**Co-option**

Although the process for co-option is not prescribed in law it is important that all applicants be treated alike so that the arrangements are seen as open and fair. The co-option process will be as follows:

1. The Parish Council will advertise the vacancy (or vacancies) on the Parish Council noticeboards, on the website and in the Parish Magazine. The notices will include:

 •A contact point so that people considering putting their names forward for co-option can obtain more information on the role of a parish councillor;

 •The co-option process;

 •The closing date for all expressions of interest;

 •The date on which the Parish Council intends to make a decision.

It is permissible for Parish Councillors (or any parishioner) to approach individuals to suggest that they might wish to consider putting their names forward for co-option.

1. The applicant will complete an ‘Application for Co-option’ form.
2. When an application is received, the Clerk to the Parish Council will consider the application, check that the individual meets the qualification requirements, and confirm that, if successful, they would be willing to accept the Code of Conduct and other obligations of a Parish Councillor.

Any applicant wishing to talk to any of the councillors should contact the clerk for the clerk to make arrangements for a meet.

1. Applicants will be informed of the date of the meeting at which the Parish Council will make its decision on the co-option.

**Co-option meeting**

Notice of the intention to co-opt should be included in the agenda for the meeting of the Parish Council either beneath a dedicated heading or within ‘Councillor Vacancies’ or similar. Applicants may be invited to the meeting to introduce themselves and to provide Councillors with the opportunity to ask questions of them, or the Parish Council can decide to rely on the written submissions alone.

If applicants are not invited to speak at the co-option meeting they are welcome to, but are not required to, attend as members of the public.

**There are no special reasons which justify excluding the public during a council meeting, (s.1(2) Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) when it is making decisions about a matter of public interest such as co-option**

**Voting Process**

The person co-opted must receive a majority of the votes of those Councillors present and voting at the meeting where the co-option takes place. Where there are two or more applicants for one vacancy, this rule means that a person must get a majority of votes over all the other applicants. Where applicant A receives four votes, and applicants B and C receive three votes and one vote respectively, A is not elected because he has the same number of votes as B and C put together and does not have a majority over their combined votes. Where there are more than two applicants it is desirable to eliminate the applicant with the least number of votes, so that the final vote is between two applicants only.

**After the Vote**

1. The Clerk will notify the applicants of the results as soon as practicable (unnecessary if they attend the meeting).
2. Successfully co-opted applicants become Councillors in their own right, with immediate effect having signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office, and are no different from any other member. Their term of office runs until the next quadrennial elections for the parish Council.