**SUSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL**

**COVID-19 BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN**

The Parish Council must maintain business continuity in the event of forced isolation of its staff and Councillors. NALC strongly encourages Councillors & staff to follow Government guidance on social distancing and self-isolation. They encourage local councils to consider if they need to hold scheduled meetings at all. NALC’s opinion is that the likelihood of a successful legal challenge is low.

**Delegation of Authority:**

During any period of restricted activity in respect of the Covid-19 virus, delegation shall be made to the Clerk to enable the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to its residents.

**Meetings:**

Should meetings not be able to go ahead, either due to a shut down or if they are not quorate, business can be held either via Skype or Zoom meetings, or via email. Discussion via email to all is preferable, as it will leave a paper trail for legal and audit purposes. The Clerk is the only member of staff, and works from home already, so business continuity should be maintained.

**All emails must be sent to all Councillors, unless they have asked the Clerk not to be included as they have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest.**

**Payments:**

While this situation continues, only regular payments should be made. These include, but are not restricted to:

● Salary

● Subscriptions to support services

● Insurance renewal

● Audit fees

The Clerk currently has delegated authority for emergency payments up to £200 via the Financial Regulations, but in addition, the Parish Council could resolve via email to agree to reasonable costs (e.g. for printing) for community groups helping to support those who are self-isolating.

Cheques are signed by two Councillors, so any financial risk will remain low. Where necessary, emails will be sent for Councillors’ approval, prior to payment being raised. Any payments made will be ratified at the next Full Council Meeting.