

Leisure & Amenities Committee

West Swindon PC – Casual Vacancy - Election

1	PROJECT PROPOSAL
1.1	To consider options for publicity if there is a contested election for the Parish ward of Middleleaze & Ramleaze
2	INTRODUCTION
2.1	Following the resignation of Cllr Simon Firth, a Notice of a Casual Vacancy was issued. Ten electors have requested that an election be called for this vacancy.
2.2	A Notice of an Election will now be issued. This must take place no less than 25 days before the election date. Anyone interested in the vacancy will need to collect a nomination pack, complete the nomination forms and deliver them to the Electoral Team within the specified date. A statement of persons nominated is then published.
2.3	As there is one vacancy, if more than one Candidate is nominated, the seat will be contested and there will be an election. It is proposed that if there is an election, that this is scheduled on Thursday October 14 th .
3	PUBLICITY
3.1	Typically, electors receive a polling card through the door alongside national press and political campaign material. As this is a stand alone election it is not mandatory for poll cards to be issued as set out in The Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006: <i>Issue of official poll cards</i> <i>25.—(1) Where the poll at a parish or community election is not to be taken together with the poll at some other election, the council of the parish or community may, not later than noon on the nineteenth day before the day of election, request the returning officer to issue official poll cards for that election.</i> <i>(2) Where the returning officer receives a request under paragraph (1) he must as soon as practicable send to electors and their proxies an official poll card.</i> <i>(3) An elector's official poll card must be sent or delivered to his qualifying address, and a proxy's to his address as shown in the list of proxies.</i> <i>(4) The official poll card must be in the appropriate form in the Appendix, or a form to the like effect, and must set out—</i> <i>(a) the name of the council and, where appropriate, of the ward to which councillors are to be elected;</i> <i>(b) the elector's name, qualifying address and number on the register;</i> <i>(c) the date and hours of the poll and the situation of the elector's polling station;</i>

	<i>(d) such other information as the returning officer thinks appropriate,</i>
4	IMPACT
4.1	The Parish Council will be required to monitor the progress of the Notice of the Election and follow the necessary stages.
4.2	It must determine whether to issue Poll Cards for this by election. The estimated cost for Poll Cards is £1800.00. This must be requested of the Returning Officer no later than Thursday 16 September.
5	COSTS
5.1	Costs for Parish elections are the responsibility of West Swindon Parish Council. In a year where there are other elections also taking place, costs can be distributed between the organisations. When it is a stand alone election, all costs will be met by the Parish Council. If contested, costs include ballot papers, equipment, venues, staffing, and if required poll cards.
6.	BUDGET
6.1	The Parish Council has an annual budget for elections in a non election year of £6,000 to allow for by elections and the build up of reserves. It is likely that if contested, this election will require that budget amount.
7	FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS
7.1	There will be costs associated with an election if it is contested. These are costs that have been factored within the annual budget planning. The Parish Council will need to consider the best tools that will deliver publicity and awareness raising in ways that are appropriate and accessible. Consideration will be given to the expectations of the public in terms of how elections are organised.
8.	RECOMMENDATIONS
8.1	That this Committee notes the information in this report in order to discuss whether to initiate the cost of printing and distributing poll cards.
8.2	That this Committee makes a resolution determining next steps for promotion/awareness raising in the event of a contested seat.

Paula Harrison, Parish Manager