

Wortwell Parish Council

Co-opting Policy

Adopted: 27.2.18

Review date: 27.2.19

The Co-option of a Parish Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no poll (by-election) has been called. The process of co-option is not prescribed by law. Save as directed by South Norfolk Council, the Council is not obliged to advertise [as distinct from the display of the statutory Notice] any Casual Vacancy, and/or if it does so, it is not obliged to appoint any member as a consequence of any application therefrom. Nevertheless, the Council's policy is to try to achieve a full complement of members and its policy for co-opting is as follows:

1.1 Attracting Candidates: In order to attract potential candidates, the Councillors will use some, or all of these actions:

- i) advertise for interested candidates by placing details on the Council's noticeboard and website. (Required)
- ii) advertise more widely using locally issued publications and notice boards
- iii) make a direct approach to such local organisations as they consider appropriate. e.g. parents at the primary school
- iv) make direct approaches to individuals

Any such candidates so identified will be required to comply with the remainder of this policy.

1.2 Responsibilities: On application, the Clerk will provide prospective candidates with relevant information on the responsibilities of being a Councillor, qualification criteria and the nature of their duties and will provide the prospective candidate with a copy of this policy.

1.3 Applications: The Council requires that prospective candidates:

- Apply in writing, to the Council providing such personal details and other information to support their application as they consider appropriate for consideration by the Councillors. Candidates can choose how to present this but must demonstrate that they meet the qualification criteria.
- Attend the meeting of the Full Council at which their application is to be considered.

1.4 Information: The Clerk will circulate to all Councillors the prospective candidate's application and such information will be deemed to be in the public domain.

1.5 Meeting: If necessary an extra meeting of the Parish Council will be held to specifically consider the [proposed] co-option(s).

1.6 Ballot: At the co-option meeting:

- Each candidate will be invited to introduce themselves to Members if they wish to add to their written information and to explain why they wish to become a Member of the Council. This will be informal and should take no more than 5 minutes.
- Not more than ten minutes (per candidate) will be available for existing Councillors to ask prospective candidates any clarification question(s).
- The process will be carried out in public session and there will be no private discussions between Members prior to a vote being taken.
- Voting will be by confidential ballot as soon as all candidates have finished giving their submissions.

1.7 Majority decision: In order for a candidate to be elected to the Council, it is necessary for them to obtain an overall majority of votes cast (50% + 1 of the votes available at the meeting). This means that:

- If there are more than two candidates and there is no candidate with an overall majority in the first round of voting the candidate with the least number of votes will be eliminated from the process; and
- Further rounds of voting will continue with the process repeated until a candidate has an overall majority.

1.8 Insufficient candidates: If insufficient candidates come forward for co-option, the process may continue at the Council's discretion, whereby the vacancies are again advertised, save for the final 6 months prior to the next scheduled election date.

1.9 Appointment: After the Vote

- The clerk will notify the candidates of the results by email, as soon as is reasonably possible (usually within 24 hours) albeit that all candidates will have attended the meeting at which the ballot was held (and publicly declared)
- Successfully co-opted candidates become councillors in their own right, with immediate effect, and are no different to any other member. As such, they must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Registration of Interests Form at their first meeting, or within 28 calendar days of election, whichever is the sooner. Their term of office runs until the next quadrennial elections for the Council.

General

2.1 Complaints: Complaints made under this policy should be referred to the Clerk as identified under the Council's Complaints Policy.