

PARISH ASSEMBLY

For the Full Council Agenda, Tuesday 9th February.

By law, each Town and Parish Council are required to hold a Parish Assembly between 1st March and 1st June. The aim of Parish Assemblies is to report on the activities of the Parish Council for the preceding year, and to encourage local organisations to also give reports of their activities. It has generally been a social occasion, held in the Village Hall for many years, wine and nibbles being provided, with the aim of encouraging as many residents as possible to attend. For several years, it has been very successful, with a good attendance.

Burwash has traditionally held their Parish Assembly in May, following the Parish Council Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on the 2nd Tuesday in May. At the AGM the Chair and Vice Chair are elected for the coming year, and the various Committees and Working Parties are formed. In this way, the Council is able to present itself to the residents/electors of the Parish at the Parish Assembly.

The Government amended the law for 2020 due to the Coronavirus crisis, to allow Town and Parish Councils to cancel the Parish Assemblies for that year. As yet, I do not believe that the law regarding the requirement for Parish Assemblies has been amended for this year. However, the guidance from the Government was not issued until April last year, so it is quite possible that these will again be cancelled.

The Parish Council needs to consider whether to/how to plan for a Parish Assembly in 2021.

Points to consider are:

1. The Parish Assembly is an important part of the Parish Council's functions.
2. Should a date be set in May and reserved at the Village Hall?
3. Could the Assembly be held in the open, eg at Swan Meadow?
4. People are becoming quite used to virtual meetings now, using Zoom, Teams etc, so it could be planned as a virtual meeting (dependent on the Govt. amending the law for 2021).
5. A Zoom meeting would not be the same social occasion (it would be difficult for the Council to virtually supply a glass of wine!).
6. The local organisations desperately need as much help as possible, a representative from each could give an idea of their aims and plans for the year ahead.
7. Local Organisations were able to claim grants from the Council, and these were paid in May. The Council did ask those who were awarded grants to be prepared to give a report on how the grant was used – these reports could form part of the Assembly.

Sylvie Franklin.