



## **FFBRA NEWSLETTER NUMBER THIRTY FIVE**

### **NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR OUR MEMBERS**

#### **Great news – there will be a parish council election in May.**

This opportunity comes only once every four years – and only happens if more than 11 people are nominated to stand as candidates. So first of all – a very big thank you to all candidates who are standing and making this happen.

Attached is the Statement of Persons Nominated as published by Mid Sussex District Council.

Balcombe has 20 candidates for the 11 positions on the parish council. 15 FFBRA members are standing as candidates. 4 members of the retiring parish council are standing for re-election and 1 person from Haywards Heath.

#### **When will the election happen?**

On the 7<sup>th</sup> May at the same time at the election for MP and District Councillors.

#### **How many candidates can I vote for?**

You can vote for up to eleven candidates in the parish council election.

#### **Why has Balcombe not had elections for the full parish council in the past?**

There were not more candidates than the 11 seats on the council and so there was no election.

2011 - 11 candidates - so all candidates were elected "uncontested"

2007 - 9 candidates - so all candidates were elected "uncontested"

2003 - 11 candidates - so all candidates were elected "uncontested"

(I have not checked 1999 and earlier to see if there were elections last century)

#### **What happened in the past when there were less than 11 candidates.**

At the first meeting of the new parish council, the parish councillors can “**co-opt**” people to fill the vacancies. In 2007 there only 9 councillors elected uncontested, and so 2 more councillors were “**co-opted**”.

### **How will the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer on the next parish council be selected?**

They will be chosen by the new parish council at the first parish council meeting after the election (20 May 2015).

### **When will the results of the parish council election be known?**

Probably on 8 May 2015, the day after the election.

### **How can a non-resident of Balcombe stand as a Parish Councillor?**

If you live within three miles of the boundary of Balcombe you qualify. So residents of Ardingly, Handcross, Staplefield and Haywards Heath can stand as candidates for Balcombe Parish Council. For example Paul Milton from Haywards Heath is standing as a candidate for Balcombe Parish Council.

### **When is my next opportunity to become a parish councillor as I was unable to stand this time?**

The whole council dissolves and all the positions become vacant every four years so the next possible full election will be in May 2019. However if a councillor resigns or dies there will be "casual vacancy".

### **How is a casual vacancy filled?**

If 10 residents of the parish sign a form asking for an election, then there will be an election to fill the vacancy. This is what happened in May 2013 when there were 2 resignations and 10 people signed the form requesting an election. Everyone on the electoral roll for Balcombe could then vote for their choice of councillor to fill these 2 posts.

If 10 residents of the parish do **not** request an election, then the vacancy is filled by the existing parish council "co-opting" someone to fill the vacancy.

### **What is happening in the rest of Mid Sussex District?**

There will be elections in four parishes.

Balcombe – 20 candidates for 11 seats

Horsted Keynes – 13 candidates for 11 seats

Poynings – 7 candidates for 5 seats

Twineham – 6 candidates for 5 seats

(the number of seats varies with the size of the population of the parish)

All the rest have uncontested candidates who are therefore "automatically" elected Albourne, Anstry & Staplefield, Ardingly, Ashurst Wood, Bolney, Cuckfield, Lindfield, Lindfield Rural East, Lindfield Rural West, Lindfield, Slaugham Handcross and Pease Pottage, Turners Hill, West Hoathly, Worth Copthorne and Worth Parish, Worth Crawley Down, Fulking, Hassocks Clayton, Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint, Sayers Common, Newtimber (zero candidates), Pyecombe

So in Mid Sussex out of 26 parishes only 4 have nominated enough candidates to have an election. Given all the challenges that Mid Sussex will face in the next four years (onshore oil and gas, Gatwick 2 and large scale housing developments) this is an unsatisfactory situation. Residents in those parishes, not holding elections this May, will be complaining in the future about the lack of democracy when faced with unpopular developments.

So bad luck for Sussex – but Balcombe is doing well. Of the 46 candidates standing for parish council elections across the whole of Mid-Sussex, 19 are from Balcombe.

(<http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/elections/9812.htm>)

## **What's On**

### **Balcombe**

#### **Coffee and a Chat, Half Moon Pub, Thursday Mornings**

10.30 am to 12.00 noon. Meet up with FFBRA members for a chat and a cup of coffee. This takes place every week – numbers vary and there is no fixed agenda.

#### **Balcombe Parish Council Meeting, 22 April, Bramble Hall 8.00 pm**

This is the last Balcombe Parish Council meeting before the current committee dissolve and are reformed.

#### **Election 7 May 2015**

You will have 11 parish councillors' votes, 2 district councillors' votes and 1 for our Westminster MP. Please do make sure you are registered to vote. You should have received your polling card by now. If you have not received it, please register online at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>. It takes about 5 minutes.

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