



STONEHOUSE
TOWN COUNCIL

CO-OPTION POLICY
Adopted 22 May 2017

1. Public Notice of vacancies

S.87(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the 1972 Act”) requires a local council to give public notice of casual vacancies. There is no statutory requirement to give public notice of Local Council vacancies which remain unfilled after an **ordinary election** (S.21(2) Representation of the People Act 1985).

The Clerk will inform the Council when a casual vacancy occurs. The Council will ensure that a quorum is always maintained by advertising inviting applications from candidates who satisfy eligibility criteria for being a councillor and the competencies listed in a person specification. The Council will decide when co-option is appropriate by taking a vote at a full meeting of the Council.

2. Eligibility for Co-Option

A person is eligible to be co-opted provided he/she is qualified to be a Councillor pursuant to S. 79 of the 1972 Act and is not disqualified pursuant to S.80 of the 1972 Act.

A person is qualified if he/she is a Commonwealth citizen or Euronational, aged over 18 years and an elector. Also in the whole of the previous 12 months to date of nomination, or date of election, that he/she has resided in the locality or within 3 miles of it, or occupied as an owner or tenant any land or premises therein or had his/her principal or only place of work there.

Disqualification occurs if the candidate holds paid office or other place of profit in the gift or disposal of the Council or Committee, or under a company controlled by the council, is subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order, or has within 5 years before the election or since his election been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands, or Isle of Man with a sentence of not less than 3 months imprisonment, or any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal practices.

3. Co-Option Application Form

Full name:

Address:

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Length of time at that address:years..... months

Date of Birth (optional):

Business or place of work within the parish:

Telephone.....

Email.....

The Council requires a statement in writing from candidates that they:

- meet the criteria for eligibility, set out in s. 79 of the 1972 Act, to be a member of the Council and
- are not disqualified, pursuant to s.80 of the 1972 Act, to be a member of the council.

I confirm that I meet the eligibility criteria above

Signature Date.....

My application is supported by the following statement to demonstrate my competency:
(Please read the expected qualities of a councillor **enclosed**):

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

4. Desirable qualities

The candidate should consider whether they offer any of the following desirable qualities and provide evidence of these in their supporting statement.

- Knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community.
- Solid interest in local matters.
- Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community.
- Good interpersonal skills.
- Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff.
- Ability and willingness to work with the council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other parish councils, principal authority, charities).
- Ability and willingness to undertake relevant training.
- Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the council (or the meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) in the evening and events in the evening and at weekends.
- Experience of working in another public body or not for profit organisation
- Experience of working with voluntary and or local community/ interest groups.
- Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish councils or local authorities.
- Experience of working with the media.
- Good reading and analytic skills.

After receipt of a candidate's written application which confirms he/she meets the statutory requirements to be a member of a local council, the council will need to fairly consider if candidates are suitable for co-option.

5. Procedure

- 5.1 Interested candidates are to write to the Clerk by a specified date given in the Vacancy Notice.
- 5.2 Completed application forms will be circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting date set for Co-option. This will be a public meeting and part of the Council's normal business activities.
- 5.3 At the meeting councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates. Each candidate will be allocated a maximum of three minutes. The candidate may at any time prior to the meeting speak to the Clerk to obtain more information about being a councillor and the work of the Council.
- 5.4. 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.
- 5.5. When there is more than one candidate the Chairman will place the names of those nominated into alphabetical order and proceed to vote. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled.
- 5.6. Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders by a show of hands and will continue until one candidate has received an absolute majority of those Councillors present. At this stage, the successful candidate will be declared co-opted.

- 5.7. Should no single candidate receive a majority on the first vote, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated. Voting will then take place for the remaining candidates until one person receives an absolute majority.
- 5.8. A candidate will fail to become elected if not receiving an absolute majority from those present and voting. If the vacancy remains unfilled and is re-advertised an unsuccessful candidate who stood unopposed will not be reconsidered for the same vacancy.**
- 5.9. The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Town Council and will be asked to join the meeting.
- 5.10. The successful candidate is a councillor in their own right and is no different to any other member; co-option is a legitimate form of election as part of the election process.