



Full Council Meeting – 31 January 2019

Agenda Item CC1961/19

Planning for 2019 Council Elections

Introduction

There will be a full Parish Council Election in May 2019. This paper reviews progress since the Council meeting on 28 June 2018 and makes further proposals for the Council to consider.

Discussion

Under item CC1879/18 the Council resolved:

- *That a working party is created to look into how best to plan for the election in 2019 and that Cllrs Benner, Cole, Gallagher & Kaur become members of the 2019 Election Planning working party.*
- *That the Council develops a programme to advertise the forthcoming elections, to encourage greater participation in the work of the Council.*

The Working Party has met twice, with the assistance of Ryan Bennett, on 9 July 2018 and 14 January 2019.

At the first meeting we discussed

- Reasons why people might not think of becoming Parish Councillors
- Ideas about what we might do to change perceptions
- People we should try to connect with
- Messages we should try to put out
- How to communicate them effectively

As a result the Council ran a stall at Croxfest on 8 September 2018 with the assistance of the Clerk and Ryan Bennett to try to reach people in the community.

Following the successful campaign in support of the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum, we met on 14 January 2019 to agree an action plan with a timetable.

We discussed how to let people from all backgrounds feel welcome and able to apply ensuring everyone feels they could stand for election, they would be welcomed, and that they could become a good councillor for the Parish.

Notice of elections will be published on 26 March 2019 and the Parish Council will enter a period known as “purdah” when it must avoid any overtly political activities. Therefore we have a short period within which to encourage people to put themselves forward as candidates for election (nominations must be submitted before 4pm on 3 April 2019).

We discussed how to encourage the widest possible range of people to stand for election whilst acting impartially between all candidates, whether they are currently Councillors or not.

On 14 January we concluded that the following actions would be appropriate: To:

- Advertise the forthcoming elections in the Parish Pump Lite
- Write an article (or articles) in MyCroxley News
- Contact other local media and seek to place articles in the Watford Observer and on local radio stations
- Produce an A3 Z-fold leaflet and deliver to all local homes
- Produce a short video about the Council's activities
- Run a discussion campaign on social media
- Speak to local groups and at local events
- Display A4 posters in local shop windows and premises
- Hand out an A5 flyer at local events and at the station
- Develop material for the Council's website emphasising diversity and providing links to published guidance
- Have a "meet the councillors" open evening in the Council offices with tea & cakes
- Contact people who have previously applied for co-option and provide them with factual information
- Speak to people who have previously expressed an interest in standing and ensure they have the relevant information.

Some of these activities can be undertaken without cost. Others will require funding.

We therefore propose that the Council allocates sufficient funds to pay for the production and delivery of the leaflet (about £1,000), the production and printing of posters and flyers (about £300), and the costs of hosting an open evening (about £100) in addition to the staff time required to support the campaign.

Recommendation

- The Council approves the proposed programme of actions and expenditure of up to £1,500 to cover any necessary costs to encourage people to stand for election to the Parish Council in 2019.

Cllrs Emily Benner & Andrew Gallagher
18 January 2019