

COLWICH PARISH COUNCIL



PD010 HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

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Parish Centre, St. Mary's Road, Little Haywood, Staffordshire, ST18 0TX
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HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASES – PD010

Revision history

This document was originally written by:

Name	Position	Date
Michael Lennon	Clerk	

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Chairman of Council	Wendy Plant

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Revision History

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Colwich Parish Council (the Council) actively seeks to protect the Councillors, Volunteers and Officials working for and on behalf of the Council and its activities. As such and following any current Public Health England (PHE) and government guidelines, the following policy applies to any High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) as defined by PHE.
- 1.2. This policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Council shall follow in respect of a HCID outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in Staffordshire in general and Colwich parish in particular.

2. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 2.1. The main areas of concern for the Council with respect to HClDs are:
 - 2.1.1 Remaining an effective council.
 - 2.1.2 Safety & Health of Councillors, Contractors, Officials, Volunteers and Members of Public.

3. ACTIVATION OF THE POLICY

- 3.1 This policy is considered to be activated when:
 - 3.1.1 There is an active outbreak of a HCID in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in Staffordshire and/or Colwich parish.
 - 3.1.2 At least 3 Councillors have requested its activation to the Chairman, and subsequently notified the Chief Officer, or the Chairman plus 2 Councillors have requested its activation to the Chief Officer, or its activation is resolved in a meeting of Colwich Parish Council.

OR

- 3.1.3 The government of the United Kingdom suspends all public meetings.

4. DEACTIVATION OF THE POLICY

- 4.1. This policy is considered to be deactivated, when:
 - 4.1.1 The imminent threat of infection in Staffordshire and Colwich parish has passed.
 - 4.1.2 A minimum of 4 Councillors have requested public meetings be recommenced.
 - 4.1.3 The government of the United Kingdom has reinstated all public meetings.

5. DEFINITION OF HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASE (HCID)

- 5.1. A HCID is defined as:
 - 5.1.1 Acute infectious disease.
 - 5.1.2 Typically has a high case-fatality rate.
 - 5.1.3 May not have effective prophylaxis or treatment.
 - 5.1.4 Often difficult to recognise and detect rapidly.
 - 5.1.5 Ability to spread in the community and within healthcare settings.

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5.1.6 Requires an enhanced individual, population and system response to ensure it is managed effectively, efficiently and safely.

5.2 The current list of HCIDs as defined on www.gov.uk (31/03/2025)

Contact HCID	Airborne HCID
Argentine haemorrhagic fever (Junin virus)	Andes virus infection (hantavirus)
Bolivian haemorrhagic fever (Machupo virus)	Avian influenza A H7N9 and H5N1
Crimean Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF)	Avian influenza A H5N6 and H7N7
Ebola virus disease (EBOD)	Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)
Lassa fever	Nipah virus infection
Lujo virus disease	Pneumonic plague (<i>Yersinia pestis</i>)
Marburg virus disease (MVD)	Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)
Severe fever with thrombocytopenia syndrome (SFTS)	

5.3 At any such time as a new disease is classified as a HCID, it shall be treated as if it were in the list above and this policy shall apply.

6. MATTERS RELATING TO OFFICIALS

6.1. The Officersⁱ⁾ usual place of work is the Parish Centre, St Marys Road, Little Haywood. The public may only visit the Officers during office hours Monday to Thursday 10:00am – noon and 1:00pm – 3:00pm.

6.2. During any active outbreak of a HCID in the UK, the Parish Office shall be closed, and the Officers shall work from home and no appointments shall be permitted. The Officers shall not come into contact with the public during working hours at their usual place of work or at home.

6.3. The Lengthsmen's usual place of work is the Jubilee Playing Field, Main Road, Little Haywood together with other outside areas across the parish owned and/or maintained by the Council.

6.4. During the initial period of an active outbreak of a HCID in the UK, the Jubilee Playing Field may, following Government guidance, be closed and the Lengthsmen shall be sent home on special leave with pay. In such circumstances, the Lengthsmen shall not come into contact with the public during working hours at their usual place of work or at home. However, the park shall reopen once Government guidance is updated and the Lengthsmen shall, consequently, return to work. The Lengthsmen shall, following Government guidance, wear a face mask, to be provided by the Council, when inside a building or in the Council owned vehicle. As they shall be working in the community, the Lengthsmen shall undertake a weekly lateral flow, or similar, test.

