

## Annual Parish Meeting

The legislation says that the parish meeting must assemble annually between 1 March and 1 June inclusive (Local Government Act (LGA) 1972, sch 12, para 14) however, there is no effective method of enforcing these rules.

The legislation goes on to say that a parish meeting may be convened by the chairman of the parish council, any two parish councillors or six electors (LGA 1972, sch 12, para 15). Note that this is a may and not a must.

The August 2020 amendment to The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, allows for parish meetings to be held online. This legislation runs until midnight on 6 May 2021.

Will we be able to meet online after 6 May? Difficult to answer, the Government might extend the current legislation or even make it permanent. There are also some that believe that the 1972 Local Government Act might allow for it anyway, the act certainly doesn't say that online meetings aren't allowed – they weren't even dreamed of in 1972! It's also worth remembering that the legislation allowing Parish Councils to meet online was brought in just 12 days after going into the first lockdown, so it is a bit early to tell in March what the Government might or might not do by May!

So, what do we do about the Annual Parish Meeting?

- We can hold the meeting online as planned on 27 April, inviting the usual attendees to deliver their reports
- If we want to hold it in person, we could plan for a date as close to 1 June as possible and hope that by then a meeting at the Village Centre feels safe and the right thing to do
- Decide not to hold an Annual Parish Meeting this year, relying on the fact that there is no legislation requiring us to call it, possibly holding a 'networking' event later in the year when the 'influential people' of the village could meet at the Village Centre and we could service the usual refreshments.

Julie King  
March 2021