

Pannal and Burn Bridge Parish Council – New Parish Council Created

Background

The villages of Pannal and Burn Bridge are currently administered by Harrogate Borough Council, North Yorkshire. Together they form part of Pannal Ward, with a population of approximately 1,862 residents. The area faces a continuous growth in population, as the proximity to Harrogate attracts more residents to the two villages, which also pride themselves with excellent leisure facilities such as the golf course and the cricket club. Therefore, housing development is of particular importance to the area, and the Pannal Village Society has initiated a campaign to set up a local council, in the hope of giving residents a greater say in the matter.

Why A Council Is Wanted

Pannal and Burn Bridge desire a parish council as it would increase their ability to manage their assets and to influence development plans in their area. Although the Pannal Village Society succeeded at times to influence some planning decisions, it acknowledged that a parish council would be able to exert considerably more influence. Furthermore, it is hoped that a parish council will better administer services that the Pannal and Burn Bridge communities need, yet which borough and county authorities are unable to provide. Thus, the creation of a parish council in the area would improve the representation of residents' interests.

Progress With Campaign To Date

The Pannal Village Society opened a petition requesting Harrogate Borough Council to conduct a Community Governance Review of the area in June 2014. The petition gathered 283 signatures very quickly, exceeding the minimum of signatures required, and was formally submitted on the 18th of July 2014. In October 2015, having concluded their consultation, the General Purpose Committee of Harrogate Borough Council recommended the creation of a parish council for Pannal and Burn Bridge. The full council agreed and arrangements are now being made to set a budget for the new parish council and for the order to establish the council to be made.

Learning From The Campaign

The campaign to set up a parish council for Pannal and Burn Bridge has run very smoothly. Under the umbrella of the Pannal Village Society, the campaign received substantial attention from the residents in the area, with petitions being lodged at the Village Shop, the Village Hall and the local pub, the Black Swan. The unity of the two village communities also contributed to the petition being submitted in a relatively short period of time. The Pannal Village Society also made sure that all residents in the area were aware of the proposal to create a parish council by organising a public meeting and distributing leaflets to all

households in the villages. A representative from the Yorkshire Local Councils Association attended the public meeting to help answer questions about what a local council could do for the community.

Campaign Lessons To Share with Others

The support of the Pannal Village Society has helped the campaign, by attracting more immediate attention than the campaign would have otherwise received. This, as well as the small size of the electorate, allowed the petition to be formally submitted in a relative short period of time. Campaigns to set up a new parish council can benefit from the support of civil society organisations, as often these organisations have already well established means of dispersing information and the necessary expertise of promoting the campaign. Although cooperation can suit both parties' interests, one shouldn't allow the campaign for a local council to be overshadowed by the interests of other organisations involved.