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- 6.5.** In the event of a HCID outbreak the National Joint Council for local government services (NJC) shall issue guidance for employers which the Council shall follow.
- 6.6.** A summary of the most recent guidance during the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020 is detailed below:
- 6.6.1.** Officials who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery.
 - 6.6.2.** As per Part 2 Para 10.9 of the 'Green Book', if an official is fit for work but decides, or is instructed, to self-isolate, their absence should not be recorded as sickness absence. All options for home or remote working to be explored with the official. As they are 'well' at this stage they should stay on normal full pay for the duration of the self-isolation period until such time as they are confirmed to have contracted any such HCID, at which point they transfer to sickness absence leave and the usual provisions of the sickness scheme shall apply.
 - 6.6.3.** In circumstances where an official decides to self-isolate without instruction from the Council it is not unreasonable for the Council to ask for some evidence. However, may not be possible in all cases for an official to produce evidence, so the Council shall need to use its discretion when trying to establish the facts behind the official's decision to self-isolate.
 - 6.6.4.** If an official is caring for someone who has or may have a HCID, this period of absence should also be regarded as self-isolation. Given the official may then have been in direct contact with the HCID we would expect only working from home arrangements to be then considered for the duration of the incubation period. The Chief Officer, as line manager, shall remain in contact with other officials during any extended period of self-isolation. The Chief Officer shall also remain in contact with the Chairman both to share details of the other officials' welfare as well as to facilitate mutual support. Councillors shall be encouraged to keep in touch with each other during such periods of isolation to offer support and retain Council cohesiveness.
 - 6.6.5.** Following any school closures, the Council shall be fully supportive of officials with childcare responsibilities and consider flexible working arrangements, including adapting working patterns to care for children or dependants or taking time off, whether this is special leave, annual leave or flexible working.

7. PUBLIC MEETINGS

- 7.1.** It is a requirement of the Local Government Act 1972, that Council meetings and/or Council Committee meetings shall be held in public with members of the public and press invited.
- 7.2.** Councillors, upon presentation of a written apology with reasons for absence, and other Volunteers can choose to not attend meetings held in public. As officials of the council, the officers do not have the same option.
- 7.3.** Due to the nature of local government and considering the Members of Public who attend meetings, there is high percentage of attendees who would be considered "high risk" with respect to all of the HCIDs listed in Section 5.2. As such, to protect the health of all attendees, meetings in public are suspended during the active period of this policy and until Government guidance removes all social distancing requirements.

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8. DELEGATED AUTHORITY

8.1. To allow the Council to operate on a minimum requirement basis, and in line with Standing Order 3.2 and Financial Regulation 5.5, the following items are delegated to the Chief Officer for the duration of the activation of this policy.

8.2. Planning

8.2.1 The Chief Officer currently has delegated authority to consider planning applications. However, the Chief Officer's custom and practice has been to refer all major and/or contentious planning applications to the Planning Committee for consideration. During the period that this policy is active, the Chief Officer shall electronically consult with the Full Council prior to submission to Stafford Borough Council and/or Staffordshire County Council.

8.3. Finance

8.3.1 All standard recurring payments shall be paid by the Finance Officers at the appropriate time such as salaries, printing costs, licences, annual subscriptions and IT services etc in line with FR 5.5.2 with the upper limit temporarily removed.

8.3.2 Nonrecurring payments, such as one-off costs relating to community building project or expenses to be authorised by a minimum of 2 Councillors, one of whom shall be the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman, by e-mail prior to payment.

8.3.3 All payments shall be formally noted by the Full Council at the next Full Council meeting.

8.3.4 Where this policy is activated over the end of the financial year, officials shall prepare the end of year accounts in accordance with normal procedures and circulate to all Councillors as part of a virtual meeting agenda. Unless Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) guidance states otherwise, on the acceptance of a minimum of 5 Councillors, they shall be signed by the Responsible Finance Officer/Chief Officer and Chairman as applicable for submission to the external and internal auditors. The accounts shall be accepted by resolution at the next Full Council meeting.

8.4 Responses to other communications.

8.4.1 The Chief Officer shall circulate, at the earliest opportunity, any communication from any 3rd parties which would normally be presented at a meeting for consideration by the council.

8.5 Policy activated during a meeting

8.5.1 In accordance with LGA 1972, where this policy is activated during a face-to-face meeting of the Council the meeting shall be adjourned. Using the delegated authority as detailed above, the Chief Officer shall endeavour to close out as much of the remaining agenda, the results of which shall be reported to the Full Council after the adjournment when the rest of the agenda is considered.

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9 REVIEW OF THE POLICY

- 9.1 This policy was first approved by the Parish Council at its meeting on 20th August 2020 and shall be reviewed annually.

SIGNED	
COUNCILLOR WENDY PLANT, PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN	

ⁱ Officers refers to Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officer and Events/Social Media Officer.