



**CITY OF ELY COUNCIL
SESSIONS HOUSE
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**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE CITY OF ELY COUNCIL HELD IN THE
COURT ROOM, SESSIONS HOUSE, LYNN ROAD, ELY AT 7.00 PM ON
MONDAY, 23RD MARCH 2020**

PRESENT: Mrs T Coulson - Clerk to the Council

Cllr M Rouse, Mayor

Cllr R Morgan

Cllr E Every

Cllr A Arnold

Cllr E Carlsson Browne

Cllr C Whelan

Cllr A Whelan

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Lindsay, Cllr Bellow, Cllr Phillips, Cllr Wilkins, Cllr Downey, Cllr Denness and Cllr Warman.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Senior Administration Officer and all other staff for all their hard work in this difficult time to ensure the Council continues to function to the best of its ability. He also thanked Cllr A Whelan for the leadership she has taken.

2. COUNCILLOR REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no requests for dispensations and no declarations of interests.

3. TO PUT PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO ALLOW THE COUNCIL TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR FUNCTIONS WITH REGARD TO ANY GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE GIVEN IN RELATION TO COVID-19

Members considered a report from the Clerk. Within this report it was recommended that to enable the functions of the Council to continue as best as it can at present, that a small group of the Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Chairman, Cllr A Whelan and Cllr Morgan, called the Delegated Authority Group be formed. This Group would then take responsibility for ensuring the Council operates following adopted Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. Cllr A Whelan proposed this proposal be approved and this was seconded by Cllr Every and unanimously approved.

Councillor A Whelan proposed the following motions contained within this report be approved.

1. To delegate full financial and business management authorities to the Delegated Authority Group, amending Financial Regulation 4.1 and Standing Orders as necessary.

2. To delegate the Parish Council's full expenditure authority (if required and subject to the constraints of local government regulations on delegation of authority) to the Group for as long as necessary, provided that all members of the Council are kept fully informed of progress and any proposed decision, and consulted prior to a final authorisation by this Group.

3. To adapt Financial Regulation 6 as necessary to allow the authorisation of payments using scanned copies of invoices for scrutiny and initialling by two of the authorised signatories. Such remote authorisations shall be reported to the next Full Council meeting. The Clerk will continue to provide members with regular financial updates.

4. The delegation of powers to continue until the next Full Council meeting or 3 months, whichever is the earlier. A meeting of the Full Council may extend that delegated power. If 3 months has expired then such delegated power may be renewed by a two-third majority of the Council, positively agreeing by email to extend for a further period of 3 months or until the next meeting of the Full Council. Decisions made under the delegated powers should be agreed in advance by positive affirmation by Councillors, where possible and that such requests should have 24 hours from issue in which to reply.

These motions were seconded by Cllr Rouse and unanimously approved.

4. TO SET A CRITERIA FOR STAFF WITH REGARDS TO HAVING TO TAKE TIME OFF WORK TO LOOK AFTER THEIR CHILDREN IF THE SCHOOLS CLOSE

Councillors discussed the criteria that would now take place, due to all schools now being closed. If a staff member is a key worker, childcare provision can be obtained through schools etc. If this facility is provided, then the staff member should use this to allow them to continue to work. If they chose not to and they wish to remain at home with their children, then this time will be taken as unpaid leave, toil or holiday will be taken. If they are unable to undertake their role at home and have to come to work, then the working hours can be made more flexible, if this would then fit their circumstances better. If hours are reduced, these would need to be topped up with holiday, toil or unpaid leave.

The Clerk will be looking at all staff members to determine whether they are able to work at home. If this is not possible and there is no work for them, she will discuss the possibility of them being declared as 'Furlough workers', as per the Government's new legislation.

Zero-hour staff, at the present time would not be eligible do be 'Furlough workers', so members agreed to pay an average of the last three months' pay to the zero-hour staff. As they are paid a month behind, they will be paid as normal for their work undertaken in March, in April and then this payment will be paid in May. This decision will be reviewed and a decision made as to whether a payment could be paid in June, but this will depend on the situation at that time. Legislation is constantly being updated by the Government, so the decisions agreed above, may change in light of this.

5. TO MAKE A DECISION ON FUTURE MEETINGS

Members unanimously agreed there would be no further meetings of the Council for the foreseeable future. The Council will follow the motions agreed under item 3.

Cllr A Whelan informed members she was working with a local volunteer to try and co-ordinate all the offers of help and the Ely Community Cov-19 Group has been set up. The City Ranger will work, on behalf of the Council to help co-ordinate this. Members thanked Cllr A Whelan for all the work she had done to move all this forward.