



Brixton Parish Council
Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Business Continuity Arrangements
after the end of remote legislation (7th May 2021)

1. Introduction

Brixton Parish Council (BPC) has a duty of care to prevent the spread of infectious disease not just to BPC Council members and staff but also to members of the public.

However, BPC needs to ensure that it maintains effective and lawful decision-making processes and continues the operation of essential services and contractual obligations.

2. Matters Relating to Staff / Councillors

If the clerk / councillor is fit for work but decides, or is instructed, to self-isolate then home working will continue.

In the event of the Clerk being unable to work, contact with the public will be maintained by the Chairman of BPC (or in her absence the Vice Chairman) as currently happens when the Clerk is on Annual Leave.

The Clerk / Councillors who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery.

3. Day to day business of BPC

It is intended that the Parish Clerk ("the Clerk") will continue to respond to enquiries from the public. While BPC has no formal role or expertise in public health matters, it is well placed to distribute information to local residents and to keep people informed. This will be done via the BPC website and local Facebook pages.

All enquiries will be dealt with via telephone and email.

The Clerk will continue to update the BPC website and request that any correspondence is placed on the LOVEBrixton Facebook page and the Brixton village website. If the Clerk is unable to fulfil these duties, then the Chair will access the emails and update the websites as per Clerk instructions.

4. Public Meetings

It is a requirement of the Local Government Act 1972, that BPC business shall be conducted at public meetings of the council and any committees.

A Government announcement confirmed that the legislation enabling remote meetings would not be extended beyond 6th May 2021 and this was confirmed in a letter sent to all Council leaders 25th May 2021 by Luke Hall MP

The legislation stated that all parish councils must return to face-to-face meetings from 7th May 2021.

BPC resumed face to face monthly meetings from September 2021

Members of the public will be allowed to attend these meetings

BPC will constantly review the guidelines regarding holding meetings and the location of these meetings.

5. Delegation to the Clerk

The Clerk is formally designated Proper Officer/Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) and in law is the only individual who can act on behalf of BPC and lead the administration of all BPC's activities.

Some obligations are statutory whilst others are determined by BPC as part of the Clerk's job description. These delegated powers are the everyday duties of the Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer, including management of all staff, services and finances.

i) General Delegation

To allow BPC to operate on a minimum requirement basis, the following is delegated to the Clerk until such time BPC retracts these powers.

The Clerk shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of BPC where such decisions cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline.

This will be carried out in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of BPC and whenever possible with all BPC council members, by electronic means or telephone. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to BPC in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation will be recorded in writing and will be published in accordance with the relevant regulations.

ii) Planning Applications

The Clerk will continue to follow the procedure set out in BPC Planning Policy taking into consideration the following points:

- All planning application site visits will be undertaken in conjunction with the appropriate government guidelines.
- Having obtained comments from all councillors within an agreed timescale and having secured agreement for a response from a quorate majority of councillors the clerk in collaboration with the Chairman, would submit the response to the relevant body (SHDC or DCC)
- The decision will then be reported minuted at the next meeting of BPC.

6. Finance

All purchases and payments will be recorded on the monthly finance report and circulated to councillors on or before the date BPC would normally meet.

- This would be agreed by councillors via email and recorded on the monthly report ready to be reported at the next meeting of BPC.
- This would be placed on BPC for transparency.

To minimise social interaction between BPC bank account signatories, cheque book will be sent via Royal Mail or delivered to the appropriate councillor to sign. This will then be returned to the Clerk and cheques photocopied and dispatched to the relevant beneficiaries.

The clerk will still produce the quarterly reconciliation, and this will be emailed to all BPC councillors.

The independent check of the quarterly reconciliation will continue to be carried out by Cllr Arran via Royal Mail and email correspondence.

7. Working Groups

Working groups will be able to meet remotely to continue to work towards a common goal.

If a decision is required, the format that BPC will adopt is detailed in 5(i) above.

Conclusion / Recommendation

That BPC considers this report and approves it in full, noting that these continuity arrangements and delegations remain in force until end of December 2024.

This document will be updated as and when specific advice is received from the relevant bodies.