

## DE-WARDING OF BRIMPSFIELD AND CAUDLE GREEN WARDS FOR ELECTION PURPOSES

Sarah Dalby (Electoral Services Manager at Cotswold District Council was invited to attend the recent Parish Council meeting regarding the **possible** amalgamation of Brimpsfield and Caudle Green, the 2 wards that are represented by **Brimpsfield Parish Council**.

### Key Points raised at the meeting:

- It is legally possible to de-ward the 2 wards of the parish and to have one ward representing both villages
- At the present time, elections in the two wards are treated as two separate legal entities. Candidates standing for election cannot stand for both wards and cannot move wards for numerical purposes. Due to the geographical proximity of the two wards, Councillors can meet the criteria and qualify for election for either of the wards whilst living in the other ward. Parish Councillors represent their individual wards but also represent the whole Parish, so it is the whole Parish Council which makes collective decisions on all matters regardless of which ward is affected
- There are electoral cost implications of having two wards within one Parish- potentially double the cost at election times. Contested Elections can happen at any time if a vacancy is created on the Parish Council and not only at four yearly intervals.

### The process for de-warding would be:

- The Parish Council would need to pass a formal resolution asking for the District Council to consider de-warding
- Cotswold District Council would conduct a whole parish consultation as part of a review
- May 2027 would be the change date as that would be the next 4 yearly election
- The time scale of the District Council part of the project would take 6-9 months
- The Parish Council would need to make a formal request no later than November 2026
- There is no cost to the Parish Council during the review process
- Consultation would include District Councillors, Residents, MPs, and the Parish Council
- Residents would be able to attend the District Council meeting to observe and to speak
- The final decision rests with the Cotswold District Council

### Why consider this matter now?

- Since 1999, the District Council has placed the cost of **contested elections** on Parish Councils, (hitherto CDC bore the cost of these itself). However, this changed again in May 2023, and **all** elections will now involve a cost to the Parish.
- In the recent election (May 2023) there was a contested election for the Brimpsfield Ward with 6 candidates standing for five places whilst Caudle Green had one candidate for two places. This meant that the Parish incurred a cost of £292.
- This cost will rise to in the region of £2107 for any contested by-election in the future and, in the unlikely event, (although possible) that there were to be contested elections in both wards then that would entail a cost to the Parish Council of around £4214.
- The Parish Council 2023/2024 Precept, the part of your rates that is added to pay for Brimpsfield Parish expenditure, is currently £7000.
- It is good practice for the Parish Council to review such matters from time to time to ensure that parishioners are best served.

The Parish Council would very much welcome your views based on the information above.

- Are you in favour of de-warding?
- If you have any other comments that you would like the Parish Council to consider before starting the formal process of de-warding by agreeing a formal resolution, then please email [brimpsfieldpc@gmail.com](mailto:brimpsfieldpc@gmail.com) or speak to one of the Parish Councillors, (see website for details).