

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee held on
Tuesday, 4 December 2018 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Dr. Douglas de Lacey – Chairman
Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: Henry Batchelor Dr. Martin Cahn
Nigel Cathcart Geoff Harvey
Steve Hunt Peter Topping

Officers: Patrick Adams Senior Democratic Services Officer
Gemma Barron Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing
Elizabeth Davy Project Officer
Andrew Francis Electoral Services Manager
Rory McKenna Deputy Head of Legal Practice
Cecilia Murphy-Roads Project Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bridget Smith and Aidan Van de Weyer.
Councillor Steve Hunt and Councillor Geoff Harvey acted as substitutes.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

4. BARRINGTON PARISH COUNCIL - COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Development Officer presented this report, which invited the Committee to consider increasing the size of Barrington Parish Council from 9 to 13 parish councillors.

The Development Officer explained that 16 residents had responded to the consultation, with 15 in favour and only one against. The resident opposed to the increase had not given a reason. The local Member, Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer, supported the Parish Council's request for an increase.

Members of the Committee made the following points:

- It was unclear if Barrington Parish Council would be able to find an extra four residents to serve on the Parish Council.
- The expected increase in population justified the increase in the size of the Parish Council.
- This would give new residents the opportunity to stand for the Parish Council.

The Electoral Services Manager explained that the Parish was not warded to ensure that the new development would be represented. The Partnerships Manager explained that the cost of a Community Governance Review to the District Council was minimal.

A vote was taken and the Committee unanimously

AGREED To the request from Barrington Parish Council to increase the number of parish councillors from 9 to 13.

A vote was taken and a majority of four votes from the Committee supported option 3(c) in the report, whilst option (a), to implement the change from the next scheduled election in May 2022 received three votes and option (b), to implement any change on the 1st Thursday in May in any year earlier (to be funded by the parish council), received no votes. The Committee therefore

AGREED To implement any change from the next scheduled election in May 2022, or on the 1st Thursday in May in any year earlier (to be funded by the parish council) should the Parish Council nominate to do so.

5. MILTON PARISH COUNCIL - COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Development Officer presented this report on a request from Milton Parish Council to decrease the number of parish councillors from 15 to 12. Milton Parish Council currently had eight parish councillors, but a size of 15 parish councillors meant that they required five parish councillors to be quorate. All three local councillors had been invited to comment and Councillor Hazel Smith supported the decrease. It was noted that the National Association of Local Councils recommended a parish council size of 11 for a parish the size of Milton.

Members of the Committee made the following points:

- It was difficult to encourage people to stand to be a parish councillor if residents were relatively content.
- A relatively small parish council could be more effective in decision making than a larger parish council.

A vote was taken and the Committee unanimously

AGREED

A) To the request from Milton Parish Council to decrease the number of parish councillors from 15 to 12.

B) To implement any change from the next scheduled election in May 2022, or on the 1st Thursday in May in any year earlier (to be funded by the parish council) should the Parish Council nominate to do so.

6. STAPLEFORD PARISH COUNCIL - COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Partnerships Manager presented this report, which invited the Committee to consider the request from Stapleford Parish Council to increase the number of parish councillors from 9 to 11. It was noted that local member Councillor Nick Sample had no objection to the increase.

Member of the Committee made the following points:

- Only five parish councillors stood for election in May and there were concerns that Stapleford Parish Council would be unable to fill the vacancies.
- It was noted that one response to the consultation had suggested a merger between Stapleford and Great Shelford Parish Councils.

- The size of the electorate in Stapleford was likely to remain the same over the next few years.
- An increase in parish council size was difficult to justify.

The Deputy Head of Legal Services advised that the Committee was responsible for deciding whether it was appropriate to increase the size of Stapleford Parish Council and a proposal should not be agreed on the basis that there were no obvious reasons to reject it.

A vote was taken and with 6 votes in favour, one against and one abstention, the Committee **DEFERRED** the item.

It was suggested that parish councils should be invited to send a representative to these meetings. The Committee agreed to ask the Constitution Task and Finish Group to review the rights of members of the public to speak at meetings of this Committee.

7. UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 5 March at 10am in the Swansley Room.

The Meeting ended at 10.50 a.m.
