SWANSCOMBE AND GREENHITHE TOWN COUNCIL
Executive & Emergency Committee – 20 March 2020.

REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION FOR NON – ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS IN RESPECT OF COUNCILLOR DR JO HARMAN.

A request has been submitted for Members to consider granting dispensation for possible non-attendance at Town Council meetings that may give rise to disqualification without prior approval. The Town Council is asked to consider the request, made due to ill health.

Any extension to the dispensation would be subject to a further approval at the appropriate time.

* *A request of this nature would normally be considered by full Council but due to the timescales involved and the uncertainty of the situation regarding Covid-19 the Executive & Emergency Committee are asked to deal with this under its Terms of Reference.*

Recommended: That the Town Council approve a dispensation for Councillor Dr Jo Harman from attending meetings of the Town Council due to ill health, for a six month period commencing 20 March 2020, to avoid ceasing being a member of the authority under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

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COVID-19 - CONTINGENCY PLAN IN THE EVENT OF A SHUTDOWN.

It is likely that Government will pass emergency legislation to support the prevention of the spread of Covid-19. This may include restricting peoples' activity and travel; increasing the number of people who are asked to "self-isolate", preventing groupings of people for meetings and events.

The Terms of Reference of the Executive & Emergency Committee include :

To assist, in an emergency, the population of Swanscombe and Greenhithe in overcoming any extreme or unusual conditions caused by natural or accidental means.

To prepare contingency plans to meet any of the situations as described above.

Members are asked to consider extending the delegation of Council decisions to the Town Clerk during any period of restricted activity declared by the Government in respect of the Covid-19 virus. Such delegation to enable the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to its residents and to include:

1. In the event of closure an amount of £50,000.00 to be transferred from the Active Saver 1 account to the Current Account to cover direct debits and staff wages for a 2 month period;

2. To respond to electronic correspondences;

3. Paying staff wages and monitoring the councils financial position (monies coming in and going out);

4. Prior to the commencement of a "lockdown" contractors and facility hirers will be informed of the Town Councils position and any arrangements for contacting the Town Council;

5. Monitoring and updating the Town Council website and social media accounts, as and when required;

6. Keeping Members updated electronically on government and KALC guidance issued during closure;

7. Ensuring staff are contacted regularly and updated on the position of any restrictions;

8. Statutory meetings – these could be affected in a "lockdown" situation as the 1972 Act specifies when these must be held. This will be considered on a risk basis taking into account the latest guidance from Public Health England (PHE) at the relevant time and any new legislation. *Pragmatically, any decree issued by the Government is likely to supercede the 1972 Act – either implicitly or through regulations issued by the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG);*

9. Any enforced closure will result in the lifting of absence recorded as sick leave with regards to wages i.e. staff receive payment in the normal manner during period of enforced closure.

Recommended: To agree and adopt the Covid-19 Contingency Plan as detailed

PHE South East
Coronavirus (COVID-19) links

Number of UK cases and latest figures - updated at 2pm every day:
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public#number-of-cases

Table of confirmed cases split by upper tier local authority:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-number-of-cases-in-england/coronavirus-covid-19-number-of-cases-in-england

Key source of information for the public:
www.nhs.uk/coronavirus

FAQ for the public:
https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/

Useful overview of local and global situation, including updated daily case numbers:
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public

Countries and areas affected and specific advice (including maps):
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas

Guidance for educational settings:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19

Guidance for social and community care settings:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings-on-covid-19/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings-on-covid-19

Guidance for employers and businesses on providing advice to staff:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19

Guidance for primary care settings:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wn-cov-guidance-for-primary-care

Guidance for those working in the transport sector:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-staff-in-the-transport-sector

Resources for universities:
https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/Pages/coronavirus.aspx

Guidance for boarding schools:
http://www.boarding.org.uk/media/news/article/13449/Coronavirus-disease-COVID-19-guidance-update-as-of-25-2-20

Guidance for health professionals:
https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus

Guidance covering decontamination and cleaning of environments in the community:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings

Resources available for the public information campaign, incl posters, press ads
https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101-novel-coronavirus-/resources.

Blog about contact tracing:
https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/02/13/expert-interview-what-is-contact-tracing/

Blog about self-isolation:
https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/02/20/what-is-self-isolation-and-why-is-it-important/

Blog about the five things you can do to protect yourself and your community:
https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/03/04/coronavirus-covid-19-5-things-you-can-do-to-protect-yourself-and-your-community/

Coronavirus (COVID-19): What is social distancing?
https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/03/04/coronavirus-covid-19-what-is-social-distancing/