

The consequences of having no Chair

TK2296: Failure to elect Chair 2025 Springthorpe Parish Meeting

✓ What is still in force:

The **current law** governing the election of a chair of a parish meeting is:

- **Local Government Act 1972, Section 13(1):**

“In a parish not having a separate parish council, the chairman of the parish meeting shall be elected annually by the parish meeting.”

- If **no chair is elected, there is no automatic power for the district council (WLDC)** to step in and appoint one but they may provide support and advice.

⚠ So what happens if no chair is elected?

- The **office of Chair remains vacant**.
- The **Parish Meeting cannot legally act corporately** (e.g. manage land, insurance, legal obligations) without a Chair, because:
 - The Chair is often a **statutory trustee** (e.g. for village greens or assets held on behalf of the parish).
 - The Chair is needed to **convene future meetings**, unless residents themselves initiate one (with six electors calling it).
- The **Parish Meeting can still be held** if properly convened, but its powers are limited.

🔧 What You Should Do

Notify WLDC of the situation;

- Informing them of the **inability of the Parish Meeting to fulfil its responsibilities**;
- Asking what support or guidance **WLDC can offer**, especially regarding any ongoing legal responsibilities (such as land).

📄 Updated Notice Template

Subject: Notification of Vacant Chair Position – Springthorpe Parish Meeting

Dear [WLDC Officer / Democratic Services],

I am writing to inform you that at the Annual Parish Meeting of **Springthorpe**, held on **[date]**, **no person was elected as Chair of the Parish Meeting**, in accordance with Section 13(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Although the meeting elected someone to act as chair for that meeting only **the statutory role of Chair remains vacant**. As a result, the Parish Meeting currently lacks the capacity to act

corporately or carry out any functions which require a Chair — including matters related to the management of the Village Green.

Given the circumstances, we would be grateful for any advice or support the District Council may be able to offer, particularly in relation to any ongoing responsibilities (e.g. land registered in the name of the Chair).

Please let us know how you would recommend we proceed, and whether there are any district-level mechanisms to support the community in the meantime.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Role if applicable]

Springthorpe Parish Meeting