



## CORNWALL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

UNIT 1/1A, 1 RIVERSIDE HOUSE, HERON WAY, NEWHAM, TRURO TR1 2XN

*Serving the parish and town councils of Cornwall*

### CALC BRIEFING – FAQ 16 MEETINGS AND GATHERINGS

January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021

We have received a number of questions on the management of gatherings either for social, welfare or business reasons. The Government Guidance [National Lockdown : Stay at Home](#) gives a detailed summary of what is permitted. Following discussions with NALC please find below the CALC view on meetings in a number of formats where people might come into contact with others.

#### National Restrictions :

- i) The starting point for all of the statutory guidance is that you **MUST** stay at home, limit your time outside and avoid mixing with others unless there is a justifiable reason.
- ii) You can only meet with one person from outside of your household for the purpose of exercise – not for social purposes. Social distancing of 2m is required when doing so.
- iii) Adherence to the principles of hands, face and space.

We therefore offer the following advice :

#### 1. Meetings of full council, committees and sub committees

Under the current restrictions, councils should not be holding physical meetings of any kind. It is not lawful to organise gatherings and with current rates of infection across Cornwall it would not be appropriate to do so either. The Virtual Meeting regulations remain in place until May and councils should continue to hold virtual meetings until further announcements are made.

We are still waiting for clarification on elections and the future of annual elector and council meetings. At present Government intends that the elections will take place on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021. We expect the legislation on virtual meetings to be extended but it is likely that the requirement for an annual meeting of both the electors and the council will be reintroduced.

#### 2. Planning Site meetings

Under the current restrictions it would be almost impossible to adhere to the regulations and therefore our recommendation is that councils should not organise site visits and inspections at this time. It would be impossible not to mix with more than one other person from outside your household and would be

improper to ask a householder for access to their property. Cornwall Council is currently considering whether it will continue with site inspections during the current lockdown and we will let you know as soon as further information becomes available.

### **3. Outdoors for exercise**

FAQs 14 & 15 explained the guidance for managing play areas and public open space. These can remain open but it is the provider's responsibility to ensure that they are manageable within the current Covid 19 restrictions. Unfortunately this means that there will be local variations as each council considers its own risks. The CALC guides to risk assessment provide templates to help you identify how you can ensure safe use of your facilities. [Government guidance on the managing of beaches](#) and [Safer Public Spaces](#) also contain useful guidance and will be updated as restrictions change.

### **4. Health and Safety inspections**

These should continue as part of the council's management of risk. Playground equipment, open spaces etc will need to be managed and inspected from time to time and this has previously been identified as part of the work of the council. All H & S visits and inspections can be carried out but must be done in accordance with the principles of hands, face, space and the Covid 19 principles around hygiene.

### **5. Cleaning and maintenance**

All attendance on site for cleaning and maintenance can continue under Covid 19 principles. This includes not only open spaces but also any facility which remains open during the lockdown i.e. public toilets, council premises if open.

### **6. Management of Contractors and employees on site**

The current restrictions allow contractors to continue working both indoors and outdoors and for employees to undertake work outside of the home if it is necessary to their job. As part of your risk management you should ensure that you have made the terms of your own risk assessment available, but that you have a copy of the contractor's Covid risk assessment as well as the normal document.

This means that maintenance staff, footpath contractors, play equipment inspections, repairs and renewals and other maintenance can continue provided that it is managed appropriately.

### **7. Weddings and Funerals**

Wedding and funeral services are permitted with tight restrictions on the numbers attending the service. Guidance on managing these and other events

and access to places of worship was updated on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and is detailed in [Covid 19 guidance for the safe use of places of worship.](#)

As always, I hope that you find this information helpful and simple to understand. I am grateful for your patience and support in promoting community safety by following the guidance especially during this time of increased infections.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further guidance.

Sarah Mason  
County Executive Officer