

Future of Stuston Parish Meeting

At the Annual Parish Meeting in May the Chair and Parish Clerk will not be standing for re-election. For the Parish Meeting to continue in a similar way to now, with the resources and commitment to focus of village issues, volunteers need to be nominated for election to these roles. It would also be helpful to have a vice chair again.

I have been liaising with senior officers in the Council to identify options if key posts are not filled.

Option 1. Stuston Parish Meeting can continue:

“To confirm that a Parish Meeting must meet between the 1st March and 1st June each year and at least on one other occasion. However, there is no means of enforcing this.

A parish meeting can be convened by the Chairman of the Parish or in the absence of the Chair by a representative of the parish on the district council or by six electors in the area for which it is to be held. So, there is ability to call a meeting if needed even if you do not have a Chair in place. Notices specifying the time, place of the business should be signed by the convener and placed in conspicuous places in the parish at least seven clear days before the meeting. The quorum of a parish meeting is two.”

District Council Officer

The Proper Officer (Chief Executive) of the District Council is the Trustee for the Parish Meeting now and that will continue. They will hold any assets and hold the precept for the village. They will continue to hold the Neighbourhood CIL for the village. Any precept required for 2024/5 could be agreed by a meeting called for this purpose, as above.

The email circulation system is likely to cease, the parish email address will not be monitored and it would be prudent to check that the terms of reference for the Social Committee and the planning committee are appropriate. A meeting will need to be called to discuss a response to any contentious planning issues that residents become aware of. Any issues that arise will only be dealt with if a meeting is called and someone offers to do any work arising. There will not be a village point of contact for communications and responses or for agreed projects. The website will not be updated.

2. Amalgamation with a neighbouring Parish Council. This can only happen by requesting a formal Community Governance Review through the District Council and there are a number of steps to go through in this.

Amalgamation with another body may dilute focus on Stuston issues. Residents would need to contribute to the cost of the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and office expenses through the precept.

3. Return to Parish Council status. A formal Community Governance Review would be required. Residents would need to stand as Councillors with a Chair and Clerk still required and meet more formal requirements e.g., quorum of 3. The residents would need to pay for the Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and office expenses through the precept.

“Just to confirm the Parish Meeting cannot be undertaken by a larger parish meeting unless you were to go through a formal Community Governance review process to approve the grouping. Such a process is undertaken by the District Council and must go through a formal consultation process before it can be implemented.

With regards to being run by the District Council, the power to call a Parish meeting actually lies with the District Councillor not the District Council. The district councillor would need to provide a notice with the date, time and place and the business to be conducted in a conspicuous place within the parish meeting area. Alternatively, a meeting can be called by six electors for the area. The parish meeting needs to meet at least twice a year one of which needs to be between the 1st March and 1st June.

District Council Officer