

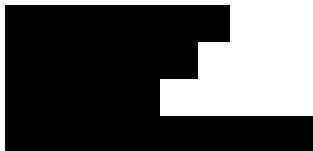


# Shaftesbury Town Council

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VAT Reg No 241 1307 58



14 August 2020

## **Re: Response to FOI request 20200426**

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your request of 18<sup>th</sup> April 2020 which was received on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2020 for records held by Shaftesbury Town Council. Your request sought:

- 1. Full and complete communications to all parties that relate to a 'Zoom' meeting that took place on or about the 31 March 2020 involving variously £5,000 and £20,000 amounts of public money.*

As a result of the Prime Minister's announcement on the 23rd March, 2020 (and consequent legislation) all public council meetings across England were cancelled. New legislation came into force from 4 April 2020, and local authorities in England were handed new powers to hold public meetings virtually by using video or telephone conferencing technology. Prior to this enabling legislation there was a Zoom discussion on the 31st March, 2020 that took place between councillors and myself. All councillors were invited by email (see page 5). This was not a formally summoned meeting as there was no legal mechanism in place to hold a formal meeting, so there was no summons, no agenda, no votes, and no minutes taken, and no legally binding decisions.

- 2. The Summons that was sent out to cover the meeting.*

Please see previous answer to question 1.

- 3. The names of the Councillors who called the "Zoom" meeting and if the meeting request protocol was properly adhered to.*

The Zoom meeting on the 31st March was not called by a councillor. With regards to the relevant protocol please see previous answer to question 1.

- 4. (a copy of the relevant protocol is also requested)*

- 5. Agenda papers that were sent out in support of the meeting*

- 6. Where these Agenda papers were posted for public inspection before the meeting*

*7. The protocol used to allow a “Zoom “ meeting - in particular compliance with the Covid legislation as it may have amended a council powers as of the relevant date/s.*

In respect of questions 4 – 7, please see previous answer to question 1.

*8. Please confirm the Covid Act’s Ministerial Delegated Powers which allowed remote meetings to take place. And if this was before or after the Shaftesbury Town Council Meant of 31 March 2010.*

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 that came into force on the 4th April, 2020. ([www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk) )

*9. The protocol that was used to allow a vote to occur where Councillors were not present in person.*

Please see previous answer to question 1.

*10. For both of the above the legal provision that allowed the Council to depart from the norms of having the Councillors physically present to vote.*

Until the 4th April, there was no legal provision. Please see answer to question 8. Guidance was received from National Association of Local Councils in March 2020: “In the absence of government guidance, we would suggest from now only taking decisions remotely for truly urgent issues. In this case, local councils should evidence their decision making as best they can, for example by asking councillors to confirm their votes by email to the clerk for the clerk to keep these as a record of the decision.”

*11. The list of those who attended the “zoom” meeting.*

Information not recorded.

*12. The date and time (start and finish) of the Zoom meeting.*

The meeting started at 1000 on the 31st March 2020.

*13. Any recording of the Zoom meeting.*

Shaftesbury Town Council does not have a recording of the meeting

*14. The provision made to allow public attendance such that transparency was achieved.*

Please see previous answer to question 1

*15. How many members of the public were invited to the Zoom meeting.*

No members of the public were invited to the Zoom meeting

*16. The declarations of interest made by Members (each by name and the precise conflict) before the meeting started and any voting occurred.*

*17. Whether the Members with declarations interest latterly proceeded to vote on the matters tabled.*

*18. The Minutes of the meeting.*

19. *The advice (all) that the Clerk received that it was lawful to allow a Council meeting to proceed without the statutory days notice, an Summons being issued, and an Agenda being issued, along with it being posted such that the public could see what was proposed.*

20. *All correspondence from all parties/persons that relates to this Council meeting, that voted public funding, in the build-up to the meeting being called.*

21. *What funds if any were in the end voted to go to the causes proposed.*

In respect of questions 16 – 21, please see previous answer to question 1

22. *What background review (all papers) that were prepared to establish that the proposals were valid and validated as good use of public money at this or any other time as the key questions of; did the proposed solutions actually work and had been approved by the relevant approval bodies were satisfied.*

23. *The question is unclear and it is not possible to answer it in its current form. Please would you rephrase the question or questions to enable an answer or answers to be prepared.*

24. *The voting record (including abstentions and the reason if given for abstention) of all councillors who attended the Zoom meeting.*

Please see previous answer to question 1.

