



Clophill Parish Council Co-option Policy and Process

The Co-option of a Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no poll (by-election) has been called. To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken the following procedure will be followed by the Council:

On receipt, of written confirmation, from the Electoral Services Office that the casual vacancy can be filled by means of Co-option, the Clerk will: a. Advertise the vacancy on the Council noticeboard(s) and website.

The Clerk Advise the council that the Co-option Policy has been instigated, by sending a memorandum to all Councillors.

Applicants for co-option will be asked to: a. Provide information about themselves, by way of completing a short application form, and confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules.

Copies of the applicant's application form will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk prior to the meeting of the Council when the Co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and all Councillors as Confidential.

The Council may select the most suitable candidate. Candidates may be asked to make a brief presentation to the council for up to 3 minutes at a council meeting or provide a short written statement prior to the co-option vote.

At the next available Council meeting, the applications will be considered (as an agenda item). Candidates are requested to attend the meeting. If a candidate is not in attendance, then the candidate must agree to sign the declaration of acceptance within 28 days and before the next council meeting.

The Chairman will request the Councillors present to nominate any of the candidates. Candidates will require a proposer and seconder to progress to the voting stage. If there is only one vacancy, a Councillor may only nominate or second one candidate.

If no candidates are nominated (i.e. if no Councillor proposed them) the vacancy shall remain open.

Councillors shall vote by show of hands¹, or, if at least two members so request, by signed ballot. All Councillors present must either vote or withdraw. If any member so requires, the Clerk shall record the names of members who voted on any question so as to show whether they voted for or against and this has to be by a show of hands. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

If there is more than one vacancy, a councillor may nominate one person per seat. Each councillor will have only one vote per seat i.e. two vacancies will enable votes for two different people.

¹ For or Against the resolution but cannot abstain

Voting will be according to the statutory requirements, in that, a successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting¹. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps² must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again; this process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.

After the vote has been concluded the Chairman declares that the successful candidate is duly elected. The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Council and summoned to attend the next council meeting.

The Clerk will advise the Monitoring Officer of the names of anyone co-opted onto the Council.

All new councillors are required to have read and understood the Code of Conduct and other policies, rules and protocols adopted by the Council.

Before the successful candidate can participate in Council business s/he must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and deliver it to the Clerk. This can be at the meeting or prior to the next meeting. Failure to sign will indicate the candidate does not want to join the Council.

All new councillors must, within 28 days of appointment to office, register their Interests with the District/Unitary Council Monitoring Officer. Failure to complete will assume that the candidate does not wish to be a member of the Council.

² If there are two candidates with tied lowest vote the Chairman will cast his second vote for one of them, thereby eliminating the other. If there are 3 or more candidates with the lowest vote, one or more candidates will be invited to withdraw, failing which the lowest scoring candidate will be determined by the drawing of lots.

Page