

HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY

Introduction

1. Caldbeck Parish Council actively seeks to protect Parish Councillors, Volunteers and Staff working for and on behalf of the Council and its activities. As such, and following any current Public Health England and Government guidelines, the following policy applies to any High Consequence Infectious Disease as defined by Public Health England with an imminent threat of infection in Caldbeck Parish or nationally (see Appendix for details of diseases).
2. This policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Parish Council will follow in respect of any High Consequence Infectious Disease outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in Caldbeck Parish.
3. The main areas of concern for the Parish Council with respect to High Consequence Infectious Disease are:
 - Remaining an effective council; and
 - Safety & Health of Councillors, Contractors, Staff, Volunteers and Members of the Public.

Activation of the policy

4. This policy is considered to be activated, when:
 - There is an active outbreak of a High Consequence Infectious Disease in the United Kingdom with any threat of infection in Caldbeck Parish **and**
 - At least 3 Parish Councillors have requested its activation to the Chairman, and subsequently notified the Clerk, or the Chairman plus 2 Parish Councillors have requested its activation to the Clerk, or its activation is resolved in a meeting of the Parish Council.

Or

 - The Government suspends all public meetings.

Deactivation of the policy

5. This policy is considered to be deactivated, when:
 - The Government's guidance allows for public meetings to be held **and**
 - A minimum of 4 Parish Councillors have requested public meetings be recommenced.

Consequences of activation of the Policy

6. Upon activation of this Policy the provisions of paragraphs 7 to 16 inclusive will apply.

Staff

7. The Parish Council has no official offices and the Clerk, the only employee, works from home. The public may only visit the Clerk by appointment. During any active outbreak of a High Consequence Infectious Disease in the UK, no appointments will be permitted and the Clerk will not come into contact with the public during working hours.

Public Meetings

8. To protect the health of all attendees, public meetings held in one building are suspended during the active period of this policy. This is because it is a requirement of the Local Government Act 1972, that council business shall be conducted at public meetings of the Council. In normal circumstances the Parish Council meets in the Parish Hall or may choose to meet in another place which would be publicised as required.
9. The Parish Council will make arrangements for virtual public meetings to be held on line where members of the public can view what is happening and participate where appropriate in accordance with Standing Orders. Such meetings would be publicised so that members of the public were given every opportunity to attend. Where it has not proved possible to make arrangements to include the public, the virtual meeting will not take place or will be cancelled.

10. If a virtual meeting cannot take place or is cancelled then to enable the Parish Council to progress business the Clerk will circulate papers on matters which would otherwise be considered at meetings to all Parish Councillors by email together with recommendations. Following email comments and any discussions, the Clerk will produce a note of actions so as to progress business and that note will be published. All such notes will be reported to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Delegated Authority

11. To allow the Parish Council to continue effective operations, significant use will be made of existing delegations.
12. The Clerk will circulate planning applications to all Councillors for comment. If an application is contentious, the Clerk will circulate a draft response to all Councillors prior to submission to the Lake District National Park or Allerdale Borough Council.
13. Finance:
 - a) The Parish Council operates on line banking and all payments will continue to require approval by a minimum of 2 Parish Councillors by e-mail prior to payment.
 - b) All payments will be formally authorised by the Parish Council at the next Parish Council meeting.
 - c) Where this policy is activated over the end of the financial year, the Clerk will prepare the end of year accounts in accordance with normal procedures and circulate to all Parish Councillors. On the acceptance of a minimum of 4 Parish Councillors, they will be signed by the Clerk and Chairman for submission to the external and internal auditors. The accounts will be submitted for formal resolution at the next Parish Council meeting.
14. Responses to other communications. The Clerk will circulate any communication from any 3rd Parties which would normally be presented at a meeting for consideration by the Council. The Clerk will circulate any contentious draft responses to all Parish Councillors for comment prior to responding to the 3rd Party.
15. Where this policy is activated during a meeting of the Parish Council, the meeting will be adjourned. The Clerk will endeavour to close out as much of the remaining agenda in accordance with paragraph 11.
16. The Clerk will have the powers to progress business pursuant to paragraph 11.

Review of the policy

17. This policy was adopted by the Parish Council by email consensus in March 2020 and the formally approved at the April 2020 meeting. The Parish Council reviewed and updated the policy in March 2021.

Appendix

1. The Appendix to this Policy sets out the current definition of a High Consequence Infectious Disease, and the current list of such diseases.
2. A High Consequence Infectious Disease is defined as:
 - Acute infectious disease
 - 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 High Consequence Infectious Disease as defined on www.gov.uk (11/03/2020).

Contact Infectious Disease	Airborne Infectious Disease
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 thrombocytopenia syndrome (SFTS)	Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)*
	Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

3. At any such time as a new disease is classified as a High Consequence Infectious Disease, it shall be treated as if it were in the list above and this policy shall apply.