

**Briefing Note**  
**Full Council Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021**  
Returning to Face-To-Face Meetings

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A copy of the briefing note circulated at the last meeting is attached. A quotation for the equipment to facilitate officers and members of the public attending virtually is also attached.

The law states that face coverings must be worn in community buildings, unless exempt, they must be put on before entering and remain on until you have left the building. I am seeking clarification on whether face coverings can be removed when a Cllr is speaking.

I will circulate the decision from the High Court as soon as I am notified.

V Woodhouse  
May 2021

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**Briefing Note**  
**Full Council Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021**  
Returning to Face-To-Face Meetings

The letter from the minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government has been circulated to Cllrs, a further copy is attached to this briefing note, confirming that the Government will not be extending the regulations to permit remote meetings, this means from the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 Council meetings, including Committee meetings but excluding Working Party Meetings, will return to face-to-face.

The Parish Council's Annual Parish Council Meeting has been moved to 7pm on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 which means this can continue as a remote meeting. As it stands at the moment the May Committee meetings will need to be face-to-face.

Face-to-face meetings are required to comply with COVID-Secure and social distancing regulations and be open to the public. The Beechfield Centre can accommodate 10 people socially distanced, therefore, Committee meetings, subject to public attendance, could be held in the Beechfield Centre, but Full Council meetings will have to be held elsewhere, we are currently pursuing the capacity and availability of the Fremington Parish Hall to facilitate meetings.

A court case is being pursued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO) that the existing regulations permit remote meetings, however, a decision is not expected on this until the end of April at the earliest, (I understand the court case is scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021).

The Parish Council needs to consider how it will protect and ensure the safety of Cllrs, members of the public and staff in attending meetings from the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021, especially those that are vulnerable or shielding.

Some of the options available and being considered by other Councils are listed below for your consideration:

1. Delegate decisions to the Executive Officer – this would mean that Council and Committee meetings do not have to be legally convened and can be held remotely, Cllrs could debate and advise the officer of decisions in the same way you would at meetings, but all decisions would be made under delegated authority and then could not be challenged as unlawful.
2. Only Cllrs must be physically present at Council meetings, therefore the public and Officer(s) can attend via a remote link the cost of the equipment to facilitate is currently being pursued, this would reduce the number of people present and therefore the risk.
3. If the weather is dry, then meetings could be held outside, but this is obviously weather dependant and not reliable, it does not facilitate a secure platform for confidential matters.
4. Continue with remote meetings on the pretence that it is a pandemic, and the Council is protecting the health and safety of its members, staff and members

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of the public, several other town and parish councils are taking the stance that so many will continue with remote meetings it is unlikely that decisions will be

challenged in a court of law and if they are the courts will not have time to deal with all of the cases – this is not a way forward that I would recommend and if the Council is inclined to proceed then I would suggest you ensure you consider all of the implications and build a strong evidence base for the decision.

**Please note** – whichever format the Council decides to proceed with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return cannot be delegated and must be agreed at a Council meeting, therefore, a physical Full Council meeting will have to be held in June to agree the AGAR ahead of the submission deadline (this can be remote if the result of the court case is favourable).

I would not suggest making a decision at the April Meeting but instead asking questions and considering the options available ready to make a decision on the way forward at the May 2021 meeting.

V Woodhouse  
April 2021

Alchemy Systems (Western) Ltd  
4 Orchard Units, Duchy Road, Heathpark  
Industrial Estate,  
Honiton  
Devon  
EX14 1YD  
<http://alchemysys.co.uk>  
VAT Registration No.: GB737134634



## Estimate

### ADDRESS

Mrs Victoria Woodhouse  
Fremington Parish Council  
Fremington Parish Council  
Offices  
The Beechfield Centre  
Beechfield Road  
Fremington  
Devon  
EX31 3DD

ESTIMATE NO. 1310  
DATE 22/04/2021

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DATE	DESCRIPTION	VAT	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
	HP 250G7/ Core I5/8GB RAM/256GB SSD/ 15'TFT/W10Pro	20.0% S	1	675.00	675.00
	Logitech BCC950 Desktop Video Conferencing Solution, Full HD 1080p video calling, Hi-Definition Webcam, Speakerphone with Noise-Reducing Mic	20.0% S	1	225.00	225.00
	All-In-OneDesign : Combines HD video with high-quality audio clarity for business- grade video conferencing—with Carl Zeiss lens, 1080p HD and 30 fps Built-In, full Duplex Speakerphone and Noise-Cancelling Microphone : All meeting participants hear and are heard				

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Please use Invoice No as reference. Thank you.

DATE	DESCRIPTION	VAT	QTY	RATE	AMOUNT
	clearly up to 2.4 metres (8 feet) away from the base Omnidirectional Sound and Echo-Cancellation Audio : It seem like the conversations are happening in the same room Quickly Control the Call : With remote control and base button control options for camera pan, tilt and zoom, volume up/down, mute and answer/hang-up functions				
	set up	20.0% S	1	225.00	225.00
	3 Year Onsite Warranty	20.0% S	1	89.00	89.00
	Microsoft Wireless Mobile Mouse	20.0% S	1	31.00	31.00
	Carriage	20.0% S	1	15.00	15.00

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SUBTOTAL	1,260.00
VAT TOTAL	252.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,512.00</b>

VAT SUMMARY

RATE	VAT	NET
VAT @ 20%	252.00	1,260.00

Accepted By

Accepted Date

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 Please use Invoice No as reference. Thank you.

