

Calne Without Parish council
8th February 2021
Agenda Item 12

Annual Parish Meeting

The Parish Council holds an Annual Parish Meeting each year between 1st March and 1st June in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 schedule 12 Part 3. The meeting requires 7 clear days' notice to be given.

The Annual Parish Meeting for 2020 was scheduled for April 20th but had to be cancelled due to the covid-19 restrictions. The subsequent Coronavirus Act and regulations allowed Council's not to hold the 2020 Annual Parish Meeting.

The purpose of the Annual Parish Meeting is for the Council to report back on its year's work and more importantly for the residents of the Parish to raise issues, ideas and priorities for the Parish Council to take forward in the forthcoming year.

For 2021 the Annual Parish Meeting can be held as Parish Councils are now allowed to meet virtually. The meeting still needs to take place between 1st March and 1st June. 2021 is an election year and at this time the Council expects Wiltshire Council to announce the Local Government elections will take place on the 6th May 2021 on the 11th March.

Wiltshire Council's monitoring Officer has issued guidance on management of Council business and publicity in the pre-election period which has been circulated to all Councillors. During the period, known as *purdah*, the following applies:

5. Paragraphs 33 - 35 of the 2011 Code state:

33. Local authorities should pay particular regard to the legislation governing publicity during the period of heightened sensitivity before elections. It may be necessary to suspend the hosting of material produced by third parties, or to close public forums during this period to avoid breaching any legal restrictions.

If the Annual Parish Meeting is to cover issues that may also be important local election issues then the Council should consider setting the date of the Annual Parish Meeting to occur before the 11th March 2021. To hold the meeting after the election may, depending on the makeup of the new Council provide difficulties on reporting on the year that has passed. The new Council can decide to hold further public meetings to discuss priorities for the new Council at any time.

Recommendation: That the Council decides on what date it wishes to hold its Annual Parish Meeting and the format for the virtual meeting.