

## MAY 2021 AGM AND FULL COUNCIL DATES

The current regulations which allow local authorities to hold meetings by video link apply to meetings which take place before 7 May 2021.

At the Annual Assembly of the Town earlier this month, Member of Parliament for Waveney Peter Aldous explained that any extension beyond that date would require primary legislation. He also said that it was not certain whether there would be room in the Parliamentary timetable for the necessary legislation to be passed before the current regulations expire.

In 2020, even though the Town Council had the option to postpone the AGM until a later date, we decided to hold the AGM on the scheduled date, by video link. The consensus was that it was the democratically right thing to do, because we had the means to hold the meeting and conduct business in a safe environment.

In 2021, the same principle applies. The only differences are that we would have to bring the AGM date forward to hold the AGM by video link under current regulations, and there are also the pending by-elections to consider.

Three Lowestoft Town Council by-elections are scheduled to take place on Thursday 6 May. Ordinarily, if it had not been for covid, these Councillors would have been elected before the AGM: if possible, they should therefore be able to take part in voting for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Committee Chairs, and have the opportunity to join Committees and Sub-Committees and put themselves forward to represent the Town Council on external bodies, as with current Councillors. However, the by-election results will not be known before the current regulations expire.

I therefore propose that:

1. We do not fix a date for the 2021 AGM at this time.
2. If by Monday 26 April 2021, the Government has confirmed that meetings can continue to be held by video link after 6 May, the AGM should be scheduled for the usual date i.e. 2 weeks before the May Full Council meeting.
3. If by Monday 26 April 2021, the Government has not confirmed that meetings can continue to be held by video link after 6 May, the AGM should be scheduled for Tuesday 4 May. The agenda should be published on Monday 26 April to ensure the minimum 5 clear days' notice requirement is met (Monday 3 May being a Bank Holiday).
4. As we will have a Full Council meeting on Tuesday 27 April 2021, the May Full Council meeting should NOT be brought forward to take place before 7 May. If the Town Council is unable to hold a May Full Council meeting by video link or in person on the scheduled date, the meeting should be postponed.

If any urgent business arises after the April Full Council agenda has been published but before 7 May, which cannot be dealt with under the Clerk's delegations, consideration can still be given if necessary to convening an extraordinary meeting so the business can be dealt with whilst current regulations remain in force.

Andy Pearce