**SUNNINGHILL & ASCOT PARISH COUNCIL**

**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 14 DECEMBER 2021**

**COUNCILLOR ABSENCE**

**Background**

Temporary Coronavirus legislation brought in in 2020 allowed parish councils to carry out business by meeting and making decisions ‘virtually’. This legislation came to an end in May 2021, meaning that it became necessary again to hold meetings in person and, as a consequence, physical attendance at meetings is required.

Councillor Charlotte Herring has been suffering ill-health for some time now and has been unable to attend any physical meetings since they resumed in May. She has always sent her apologies for her absence at meetings and has attended Planning Committee meetings which are held virtually. However, because of the legal requirement to attend meetings physically, attendance at Planning Committee meetings does not qualify as attendance in legislative terms.

The Local Government Act 1972, section 85, stipulates that if a member fails to attend any meetings in a period of six consecutive months, they fail to be a member and a casual vacancy will arise for the council.

**Proposal**

The reasons for Councillor Herring’s absence are that she is in the early stages of managing a long-term health condition and is currently finding attending in-person meetings too difficult. Charlotte is, however, keen to remain as a Councillor and hopes to be back on board as soon as her condition has stablised.

The parish council must consider these reasons for Councillor Herring’s absence and approve by resolution that she may continue as a member of the Parish Council. The proposal is that she remain a member until the end of April 2022, at which time both she and the parish council review the situation and consider whether she should continue as a member.

Helen Goodwin

Clerk to the Council

08 December 2021