

Appointment of temporary Councillors to Langport Town Council

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Purpose

To seek Members approval for the temporary appointment of three people to Langport Town Council to allow them to progress urgent business, until an election can be held to appoint new Town Councillors.

Recommendations

That Council agrees to:-

1. the appointment of the following persons as temporary members of Langport Town Council until such time as an election can be held and those elected have taken up office:

Mr Gerard Tucker
Mr Crispin Raikes
Mrs Clare Aparicio Paul

2. authorise the Director (Support Services) to make the necessary Order under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 with effect from 22nd September 2017.

Background

Following a Parish meeting called by electors of the parish to discuss the future of the Hanging Chapel in Langport, the Town Clerk has received 7 resignations from Town Councillors, including the Chairman of the Town Council.

Langport Town Council comprises of 11 Councillors. Normally the quorum of a Town Council meeting is three or one third of the total membership whichever is greater, however, the Town Council have a Standing Order which states their minimum quorum for a meeting is five.

South Somerset District Council now need to appoint temporary councillors, sufficient for there to be a quorum for them to conduct urgent items of business in the interim period and, to assist in the notification of vacancies and election of new Town Councillors.

In the interim, the Clerk will continue to preserve the day to day business of the Town Council and he has confirmed that negotiations with the tenants of the Hanging Chapel have been postponed until after the vacancies that have been created by these resignations have been filled.

Report

There are now so many vacancies on the Town Council that it is unable to act. Its quorum is five members. With fewer than five members the Town Council cannot act. It cannot co-opt new councillors or exercise any of its functions. The Local Government Act 1972

gives this council the power to take action in such cases. This Council, pursuant to an Order made under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972, can appoint persons to fill such of the vacancies on the Town Council as is appropriate to allow the Town Council to progress urgent business, until such time as the election of new Town Councillors can take place and those elected take up office.

Accordingly, three District Councillors have agreed to act as temporary Town Councillors for Langport for this interim period to enable the Town Council to continue to function.

Timescale

If an election is called by ten electors for the Parish of Langport, then an election to fill the vacancies will be held in early October 2017. It is anticipated that the temporary appointments will be up to this period only as it is envisaged that sufficient people will stand for election to provide the necessary quorum. Any new members take up office upon making their declaration of acceptance of office in the prescribed form before or at the first meeting of the Town Council after the election. The SSDC appointed Town Councillors will then step down.

Financial Implications

There is currently budget provision made for members' travel expenses to attend approved duties. These appointments would be classed as approved duties.

If an election is called to fill the vacancies then the majority of the cost will be reclaimed from the Town Council.

Background Papers

Section 91, Local Government Act 1972,
E-mail correspondence from the Clerk to Langport Town Council and author's working papers
