

D&H Democracy

I don't know how many residents knew that there was a vacancy on the parish council. It certainly did not come to the attention of the Research Department here until a keen-eye resident let us know on March 13. A junior mole was tasked to investigate. He found a notice to that effect on the local PC notice board. He thought not many people could have seen it as the glass was obscured by green algal slime. Also a notice under "News" on the PC website situated a long way down on the front page and there was no link to it from the navigation bar.

But it was too late for anyone to apply as the closing date – March 8 - had already passed. This leaves co-option, whereby the council chooses their own candidate, as the only option.

Legally the PC had fulfilled the notification requirements according to SGC's Electoral Office. But it does not appear the PC entered whole-heartedly into advertising the vacancy.

For instance, D&H website which is widely read –already nearly 3000 page hits this year alone – was not asked to advertise it; it did not appear in the Parish News which the PC subsidises; and none of the residents, whose email addresses the PC has, were contacted.

In this instance, a ready-made candidate was available. He had been the runner up in the 2015 election and had scored only a few fewer votes than some of the successful councillors. Our mole has discovered he was not informed of the vacancy and so far has not been invited for co-option.

We think the parish council should observe its often-declared commitment to Transparency.