Holme Parish Council News

**Happy New Year!**

**SANTA!** Thank you to all who made Santa’s visit possible. He has left a few spare hats about the village so maybe his elves could rescue them for him?

**Cemetery** – Please can Christmas wreaths be removed or broken down into their component parts for recycling by 1 March? The greenery and flowers **only** may be put into the green bin, anything else (bases, wires, ribbon) please take home.

A reminder – **The Post Van** is now coming on a **Friday** morning 9.30 till 10.30am.

**Parish Council Elections**

2022 sees the current Council term coming to an end. There will be elections on 5 May. Before that there is a nomination process which takes place in a very short window of just a week between **28 March and 5 April.**

**Would you like to join the Council to help it to become more representative?**

Our current Councillors are 5 men and 2 women, but only one of them is under 60. However the residents of Holme are increasingly younger people with families and it would be great to have this section of the community represented better. Our newest Councillor Ed Whittaker does his best and all the Councillors talk to people, read social media etc and keep abreast of things but we now have an opportunity to enhance the Council’s inclusivity without losing the experience built up - we are being granted 2 additional Council seats and going up from 7 to 9 places.

 **What is a Parish Council?**

Each village or town parish has its own Parish Council, large or small. Parish Councils are the grass of roots of local government. Councillors in Holme are all volunteers and are responsible for decision-making affecting the village like grass cutting, trees and the cemetery. I, as the Clerk, am their employee and I manage the correspondence, meeting administration, paperwork and finances as decided and directed by the Parish Council.

**What’s the difference between all the different Councils?**

 The Parish Council is the lowest tier of local government and is responsible for managing village services and assets. Above us we have Huntingdonshire District Council which controls planning, waste services and housing amongst other things. Tim Alban is our District Councillor and he often attends Parish Council meetings, as does our County Councillor Simon Bywater, member of Cambridgeshire County Council/Cambs and Peterborough Combined Authority (which comes above the District and answers to central government ministers) which deals with highways, social care and education, links with fire, police etc. We do all work together very effectively.

**What would I have to do?**

Holme Parish Council meets 6 times a year and the meetings are generally 2 hours long when things are discussed and decisions made. This is the minimum commitment, but if you have to miss the odd meeting it’s not a problem. Occasionally there are extra meetings (often to discuss planning applications) and any additional duties beyond that – maintenance or leafleting, for example- are taken on voluntarily. You’d need to be able to listen, form and voice your opinion and work as a team to achieve a majority decision.

**Do I need to have qualifications?**

No particular educational qualifications are needed, however the ability to read emails (and preferably also to respond to emails!) is required and use of the internet is needed to access some information.

You must be over 18 and resident/work/own property in the Parish for the previous 12 months, also not be “disqualified” (you would know if this were the case!). You also must be registered to vote.

**So, how do I take the next step**?

If becoming a Parish Councillor might appeal to you, do please let me know and I will happily tell you more and in due course can make sure that nomination forms are available for you – as above, there is only one week at the end of March to get them in to Huntingdon so you’ll need to be ready.

If there are more than 9 nominees there will be an actual election and everyone on the electoral roll in Holme will get to vote for their preferred candidates – if 9, or fewer than 9 candidates are nominated then they will all win a seat and then the Council can try to co-opt someone to fill the gaps later.

**Can I come and try?**

Anyone can come along to watch a meeting before deciding to apply - let me know first if you wish, or you can just turn up, meetings are open to the public.

**The next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Thursday 24 March at Holme Village Hall at 7pm.**

Janice

Parish Clerk

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