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**STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL EMERGENCY PLANNING**

MINUTES of a meeting of the EMERGENCY PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE held on Wednesday 9th November 2022 at 7.00pm in The Mountfitchet Exchange, Crafton Green, 72 Chapel Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex

**PRESENT** Cllr P Jones (Chair), Cllrs M Caton, J Hudson, M Jessup, J Kavanagh and

F Richards

**ATTENDING** Mrs Emma Philbrick – Deputy Clerk

**229 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE -** None

**230 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST -** None

**231 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 20TH APRIL AND 11TH MAY 2022**

**RESOLVED** To accept the minutes of the meetings held on 20th April and 11th May 2022 as a true and accurate account

**232 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON ACTION POINTS FROM THE LAST MEETING** None

**233 TO REVIEW THE SUB-COMMITTEE’S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

These were circulated to members ahead of the meeting.

The Chair asked that the wording in the Terms of Reference be changed to include the wellbeing and safety of the community instead of just safety. Having been proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr Caton, with 5 votes in favour and one abstention, it was:

**RESOLVED** To change the wording of the terms of reference to say wellbeing and not just safety of the community.

It was considered beneficial to be able to co-opt additional members onto the sub-committee so, having been proposed by Cllr Richards and seconded by Cllr Caton, it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED** To increase the sub-committee membership from 6 members to 8.

**234 TO CONSIDER THE COST-OF-LIVING EMERGENCY**

**a) HEATING AND ENERGY**

**b) FOOD**

The Chair advised that following a conversation with Touchpoint, the Council needed to consider how it helps the cost-of-living emergency. At present the Council is supporting Touchpoint in every way we can but we needed to look at further ways we can help going forward. Cllr Caton suggested that Paul from Touchpoint and a representative from Let’sTalk, Stansted and Churches Together be asked to sit on the sub-committee. This idea was seconded by Cllr Richards and all other members present were in agreement.

Cllr Caton raised the issue of the need to include and amend as appropriate, the Emergency Plan in light of the Parish Council’s support of local community organisations. Cllr Jones agreed to work on amending the documents.

**235 TO CONSIDER A CONTINGENCY PLAN TO SAFEGUARD THE COUNCIL’S OPERATIONS, INCLUDING:**

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**a) THE SECURITY OF PHYSICAL DOCUMENTS**

The Deputy Clerk advised that all documents such as leases and deeds etc, were kept in a fireproof box. Copies of all documents have been taken and these are kept locked off-site in a secure location.

**b) AN OFFICE BASE IN THE EVENT OF THE MOUNTFITCHET EXCHANGE BEING UNFIT FOR USE**

It had been proven during lockdown that working from home was successful and all staff could do this in the short term. The Day Centre, if available, could be used and a local venue could be hired for Council meetings. Following a query from Cllr Caton, it was decided whether, under these exceptional circumstances, meetings could be held on Zoom. The Deputy Clerk didn’t think they could legally but she would get this confirmed. [Subsequently confirmed that meetings must be held in person].

**c) A PLAN OF ACTION IN THE LONG-TERM ABSENCE OF THE CLERK AND/OR DEPUTY CLERK**

The Deputy Clerk advised that EALC hold a list of experienced locum clerks who would come in and cover.

**d) A PLAN OF ACTION IN THE ABSENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL RANGERS**

It was agreed that the most urgent job that would need to be covered would be the emptying of bins. The Deputy Clerk advised that in the first instance, the Parish Council should contact Uttlesford to ask if they could be of assistance. All other jobs would have to be prioritised in order of importance and covered with contractors where possible, or volunteers could be sought, either Councillors or residents or both. It’s inevitable that not all jobs would get covered daily.

**e) A PLAN OF ACTION IN THE ABSENCE OF SIGNIFICANT CONTRACTORS**

If the grass cutting contractors or gardening contractors were absent, then the Council would first of all ask the other company if they could cover any urgent jobs whilst other contractors are sourced.

Cllr Hudson asked whether the Council’s databases were backed up. Cllr Jessup advised that these are all backed up off-site by a private company.

**236 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE FLOOD PLAN**

The Chair advised that the flood warning system had been replaced but a second set of poles in the agreed location needed to be installed once permission is received from the Environment Agency.

During recent heavy rain there was a good turn-out of help available when the trash screen needed clearing.

At present Iain Rankin keeps an eye on the weather forecast and lets people know when the screen needs checking/clearing. The Chair is concerned that we shouldn’t be relying on one local resident and that councillors needed to take control. Cllr Jones confirmed he would ask Iain Rankin to put in writing exactly what he looks out for with regards to rain fall and what precautions/procedures he puts into place at certain levels. Cllr Hudson agreed that he would check daily weather forecasts and members suggested asking Cllr O’Brien if he would be the second volunteer.

It was also agreed that during rainfall Cllrs Hudson, Jones and O’Brien would be responsible for checking the screen and putting out calls for helpers when needed.

Cllr Jones also suggested that the councillors need to undertake regular inspections of the key drains in the village in areas at flood risk and report these to Highways

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regularly. It was agreed that the office would produce a map of all key drains and bring this back to the next meeting to make a decision on the way forward.

It was also agreed to ask Lucy and Levi to report any drains that they spot blocked so that the office can report these.

Cllr Hudson asked if the Parish Council could pay for the drains to be privately cleared. Cllr Jessup commented that this would be too expensive especially when it is someone else’s responsibility and would set a precedent.

**237 TO NOTE THE ANNUAL GRITTING AND SALTING SCHEDULE**

This was circulated to members ahead of the meeting.

Cllr Kavanagh asked what area of Cambridge Road is gritted and it was confirmed that this was from Norman’s Way down to the shops. Cllr Caton asked if the area by the doctors could be done but it is believed that this is private property so could not be done by the Parish Council.

Cllr Caton asked if the grit bins were stocked up and the Deputy Clerk advised that the office were in close contact with the Environmental Rangers and when the weather starts to change to colder conditions this would be done. It they do it too early then the salt is often taken.

All members confirmed they are happy with the current schedule

Meeting closed at 7.52pm

**ACTION POINTS**

234 Ask representatives from Touchpoint, Let’sTalk,Stansted and the Churches Together Group to sit on the sub-committee

234 Cllr Jones to amend the Emergency Plan

235b Deputy Clerk to confirm if holding meetings via Zoom was legal in the event of an emergency

236 Office to produce a map showing locations of key drains

236 Ask Lucy and Levi to report any blocked drains they notice to the office