## Options for holding council meetings and making decisions after 07 May 2021

01 May 2021

The regulations that currently allow local authorities to hold meetings remotely until 06 May 2021 will not be extended by the Government, so face-to-face meetings will need to resume from 07 May.

The legal challenge lodged in the High Court seeking a continuation of local authority meetings beyond 06 May 2021 has been dismissed.

The Council has several options as outlined in the OALC document (and also OALC April update).

1. Hold face to face meetings
- Council would need to carry out risk assessments (see NALC recommendations)
- Number of members of the public able to attend might be restricted (social distancing)
2. Continue virtual meetings
- Not technically permitted – risk of legal challenge
3. Delegate further powers to the Clerk for a temporary period.
- The Clerk already holds some delegated powers as listed in Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. These could be temporarily extended to allow normal council business to continue during any period that the council decides is it not appropriate or possible to hold face to face meeting.

SUGGESTED WORDING FOR DELEGATION

In response to the COVID-19 situation and after a thorough risk assessment Sandford St Martin Parish Council believes it is not safe to hold a physical council meeting. The council agrees to allow the Clerk delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the council where such decisions cannot reasonably be deferred. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. This delegation is in addition to the delegated powers listed in Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Before making any decisions, consultation must take place with at least two councillors, by email, telephone or virtual meeting, followed by a confirmation email.

Any decision made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be ratified at the next council meeting. This delegated authority ceases upon the first meeting of the council after the council meeting at which the delegation was put in place.