



Northumberland Association of Local Councils

The Annual Parish Meeting v The Annual Parish Council Meeting

Summary

This note seeks to explain the difference between these meetings as there has been some confusion.

The Annual Parish Meeting

This is NOT a meeting of the Parish Council. It may be useful to call it a "Parish Assembly", or something similar, to assist in making the distinction.

It is a meeting for all the local govt. electors for the parish and is to discuss parish affairs. It is perhaps rare for there to be more than a handful of electors present.

The meeting has few formal powers and its decisions do not legally bind the Parish Council.

It can require the holding of a referendum (poll) in the parish and the costs are likely to be recharged to the Parish Council. Such a referendum is administered by the Elections Team at either the City or County Council. The rules for such a poll differ substantially from those for elections.

The meeting is chaired by the Chairman of the Parish Council (if present) and in their absence by the Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council. If neither are present, the meeting has to elect an elector to act as the chairman of the meeting.

Any resolutions made by the meeting do not bind the Parish or City/County Councils, with one minor exception regarding allotments.

The meeting does NOT have the power to appoint the Chairman of the Parish Council, nor the Parish Council's representatives on outside bodies.

The meeting/assembly must be held annually between 1 March and 1 June each year.

There is more information in *LTN 6 – Meetings of Parish Meetings* available on the national NALC's website or from this office.

The Annual Parish Council Meeting

This is a meeting of the Parish Council which must be held in May each year except in election years, when the annual meeting has to be held within 14 days of the date on which councillors take office. If elections are on Thursday, the latest day is a fortnight the following Monday. This applies even if there are no contested elections for the Parish Council.

It is this meeting which elects the Chairman of the Parish Council for the following year, plus the Vice-Chairman if there is one. Often Councils will appoint their representatives on outside bodies at the Annual Parish Council Meeting although some outside bodies may require representatives to be appointed for more than a single year at a time.

Whilst the election of the Chairman is the first item of business on the agenda for the Annual Parish Council Meeting, there is no reason why ordinary business should not be included. There is therefore no need for a Parish Council to hold a formal Annual Parish Council Meeting, immediately followed by another meeting that evening to conduct the usual business.

There is more information in *LTN 5 – Parish and Community Council Meetings* available on the national NALC's website or from this office.

Can the Assembly be held on the same day as the Council Meeting?

It is acceptable for the two meetings to be held on the same evening. Usually the Annual Parish Meeting/Assembly is held first followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting. If that occurs, then the second meeting should be timed to start at the end of the previous meeting.

For example; if the Annual Parish Meeting/Assembly starts at 7.30 pm, then the agenda for the Annual Parish Council Meeting could show the commencement time as

“7.35 pm or on the rising of the preceding Annual Parish Meeting/Assembly, whichever is the later.”

Stephen Rickitt
NALC Chief Officer
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