

Advice from WALC re the May Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

Annual Parish Council Meetings

updated 2 March 2021

The current coronavirus regulations which allow Parish and Town Councils to meet virtually end on the 7th May (last possible virtual meeting on the 6th). While I, and NALC have heard positive sounds from MP's and government we are still waiting on this being extended. This is then a consideration for the Annual Meetings.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting is held in May. This is the meeting where the Parish Council elects a Chairman (should be first item on the agenda) for the year. Last year the regulations allowed Councils to postpone or not hold this meeting. That provision won't occur this year. Therefore, Councils will need to hold this meeting in May. We would recommend holding this meeting before the 7th May in case virtual meetings are not extended.

In Rugby Area you may have the full 4 year election cycle taking place in which case you have to hold the meeting during the 14 days after the election. As things stand that will have to be face to face but the lockdown timetable does not allow gatherings of more than 6 until 17th May therefore that meeting would need to be held between 17th and 20th May and then only outdoors (and limited to 30 people)

If the Council is not happy about meeting face to face, and the regulations do not look as though they will be extended in addition to the advice above, we would recommend holding a Full Council meeting in late April to progress as much work as possible of the Council before the virtual meetings end.

Councils are currently unable to meet face to face. As the lockdown eases it might be more likely to meet face to face after 21st June. However, we would advise that all meetings are held virtually. If you do look to hold face to face meetings, then there are a number of things you must consider.

1. Some people will not have had their first vaccine and most people will not have had their second vaccine
2. Is the Clerk happy to meet face to face – especially if they haven't received their vaccine. If this is the case there needs to be early discussions about when face to face meetings are suitable
3. Risk assessment, is the venue large enough to socially distance, requirement to wear masks, space for members of the public, hand sanitiser, different entry and exits.
4. Acoustics – even if you can meet the social distances required, will people be able to hear, especially with people wearing masks?