



## Goostrey Parish Council

The Village Hall

Goostrey

Cheshire

CW4 8PE

01477 535825

E-Mail: [Parishcouncil@Goostrey.info](mailto:Parishcouncil@Goostrey.info)

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

WILL BE HELD ON

TUESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2021 at 6.00pm via ZOOM

To be conducted in accordance with the Agenda below.

- 02.21.1. **Declaration of Interests:** To receive and minute any Declarations of Interests.
2. **Apologies for absence:** To receive Apologies for unavoidable absence.
3. **To consider a motion to allow the Village Hall to be used as a Polling Station for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021** - The Government has mandated that local elections must go ahead regardless of the Tier category of the area in which the elections and polling stations are located.  
  
Cheshire East Electoral Department has requested that we notify them whether or not the provisional booking made last year can be confirmed by 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at the latest.  
**See details on pages 2 & 3.**  
**MOTION:** The Parish Council resolves to accept the booking of the Village Hall on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 by Cheshire East Electoral Department for the purpose of providing a polling station for the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, whether or not the Village Hall is open for business.
4. **Date of Next Meeting:** To confirm the date of the next Meeting – 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021.
5. **Closure of Meeting:** To formally close the Meeting.

*S Jones*

Sharon Jones, Clerk to the Parish Council.

Residents are encouraged to attend & members of the Press are welcomed.

The Press and Public may not speak when the Council is in session unless invited to do so by the Chairman.

**Public Forum** 6.00pm – 6.05pm. - Public comments will be taken before the Meeting commences but are restricted to 5 minutes unless the Chairman allows otherwise.

**Zoom Meeting Link** – Click the link below to join the meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83361074919?pwd=VDh2TU1UVXJDSmtSMlpSQVhTNFM4dz09>

**Meeting ID:** 833 6107 4919

**Passcode:** 524114

Dial by your location

+44 203 481 5237 United Kingdom

+44 203 481 5240 United Kingdom

\*Please be aware if you dial in via a landline that the rate for the call will be the national rate per minute as stated by your landline provider.\*

Participants joining by phone only can use \*6 to mute and unmute their phone or \*9 to raise their hand in the meeting.

## Information Pack

### ITEM 02.21.03 - To consider a motion to allow the Village Hall to be used as a Polling Station for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021

The Government has mandated that local elections must go ahead regardless of the Tier category of the area in which the elections and polling stations are located. See additional Government Information at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/may-2021-polls-delivery-plan/may-2021-polls-delivery-plan>

Cheshire East Electoral Department has requested that we notify them whether or not the provisional booking made last year can be confirmed by 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at the latest.

The Elections Department at Cheshire East has been asked by Government not to use Schools as Polling Stations, to prevent further disruption to education.

The provisional booking for the use of the Hall was made last year and the School was notified of the date. However, the Clerk contacted the School on 8<sup>th</sup> February to ask if this booking would cause the school any difficulties were it to go ahead on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The School confirmed that they would be able to manage without the use of the hall on that date.

The following information was published on 11<sup>th</sup> February which supports the Government request not to use schools as Polling Station in local elections:

- *Letter from the of State for School Standards and the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office to Returning Officers and Headteachers on using schools during the elections* is attached on pages 3 & 4.
- *Government: 'Avoid using schools as polling stations'* – View article at: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/31m-pledged-to-avoid-using-schools-as-polling-stations-during-may-elections/>
- *Press articles relating to the use of schools as polling stations* are attached on page 5.

The Clerk has asked the Elections Department if it will consider using the Lounge at the Village Hall instead of the Main Hall which would remove the conflict of use with the School (no reply has been received as of 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021). She has also suggested that the Elections Department find out if there are any other local venues, they could use instead of the Village Hall if necessary.

Cheshire East Electoral Department has requested that we notify them whether or not the provisional booking made last year can be confirmed by 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at the latest.

**MOTION:** The Parish Council resolves to accept the booking of the Village Hall on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 by Cheshire East Electoral Department for the purpose of providing a polling station for the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, whether or not the Village Hall is open for business.



Department  
for Education



Cabinet Office

11 February 2021

**Use of school buildings for polls on 6 May 2021**

To: Returning Officers and Headteachers of schools in England

Dear colleagues,

The Government has confirmed that the May polls will go ahead as planned, with council, Mayoral and Police and Crime Commissioner elections taking place alongside a number of local by-elections, and referendums in some areas. Many of these polls were delayed from last year. It is important for our democracy that our elections take place even during the pandemic. Right now, the decisions taken by elected officials are more important than ever and voters must be given their say.

In Government we are working across departments and with Public Health England and the electoral sector, including the Electoral Commission, to support Covid-secure elections. This includes providing clear guidance to Returning Officers who have responsibility for the conduct of the elections.

We are sending this letter to Returning Officers and Headteachers this year because we recognise there are particular concerns about the use of schools as polling stations. This year all children have missed vital time at school and the Government is committed to minimising any further disruption to pupils' education. We know that Returning Officers are acutely aware of this and are seeking to avoid using schools as polling stations. We support this approach of avoiding schools where it is practically possible to do so; in particular, we are clear that where schools would be required to close, Returning Officers should look to other available venues first. There may be other venues locally that can be considered, such as places of worship, gymnasiums, or other community or commercial venues. This should be an opportunity to support local businesses and we would very much encourage you to work to find viable alternatives to schools in your local area.

