

Okehampton Town Council
Full Council Meeting 29th March 2021
Meeting Report

Date:	4 th March 2021
Name:	Emma James
Subject:	COVID19 – Preparation for face-to-face meetings

Correspondence from both NALC and DALC has indicated that the legislation permitting the virtual meetings of local councils may not be extended past 6th May 2021, they will be lobby government requesting that this is reconsidered.

It would be prudent for OTC to put plans into place setting out how face to face meetings would be managed and delegations to enable the Council to continue to operate in the event the Council is unable to meet face to face.

12.1 Delegations - To consider and resolve to approve delegations as set out in the previously circulated report and recommended by the Emergency Committee.

In the event that Legislation permitting virtual meetings is not extended past 6th May 2021 and the Council or its Committees are not able to meet face-to-face:

Delegation as follows, to be reviewed after 12 months of approval:

- a) Details of planning applications to be circulated by email to Members of the Planning Committee by the Clerk or Assistant Clerk for comments to be returned to the originator by email. Final decision for submission to be delegated to the Clerk or Assistant Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee, or the Mayor.
- b) Expenditure and the acceptance of quotations for work to be approved in line with the regulations set out in Financial Regulations, an extract of which follows, with an amendment that the amounts are approved by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor, or relevant Committee Chairman or Vice-Chairman, in conjunction with the Clerk or Assistant Clerk thereby enabling the work of the Council to continue.

BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND

Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- *the council for all items over £2,000, with the exception of approval of Grants which may be authorised by the Policy & Resources Committee up to £5,000;*
- *a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £1,000 and below £2,000;*
- *the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items between £500 and £1,000.*
- *the Clerk for items up to £500*

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute, email or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.

Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

In cases of extreme risk to the delivery of council services, the clerk may authorise revenue expenditure on behalf of the council which in the clerk's judgement it is necessary to carry out. Such expenditure includes repair, replacement or other work, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £1000. The Clerk shall report such action to the chairman as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter

- c) Urgent business that is outside the remit of delegation to the Clerk to be agreed by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the relevant Committee in conjunction with the Mayor or Deputy Mayor, and the Clerk or Assistant Clerk.
- d) Register of all delegated decisions to be kept by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk
- e) That the schedule of payments be circulated by email or other means to all Members for a response to the Clerk or Assistance Clerk within 3 working days. Final agreement to be made by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor, in conjunction with the Clerk or Assistant Clerk
- f) Officers will continue to work from home as necessary

12.2 Meeting Location – To note that prior to the removal of social distancing regulations meeting will need to take place in a space larger than the Council Chamber and alternative locations are being sought by the Clerk as agreed by the Emergency Committee

Enquiries have been made with the following locations initially which may be needed in the event that the Charter Hall is unavailable due to the roofing works:

Location	Response
Ockment Centre, Dining Hall	Room already booked
Church Hall, Market Street	Currently available - £15 p/hour charge
Fairplace Church	Available - £40 p/booking
Conservative Club, Drill Hall	Room already booked

12.3 Microphone System – To consider and resolve to purchase To consider and resolve to purchase a microphone system as set out in the attached report

The Emergency Committee recommend that a T-Bone 100 microphone system with a minimum of 20 microphones to facilitate socially distanced face-to-face meetings and for future use in the Council Chamber, is purchased

The following investigation into suitable systems available was undertaken and information provided by OTC's Assistant Caretaker. Should agreement to the purchase of the recommended system, an attempt to obtain 3 quotations will be made to establish best value.

T-Bone speech 100 system



This is a purpose-designed system, for conference and council meetings; it has a voting system and can be recorded to and controlled by a PC. Each microphone has a push button to talk and a built in speaker, as well as a headphone socket. It will link to our existing speakers and hearing loops via phono cables. Each microphone is connected one to the other in a loop via a telephone type cable. The system can be used in different parts of the building, as it is self-contained.

Pros:

- Purpose built for the job
- Relatively low cost
- Parts are replaceable
- Will take up to 32 microphones.
- Chair has control
- Each microphone has a speaker and headphone socket

Cons:

- It is a one job unit
- Parts only available from supplier

The only thing needed to purchase on top of the system is some telephone cables as the supplied ones are 2m in length so would make distancing a problem, cables are £2.50 each for 5 meters.

This is the only supplier I have found of this type of system off the shelf, they are based in Germany so not sure of any import costs involved. It is a company I have used a lot in the past and always had good service, they also give a 3 year warranty as standard. **£2,099+VAT**

https://www.thomann.de/gb/the_t.bone_speech_100_m_151_bundle.htm

Amp and Microphone system



This is a professional mixing desk and microphones, each microphone plugs directly into the unit. It can run in an auto mix setting that effectively turns off microphones not being spoken into, this is all done automatically so as soon as someone speaks their microphone turns on, from what I've read 1 microphone can be given priority that will always be loudest and will shut the others off when it's in use.

Pros:

- Multi use system (with additional amp and speakers)
- Very portable
- Parts available from most PA suppliers
- Low cost
- Will work with any microphone

Cons:

- Has a maximum of 16 microphones in meeting mode
- Chair does not have control
- No individual speakers
- Can be confusing to set up
- Possibility of becoming obsolete in the future due to it using an App/PC for control

Price for this system is around £1000, all available from amazon.

<https://tinyurl.com/1u5vvpk8> Mixer

<https://tinyurl.com/1459rxz0> Microphones

On a personal note I have sworn off all Behringer equipment due to quality issues across the whole of their product range, this could have improved over the years but I do not know any professional sound engineers that use their equipment, it seems to be marketed at bands that want to run their own sound.

Either system would need some extra cable purchased to connect to the hearing loop and speakers in the hall and council chamber.

Paul Tucker