STILTON PARISH COUNCIL

HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY

1. Introduction

1. Stilton Parish Council actively seeks to protect the Councillors, volunteers and staff working for, and on behalf of, the Council and its activities, as well as aiming to safeguard members of the public. 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.

2. The Policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Parish Council will follow in respect of a HCID outbreak in the United Kingdom that has an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Stilton.

2. Scope of the Policy

3. The main areas of concern for Stilton Parish Council with respect to HCIDs are to:
   a) Remain an effective council;
   b) Ensure the safety and health of Councillors, contractors, staff, volunteers and members of the public.

3. Activation of the Policy

4. This Policy is considered to be activated when:
   a) There is an active outbreak of a HCID in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Stilton; and,
   b) At least three Councillors have requested its activation to the Chairman, and subsequently notified the Clerk; or the Chairman plus two Councillors have requested its activation to the Clerk; or its activation is resolved in a meeting of Stilton Parish Council;

   or

   c) The government of the United Kingdom suspends all public meetings.

4. Deactivation of the Policy

5. This Policy is considered to be deactivated when:
   a) When the imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Stilton has passed; and,
   b) A minimum of four Councillors have requested public meetings be recommenced; and,
   c) The government of the United Kingdom has reinstated all public meetings.

5. Definition of High Consequence Infectious Disease

6. A HCID is defined as:
   a) An acute infectious disease;
   b) Having a typically a high case-fatality rate;

c) Not having an effective prophylaxis or treatment;
d) Often being difficult to recognize and detect rapidly;
e) Having the ability to spread in the community and within healthcare settings;
f) Requiring an enhanced individual, population and system response to ensure it is managed effectively, efficiently and safely.

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

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 (EVD)	Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)
Lassa fever	Monkeypox
Lujo virus disease	Nipah virus infection
Marburg virus disease (MVD)	Pneumonic plague (Yersinia pestis)
Severe fever with thrombocytopaenia syndrome (SFTS)	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 on the list above and this Policy shall apply.

6. Matters relating to staff – the Clerk and Pavilion Administrator

8. Stilton Parish Council has two designated official offices in Council premises - the Parish Room and the Pavilion. Mostly, however, the Clerk and the Pavilion Administrator work from home. The public may only visit the Clerk or the Pavilion Administrator by appointment. During any active outbreak of a HCID in the UK, no appointments will be permitted. The Clerk and Pavilion Administrator will not come into contact with the public during working hours at their normal place of work.

9. The Parish Room, the Pavilion, or any other public location used for Parish Council meetings may also be a place of work for the Clerk and Pavilion Administrator. This is dealt with in Section 7 below.

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

a) Employees who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery;

b) 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;
c) 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;
d) If an employee is caring for someone who has or may have a HCID, this period of absence should also be regarded as self-isolation. Given the employee may then have been in direct contact with a 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;
e) 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.

7. Public Meetings

11. It is a requirement of the Local Government Act 1972 that Council business shall be conducted at public meetings of the Council and its Committees.

12. Councillors and volunteers can choose if they do not wish to attend public meetings. As an officer of the Council, the Clerk cannot choose whether or not to attend such meetings.

13. Due to the nature of local government and considering the Councillors and members of the public who attend meetings, there may be a significant percentage of attendees who could be considered "high risk" with respect to the HCIDs listed in Section 0. Therefore, to protect the health of all attendees, public meetings are suspended during the active period of this Policy.

8. Hire and use of Council premises

14. On activation of this Policy, in order to safeguard Officers, Councillors, contractors, volunteers and members of the public, the use of Council premises (the Parish room and the Pavilion)

for meetings, classes and recreation shall cease. Hirers of the premises shall be informed of the decision as soon as possible and the Clerk and Pavilion Administrator will implement the necessary measures to refund payments as required under the Terms and Conditions of hire.

9. Delegated Authority

15. To allow the council to operate on a minimum requirement basis, the following items are delegated to the Clerk for the duration of the activation of this Policy.

16. Planning applications. After consultation with a minimum of four Councillors, a summary response will be circulated to all Councillors for comment prior to submission to Huntingdonshire District Council by the Clerk.

17. Finance

a) All standard recurring payments listed as line items on the budget will be paid by the Clerk/RFO at the appropriate time to prevent any late charges, e.g. salaries, village maintenance costs, licences and IT services;
b) Non-recurring payments, such as one-off costs relating to the Pavilion or Parish Room maintenance, or expenses, to be authorized by a minimum of two Councillors by e-mail prior to payment;
c) All payments will be formally authorized by the full Council at its next meeting;
d) Where this Policy is activated over the end of the financial year, the Clerk/RFO will prepare the end-of-year accounts in accordance with normal procedures and circulate to all Councillors. On the acceptance of a minimum of 4 Councillors, they will be signed by the RFO/Clerk and Chairman as applicable for submission to the external and internal auditors. The accounts will be accepted by resolution at the next full Council meeting.

18. Responses to other communications. The Clerk will circulate, at the earliest opportunity, any communication from any third parties which would normally be presented at a meeting for consideration by the Council. The Clerk will circulate the summary response to all Councillors prior to responding to the third party.

19. In accordance with Local Government Act 1972, where this Policy is activated during a meeting of the Council the meeting will be adjourned. Using the delegated authority, as detailed in paragraphs 16-18 above, the Clerk will endeavour to deal with the remainder of the agenda; the results of the Clerk's actions will be reported to Members of the Council after the adjournment.

10. Review of the policy

20. This policy was approved by Stilton Parish Council at its meeting on 17 March 2020 and will be reviewed annually.