limit of £10,000 for a single transaction.
- 5.8. All grant funding and unessential spending will be frozen unless approved by the majority of councillors using email.
- 5.9. 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 attempt to circulate to all Councillors. The accounts will be accepted by resolution at the next full council meeting.
- 5.10. The Clerk should follow all appropriate regulations and guidance issued by the UK Government and/or the Local Authority.
- 5.11. The provisions in this policy should be taken as overriding any conflicting clauses in the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- 5.12. The Clerk should attempt to keep all councillors updated on a regular basis, using telephone, email or virtual meetings as most appropriate.
- 5.13. Any communication with the press or public shall be the responsibility of the Clerk after due consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

6. Matters relating to staff – The Clerk

- 6.1. Feering Parish Council's official office is based at Feering Community Centre and as such the only employee, the Clerk's place of work is the office. The public may visit the Clerk during office opening hours. During any active emergency situation, it may be necessary to restrict any public appointments to the visit the Clerk at the office.
- 6.2. If the Clerk is unable to work due to illness, the Chairman will access any email correspondence and action anything urgent in conjunction with the Vice-Chairman, and if necessary, seek to obtain the services of a locum Clerk.

7. Review of the policy

- 7.1. This policy was approved by the Parish Council at a virtual meeting held on 16 March 2021 and will be reviewed every 2 years.
- 7.2. This policy will also be reviewed during any significant changes during these events.