

Report regarding temporary appointments to Salthouse Parish Council	
Executive Summary	<p>The options and proposals outlined in the report below allow for a sensible and pragmatic approach which will enable the Parish Council to return to full operation.</p> <p>The proposals will not place a huge demand on the temporarily appointed members as it is anticipated that the co-option process can be undertaken at the first parish council meeting scheduled to take place following the meeting of Full Council that this report is considered at.</p> <p>Once the co-option process has been completed the temporarily appointed councillor will be able to step down from their temporary role on the parish council.</p>
Options considered	<p>Temporary appointment of District / County Council elected members to Salthouse Parish Council in order to allow parish council to undertake co-option process.</p> <p>Temporary appointment of Parish Clerk to oversee the above co-option process and any other duties in the role until such a time when a permanent appointment can be made.</p>
Consultation(s)	Not required
Recommendations	<p>To seek approval from Full Council to the temporary appointment of either Cllr Eric Vardy or Cllr Victoria Holliday to Salthouse Parish Council.</p> <p>To seek approval on the creation of an Order to formalise the appointment.</p> <p>To install a temporary parish clerk to support the co-option process and other duties until a permanent clerk is appointed.</p>
Reasons for recommendations	The temporary appointment will bring the current membership of the parish council to three which will allow the council to legally operate and undertake a co-option process to appoint further parish councillors.
Background papers	none

Wards affected	Coastal Ward
Cabinet member(s)	Tim Adams
Contact Officer	Rob Henry, (rob.henry@north-norfolk.gov.uk) Senior Elections Officer

Links to key documents:

Corporate Plan:	Not directly linked to corporate plan priorities
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Not linked to MTFS
Council Policies & Strategies	Not linked to any Core Strategy Policies as listed here

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	No
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	none

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To obtain approval from Full Council to temporarily appoint a parish councillor and parish clerk to Salthouse Parish Council in order to bring the membership of the parish council to a quorate number and to assist with the co-option process to appoint a number of interested members of the parish who wish to join the parish council as councillors.

2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 A Town or Parish Council needs to be quorate in order to discharge any business at a meeting. A quorum is defined in legislation as being one third of the total number of members of the relevant Town/Parish Council, subject to a minimum of three Councillors.
- 2.2 During the nomination process ahead of the 4th May 2023 Parish Elections, four valid nominations were received for Salthouse Parish Council. However, in the weeks since there have been two resignations from the Parish Council and also the Clerk has resigned too. With two sitting members, the Council is not currently in operation as no decisions can be made whilst it is not quorate.
- 2.3 There are a total of seven seats on Salthouse Parish Council so the Council needs a minimum of three councillors in order to be quorate and transact any business.
- 2.4 Under section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 in situations where Town or Parish Councils do not have the required number of councillors to be quorate and conduct the business of the Parish Council, the District Council can make an order to appoint persons to serve on the Parish Council until such time as vacancies on the Council are filled by election or co-option.
- 2.5 It has been advised that there are a number of interested parties looking to be co-opted onto the parish council so the duties of the temporarily appointed member would be to assist the two sitting members with the co-option process.

3. Proposals and Options

- 3.1 In order to enable Salthouse Parish Council to function in the short term it is proposed that North Norfolk District Council makes an appointment to the parish council through roles being taken up by either the District Council or County Council member for the area in which the parish is situated.
- 3.2 This would see either Cllr. Victoria Holliday, District Councillor for the Coastal Ward or Cllr. Eric Vardy, County Councillor for the Holt Division appointed on a short term basis to assist with the co-option process of qualified local persons to bring the parish council to a quorate level of operation.
- 3.3 To appoint a clerk to assist temporarily with the co-option process and until such a time that the parish council can make a permanent appointment to the role of parish clerk.
- 3.4 Jane Wisson, a member of the Officer staff at North Norfolk District Council, is an experienced Parish Clerk and this proposal would seek to appoint her temporarily to conduct the duties as stated in paragraph 3.3 above.
- 3.5 To approve the making of an order to effect of the temporary appointments as stated in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.4 above.

4. Corporate Priorities

NA

5. Financial and Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications linked to this report. All work undertaken in relation to it and any outcomes are in employee time only.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 Paragraph 12 of Schedule 12, Part ii of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that no business shall be transacted at a meeting of a parish council unless at least one-third of the whole number of members of the council are present at the meeting; but notwithstanding anything in that paragraph, in no case shall the quorum be less than three.
- 6.2 The number of parish Councillors for a parish council shall not be less than 5 (s16 Local Government Act 1972. The number of Parish Councillors able to serve on Salthouse Parish Council is seven.
- 6.3 Section 91(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that the principal authority, in this case North Norfolk District Council, may make an order to appoint persons to fill all or any vacancies on a town or parish council until such time as other councillors are elected and take up office.
- 6.4 In the event that Salthouse Parish Council are unable to fill the required number of vacancies through co-option, section 39(4) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 enables the District Council to make any appointment or do anything which appears to them necessary or expedient for the proper holding of such an election or meeting and properly constituting the council. This includes the power to direct the holding of an election or meeting and fix the date for it.

7. Risks

- 7.1 The District Council could choose not to make any appointments to Salthouse Parish Council. However, without the District Council making a temporary appointment the Parish Council would not be able to sit or take decisions in the interests of the local community until the next regular elections in 2027.

8. Net Zero Target

- 8.1 All exercises and duties relating to this report do not have an impact on the The Council's Net Zero Strategy & Action Plan.

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 9.1 NA

10. Community Safety issues

NA

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

- 11.1 To seek approval from Full Council to the temporary appointment of either District Council ward or County Council division member to Salthouse Parish Council to allow the council to operate and undertake a process of co-option to appoint qualified members of the parish to allow the ongoing operation of the parish council.
- 11.2 To seek approval of Full Council to the temporary appointment of Jane Wisson to the role of Parish Clerk to assist with the process of co-option and all other clerk duties until a permanent appointment can be made.