We know that it will not be possible in all cases to avoid use of schools. Where there are no alternative premises, we know that schools and Returning Officers will, as usual, work together to minimise any disruption and keep the school open where that is possible.

To support these efforts, the Government is making an estimated £31 million of additional funding available for local authorities, which can be used in these exceptional circumstances, to pay for alternative venues and find creative solutions. This brings the total of central Government funding for these elections to an estimated £92 million. In the case of Police and Crime Commissioner elections, this is a commitment to meet all reasonable additional costs of the elections as part of the usual funding process with national Government. For the local elections an additional £15 million is being made available to authorities to help them to meet the extra costs of these polls.

Should it be impossible to avoid using a school as a polling station, the additional funding set out above should be used to meet the costs of additional measures to minimise disruption in schools and costs of cleaning, including any cleaning to take place after polls close, so that schools can immediately reopen the following day. The Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, and Public Health England advise that the following measures would be broadly proportionate at handover points:

- Ventilate any rooms used via full window and door opening to fresh outside air for at least 1 hour; and
- After ventilation, sanitise all hand touchpoints (e.g. door handles, rails, seats used by polling officers, desks).

This should be possible in this timeframe, and would likely take around 1 hour, after the requisite ventilation time, for a small cleaning team in an average polling station. Broader guidance on cleaning to make your workplace Covid-secure is available from the Health and Safety Executive.

We recognise that the success of polling arrangements are built on local relationships, often developed over years, between Returning Officers and Headteachers and your expert knowledge of the communities that you serve.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the work you are doing to support young people and our democracy at this very challenging time.



**Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP**  
**Minister of State for School**  
**Standards**



**Lord True CBE**  
**Minister of State for the**  
**Cabinet Office**

# School return date 'must be signed in blood'

TELEGRAPH 12/02/21 Page 1

By Ben Riley-Smith, Lucy Fisher, Laura Donnelly and Camilla Turner

BORIS JOHNSON has been warned by Tory MPs that reopening schools on March 8 must be "signed in blood" as fears emerged that the date could be pushed back.

Concern developed yesterday at the chance of a delay as the Government declined to confirm the exact date the Prime Minister will reveal his "road map" for easing lockdown.

Mr Johnson and his ministers have made differing comments about the day the road map will be published, referencing either Monday Feb 22, or later in that week. If the road map is published after Feb 22, then the day schools re-

<b>13,509,108</b>	<b>524,447</b>
VACCINE FIRST DOSE	VACCINE SECOND DOSE
<b>+450,810</b>	<b>+4,894</b>

**13,494**  
DAILY CORONAVIRUS CASES

**-28.6%**  
CHANGE IN 7-DAY AVERAGE

**115,529**  
DEATHS **+678**

open will probably be pushed back beyond March 8, given Mr Johnson has said teachers will get two weeks' notice. Asked to guarantee the reopening date, the Prime Minister's spokesman said: "It's for us to examine the data next week. That will inform the road map we publish on the week of the 22nd."

Robert Halfon, the Tory chairman of the education select committee, told *The Daily Telegraph*: "We just need to make sure March 8 is signed in blood, not just a line in the sand."

Mark Harper, the Tory chairman of the Covid Recovery Group, said: "It's crucial we don't backslide on this."

But Downing Street sources insisted they were "overwhelmingly confident" *Continued on Page 4*

## Virus data must drive date for reopenings, expert says

*Continued from Page 1*

and had a "high degree of expectation" that the road map would be published on Feb 22. Next week ministers are expected to review data about the effectiveness of Covid vaccines.

Schools are due to be first to reopen, but it remains unclear whether all will open at once or whether some will have to wait longer. The Prime Minister's road map is due to include a series of "earliest" times when different parts of the economy can reopen, with shops likely to be back in April and pubs in May. Categorical commitments for reopening dates are unlikely because the Government has made clear it will monitor changing Covid-19 statistics.

One Whitehall source said of the reopening plan: "What is looking likely is that we see a series of reviews, spaced around three weeks apart."

Sir Jeremy Farrar, a member of the Government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, warned against naming hard and fast reopening dates.

He told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme: "It is not sensible to set a date when restrictions will be lifted - those restrictions can and will be lifted, but only when the data allows that to be true. Setting a date now, arbitrarily, doesn't make any sense."

"I appreciate businesses have to plan, but the data has to drive us, and in 2020

we lifted restrictions too quickly when the data would not really have allowed that and, frankly, as a result the transmission went back up."

Pressure from the other side of the debate is being applied by backbench Tory MPs, who are arguing businesses need certainty to plan their reopenings and help quicken the economic recovery. Sir Graham Brady, chairman of the 1922 Committee, said: "Clarity is essential. The concrete thing that can be said is schools will reopen - one hopes it will be all schools and not just primary schools. Some concrete planning horizons for business would also be beneficial, including for retail and hospitality."

Schools should not be used as polling stations for the May local elections because children have already missed so much "vital time" in the classroom, ministers said. A fund of £31 million will be available for councils to find alternative venues and "creative solutions".

Nick Gibb, the schools minister, and cabinet minister Lord True told head teachers and returning officers to avoid the use of schools as polling stations.

Social distancing will remain in place until the autumn under plans being considered by ministers, *The Times* reported. The roadmap out of lockdown may require people to remain one metre apart and wear facemasks until later this year.

