

## **Agenda Item 9 – Annual Parish Meeting**

### **Background**

Under the 1972 Local Government Act there is a legal requirement to hold an annual meeting of the Parish between the 1<sup>st</sup> March and the 1<sup>st</sup> June each year. This is **not** a Parish Council meeting but a meeting for local electors in the Parish. It is **not** a decision-making forum and the Parish Council is **not** bound by the outcome of any votes or polls that take place during the meeting.

It must not commence earlier than 6 p.m. in the evening but the legislation does not address whether it can be held in the daytime if on a weekend.

The Parish meeting may be convened by any of the following:

- the Chairman of the Parish Council, or
- any two Parish Councillors, or
- any six electors for the Parish

NALC are of the view that the Parish Council should convene and organise the meeting, although this is not a requirement of the legislation.

### **Willand Annual Parish Meetings**

Historically the Parish Council has convened and organised the meetings and has tried different formats, none of which have elicited much interest from the local electorate with attendance being low.

Currently the meeting is held on the same night as the March Full Council, just prior to that meeting. The 2024 and 2025 meetings both lasted approximately 20 minutes with few of the electorate attending and some of those were there for the Full Council meeting. Prior to the meeting local organisations are invited to submit reports and around 17 are received each year. Only one organisation has attended to read their report. All reports are added to the website along with the Chairman's report for the Parish Council, and the minutes.

### **Way Forward**

The current and previous formats are eliciting very little interest in the Parish, and Councillors are asked to consider the following:

1. Whether the meetings should still be convened by the Parish Council Chairman and organised by the Parish Council, and the likely outcome of not doing so. The main one being that no meeting takes place, however even though the requirement for the meeting is set out in legislation there are no sanctions if it doesn't take place and it is not expressly the Parish Council who should convene the meeting, although it is considered good practice and much of the wording in the legislation leans toward the Parish Council doing so.

2. If the Parish Council is to continue convening and organising the meeting, should it remain in its current form, and if not what other options are there that might draw in greater interest. Any associated costs would need to be considered in the latter case; however, the Council does have a Community Events earmarked reserve that could be used to fund modest costs.

**Debbie Bird**  
**Clerk to Willand Parish Council**  
**July 2025**