# Spelsbury Parish Council High Consequence Infectious Disease Policy

Adopted by Spelsbury Parish Council on 03 March 2026

## Introduction

Spelsbury Parish Council actively seeks to protect the councillors, staff and volunteers working for and on behalf of the council and its activities. As such, and following any current Public Health England (PHE) and government guidelines, the following policy applies to any High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) as defined by PHE.

This policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Parish Council will follow in respect of any HCID outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Spelsbury.

## Scope

The main areas of concern for Spelsbury Parish Council with respect to HCIDs are:

- Remaining an effective council:
- Safety and health of councillors, contractors, staff, volunteers and members of the public.

## Activation of the policy

This policy is considered to be activated when:

a. There is an active outbreak of a HCID in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Spelsbury **AND**

b. Either:
   i. At least three councillors have requested its activation to the Chairman, and subsequently notified the Clerk, **OR**
   ii. The Chairman plus two councillors have requested its activation to the Clerk, **OR**
   iii. Its activation is resolved in a meeting of the Spelsbury Parish Council

   Or:
   i. The government of the United Kingdom suspends all public meetings.

## Deactivation of the policy

This policy is considered to be deactivated when:

a. The imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Spelsbury has passed **AND**
b. A minimum of three councillors have requested public meetings be recommenced **AND**
c. The government of the United Kingdom is allowing public meetings to take place.

## Definition of High Consequence Infectious Disease

A HCID is defined as:

- acute infectious disease
- typically has a high case-fatality rate
- may not have effect 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 HCIDs as defined on www.gov.uk (28/02/2026)

| **Contact HCID** | **Airborne HCID** |
|---|---|
| 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 thrombocytopaenia syndrome (SFTS) | Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) |
| Chapare virus infection | Novel orthopoxvirus |

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

**Matters relating to staff – The Clerk**
Spelsbury Parish Council has no official offices. As such, the only employee, the Clerk, works from home. The public may only visit the Clerk by appointment. During any active outbreak of a HCID in the UK, no appointments will be permitted. The Clerk will not come into contact with the public during working hours at their first normal place of work (home).

The Memorial Hall, or any other such public location used for Parish Council meeting is the second normal place of work for the Clerk. This is dealt with in "Public Meetings".

In the event of a HCID outbreak the National Joint Council for local government services (NJC) will issue guidance for employers which the council will follow.

A summary of the most recent guidance during the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020 is detailed below.

1. *Employees who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery.*
2. *As per Part 2 Para 10.9 of the "Green Book", if an employee is fit for work but decides, or is instructed, to self-isolate, their absence should not be recorded as sickness absence. We would expect all options for home or remote working to be explored with the employee. As they are "well" at this stage they should stay on normal full pay for the duration of the self-isolation period until such time as they are confirmed to have contracted any such HCID, at which point they transfer to sickness absence leave and the usual provisions of the sickness scheme will apply.*
3. *In circumstances where an employee decides to self-isolate without instruction from the authorities it is not unreasonable for the employer to ask for some evidence such as an email from a holiday operator that shows the dates of the holiday, the resort location and flight details. However, it will probably not be possible in all cases for an employee to produce any evidence, so employers will need to use their discretion when trying to establish the facts behind the employee's decision to self-isolate.*
4. *If an employee is caring for someone who has or may have Coronavirus, this period of absence should also be regarded as self-isolation. Given the employee may then have been in direct contact with the virus we would expect only working from home arrangements to then be considered for the duration of the incubation period. Employers should keep in touch to support employees.*
5. *Following any school closure, employers should be fully supportive of employees with childcare responsibilities and consider flexible working arrangements, including adapting working patterns to care for children or dependants, or taking time off, whether this is special leave, annual leave or flexible working.*

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

Councillors and volunteers can choose not to attend public meetings. As an officer of the council, the Clerk cannot choose not to attend meetings.

Due to the nature of local government and considering the councillors and members of the public who attend meetings, there is a high percentage of attendees whom would be considered “high risk” with respect to all of the HCIDs listed previously. As such, to protect the health of all attendees, public meetings are suspended during the active period of this policy.

**Delegated Authority**

The Local Government Act 1972, s101, states that the only individual in law who can act on behalf of the Council is an officer of the authority (aside from specific items noted in the LGA Act 1972 and other legislation).

To allow the council to continue to operate to fulfil its responsibilities, the following items are delegated to the Clerk for the duration of the activation of this policy. This delegation is in addition to existing delegation in the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and any other current policies.

1. Planning applications – as per Standing Orders
2. Finance
    - All standard recurring payments listed as line items on the budget and/or listed on the approved Scheduled Payments List shall be paid by the RFO at the appropriate time to prevent any late charges.
    - Non-recurring payments – one-off costs relating to existing authorised works - to be authorised by a minimum of two councillors by email prior to payment.
    - Other payments incurred since the inception of this policy – to be authorised by a minimum of three councillors by email prior to payment
    - All payments will be formally authorised by full council at the next full council meeting.
3. Responses to communications – the Clerk will circulate at the earliest opportunity, any communication from any third parties which would normally be presented at a meeting for consideration by the council. The Clerk will circulate the summary response to the full council prior to responding to the third party.