

Full Council 15 July 2021 Proposed Dissolution of Chedington Parish Council

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

Local Councillor(s): Cllr Rebecca Knox

Executive Director: J Mair, Corporate Director, Legal & Democratic

Report Author: Jonathan Mair

Title: Monitoring Officer

Tel: 01305224181

Email: Jonathan.mair@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That the Council:

1. Make an order under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1972 to dissolve the Chedington Parish Council
2. Grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the ward member, to enable orders to be made under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 to group, separate or dissolve parish councils without the need for individual decisions by the Full Council.

Reason for Recommendation:

Dissolution of the Parish Council has been requested by Chedington Parish meeting.

A delegation to the Chief Executive will enable future qualifying requests to be decided by the Chief Executive in consultation with the ward member and without the need for a report to the Full Council.

1. Executive Summary

A separate report on this agenda deals with proposals for a Dorset Council area wide community governance review to report in 2022.

This report concerns an individual request from a parish meeting to dissolve a parish council and is being brought forward in advance of the community governance review.

Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that for every parish there shall be a parish meeting for the purpose of discussing parish affairs and exercising any functions conferred on such meetings by any enactment.

The Act goes on to provide for the continuation of parish councils or grouped parishes in existence before 1st April 1974. It also sets out legal powers enabling the Council for the District to dissolve small parishes (defined as having fewer than 150 local government electors) and for the grouping and the separation of parishes.

Chedington has fewer than 150 local government electors and the parish meeting has applied to Dorset Council to dissolve the Parish Council. Previously Chedington was part of the grouped Parrett and Axe Parish Council. Whereas South Perrott was able to return parish councillors Chedington could not do so and this has continued to be the case since the Group was dissolved.

No one at all is prepared to serve as a parish councillor, leading the Chedington Parish Meeting to request a dissolution.

Provisions contained in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enable the Council of the District to carry out a wider community governance review. As well as merging, altering or abolishing parishes or changing a parish council into a parish meeting a community governance review enables the council to work with parishes to

- Increase or decrease the number of councillors
- Create ward boundaries or change existing warding patterns
- Change parish names
- Correct minor boundary anomalies.

Requests to dissolve, to group or to separate grouped parishes outside of the scope of a wider community governance review are likely to occur only

infrequently. Nevertheless it is suggested that for the future there should be a specific delegation to the Chief Executive, to enable such individual requests to be decided between meetings, in consultation with the ward councillor.

2. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. As the Parish Council is not quorate the previous precept is being held by Dorset Council. Under the 1972 Act in a parish not having a separate parish council the chairman of the parish meeting and the proper officer of the district council are “the Parish Trustees” and hold assets on behalf of the parish meeting.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

In a parish without a parish council the parish meeting retains a range of powers relevant to the well-being and health of the community, particularly in relation to the maintenance of open spaces.

4. Climate implications

None.

5. Other Implications

The local member has made clear her commitment to support the community and in the absence of a parish council she will continue to help address residents’ concerns.

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

This report does not raise any issues in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

8. Appendices

None.

9. Background Papers

Notes of the Chedington Parish meeting.