25. *Please provide the request made by whichever part of the NHS that it had insufficient funding available to purchase claimed much needed PPE*

Shaftesbury Town Council has not received a request from any NHS organisation.

26. *Has the local authority confirmed that it has a sourcing issue on PPE?*

Shaftesbury Town Council has not received a communication from Dorset Council reporting a sourcing issue on PPE.

27. *(I note for the available figures that the SouthWest still has capacity in hospitals, staffing and consumable resources - thus if the Town Council has been provided other information that contradicts that which is being published nationally, please supply that)*

The information requested is not available.

28. *Has this NHS funding request gone to all local Parish Councils.*

Shaftesbury Town Council does not have information on what communications have been sent to other Parish Councils.

29. *Is it known by Shaftesbury Town Council if other Parishes are also stepping-in to sort out NHS PPE supply chain issues.*

Shaftesbury Town Council is unable to provide information on what other parish councils are doing.

*30. It is a matter of considerable public concern as to the level of individual and corporate competency that a Parish Council is seeking to set itself up as an authority on significant and much debated medical matters that can have a major impact of public safety and associated mental health issues when in a time of huge confusion and fear over a disease that is still being learnt about. What expertise (list each Members relevant qualifications) does the Council have in assessing these complex issues? Has it debated and evaluated these items before making any purchasing decisions?*

Shaftesbury Town Council does not hold this information.

*31. On what basis did the Members decide to ignore the Officer input regarding national policy at this time of crisis?*

The question is unclear and it is not possible for it to be answered in its current form. Should you wish to re-phrase the question it would be helpful if you could specify which national policy is being referred to and what data you consider to be held by Shaftesbury Town Council that you wish to be provided.

*32. Finally, what exactly was resolved on 14 April 2020 as having watched the meeting recording, besides endless fractional fighting and rudeness to each other it is as clear as mud what is going to happen with tax-payers hard earned cash at this time of national crisis(?), and, what level of oversight will occur to ensure what is spent provides value for money(?), and, as above whatever was resolved does not actively disrupt critical supply chains when there are national supply chain issues that frankly are well outside the remit and competency of this Parish Council (?)*

The minutes of the Full Council meeting of the 14 April 2020 are available on the Town Council website. All spending matters are reported to either Full Council or the General Management Committee. As regards critical and national supply chains that is outside the remit of Shaftesbury Town Council and there is no information available to answer this question.

Should you have any concerns about the handling of this request, you may contact the ICO at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

You may be interested to know that responding to your request was at a cost to the tax payer of £113.05. The costs of locating, retrieving and extracting the information below the appropriate limit of £450 set out in legislation and as such, the cost will be borne by Shaftesbury Town Council.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Claire Commons, Principal SLCC, CertHE (ComGov)  
Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer  
For and on behalf of Shaftesbury Town Council

**From:** [Claire Commons](#)  
**To:** [Alexander Chase](#); [Andrew Hollingshead](#); [George Hall](#); [Jeanne Loader](#); [John Lewer](#); [Julian Prichard](#); [Karen Tippins](#); [Matthew Welch](#); [Peter Yeo](#); [Phil Proctor](#); [Piers Brown](#); [Tim Cook](#)  
**Cc:** [Brie Logan](#)  
**Subject:** Covid-19 Test Kits  
**Start:** 31 March 2020 12:15:00  
**End:** 31 March 2020 12:45:00  
**Location:**<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/718247052?pwd=Slo5SHpEdDlDdHJzcUg2Q3dBeDlpUT09>

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Claire Commons is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.  
Join Zoom Meeting <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/718247052?pwd=Slo5SHpEdDlDdHJzcUg2Q3dBeDlpUT09>  
Meeting ID: 718 247 052  
Password: 006101