



MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL **HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY**

Introduction

Marden Parish Council actively seeks to protect the Councillors, staff, contractors and volunteers working for and on behalf of the Council. The Parish Council also actively seeks to protect members of the public attending its meetings, using its facilities or attending events organised by it. 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.

This policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Parish Council will follow in respect of and HCID outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Marden.

Scope of the policy

The main areas of concern for Marden Parish Council with respect to HCIDs are:

- Remaining an effective council
- Safety & Health of Councillors, staff, contractors, volunteers and members of the public.

Activation of the policy

This policy is considered to be activated, when:

- There is an active outbreak of a HCID in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Marden; **and**
- Its activation is resolved in a meeting of Marden Parish Council.

OR

- The Government of the United Kingdom suspends all public meetings.

Deactivation of the policy

This policy is considered to be deactivated, when:

- The imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Marden has passed **and**
- Its deactivation is resolved at a meeting of the Council **and**
- The Government of the United Kingdom has lifted the suspension of all public meetings.

Definition of High Consequence Infectious Disease

A HCID is defined as:

- acute infectious disease

Office Opening Times:

Mondays, Tuesdays & Fridays 10am - 12 noon

Email: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

Website: www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

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- typically has a high case-fatality rate
- may not have effective prophylaxis or treatment
- often difficult to recognise and detect rapidly
- ability to spread in the community and within healthcare settings
- requires an enhanced individual, population and system response to ensure it is managed effectively, efficiently and safely

The current list of HCIDs as defined on www.gov.uk (11/03/2020)

Contact HCID

Argentine haemorrhagic fever (Junin virus)
 Bolivian haemorrhagic fever (Machupo virus)
 Crimean Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF)
 Ebola virus disease (EVD)
 Lassa fever
 Lujo virus disease
 Marburg virus disease (MVD)
 Severe fever with thrombocytopenia syndrome (SFTS)

Airbourne HCID

Andes virus infection (hantavirus)
 Avian influenza A H7N9 and H5N1
 Avian influenza A H5N6 and H7N7
 Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)
 Monkeypox
 Nipah virus infection
 Pneumonic plague (Yersinia pestis)
 Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)*
 Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

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.

Actions When the Policy is Activated

Matters relating to staff

The Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Administrative Assistant

The Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Administrative Assistant work from the Parish Office at the Memorial Hall. The office is open to the public on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays from 10.00am to 12noon but the office is open for the majority of the time that the Clerk or Deputy Clerk are in the office.

During any active outbreak of a HCID in the UK, no appointments will be permitted, the office will be closed to members of the public and contact will be either via telephone or email.

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At the recommendation from Government, NALC or Parish Council the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and/or Administrative Assistant may on occasion need to work from home.

Grounds staff

All grounds staff will be advised to follow guidelines set by Government and the risk assessment provided by the Parish Council. Any additional Personal Protection Equipment will be provided.

In the event of a HCID outbreak the National Joint Council for local government services (NJC) will issue guidance for employers which the Council will follow. A summary of the most recent guidance during the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020 is detailed below:

- Employees who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery;
- (As per Part 2 Para 10.9 of the 'Green Book', if an employee is fit for work but decides, or is instructed, to self-isolate, their absence should not be recorded as sickness absence. We would expect all options for home or remote working to be explored with the employee. 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 will apply;
- (Where possible a member of staff will be permitted to work from home and have communication via telephone or email. A telephone message will be left on the Office answerphone giving alternative contact details;
- In circumstances where an employee decides to self-isolate without instruction from the authorities it is not unreasonable for the employer to ask for some evidence such as an email from a holiday operator that shows the dates of the holiday, the resort location and flight details. However, it will probably not be possible in all cases for an employee to produce any evidence, so employers will need to use their discretion when trying to establish the facts behind the employee's decision to self-isolate;
- If an employee is caring for someone who has or may have coronavirus, this period of absence should also be regarded as self-isolation. Given the employee may then have been in direct contact with the virus we would expect only working from home arrangements to be then considered for the duration of the incubation period. Employers should keep in touch to support employees;
- Following any school closures, employers should be fully supportive of employees 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.

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Public Meetings

It is a requirement of the Local Government Act 1972, that council business shall be conducted at public meetings of the Council and any committees, unless under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 their presence would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons.

Councillors and other Volunteers can choose to not attend public meetings. As an officer of the council, the Clerk cannot choose to not attend meetings.

Due to the nature of local government and considering the Councillors and members of public whom attend meetings, there is high percentage of attendees whom would be considered “high risk” with respect to all of the HCIDs listed on Page 3. As such, to protect the health of all attendees, public meetings are suspended during the active period of this policy where it is resolved by the Council to be a special reason for the purposes of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

Delegated Authority

To allow the Council to operate on a minimum requirement basis, it may be necessary for the Council to amend its Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation.

Review of the policy

This policy will be reviewed annually or more regularly if the situation changes.

Adopted by Marden Parish Council on: 24th March 2020

Reviewed on: 6th April 2021 / 8th March 2022 / 14th January 2025

Review date: March 2026

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