

# CO-OPTION PROCEDURE

**A policy including the procedure for co-opting to a casual vacancy.**

# ADOPTED XXXX 2021

## Introduction

A Casual Vacancy may occur following:

1. county wide elections where insufficient candidates stood to fill the quota for Parish Councillors, or
2. where a councillor has resigned or died during the period of office and no request for an election is received by Wiltshire Council by the date on the Notice of Vacancy.

In either of the above circumstances, Wiltshire Council will advise the Parish Council that it may co-opt to the vacancy. Co-option is the process by which the Parish Council selects a new Councillor and it is done as an agenda item within a monthly Parish Council meeting.

The Parish Council manages the process of co-option by itself and strives to demonstrate that it is fair and equitable by following the procedure set out below:

## Procedure

1. Tisbury Parish Council invites interested candidates to write to the Clerk by a specified date. If the number of applicants is equal to or less than the number of vacancies, the applicants are automatically co-opted to the Parish Council unless the candidate(s) are not eligible.
2. If there are more candidates than vacancies, the letters received are circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting at which co-option is to take place. These letters form part of the meeting pack that Councillors receive for every Parish Council meeting.
3. At the Parish Council meeting candidates are invited to say something about themselves and Councillors have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates. Each candidate will be allocated a maximum of three minutes.
4. In a closed session of the Parish Council without the public present, members consider the candidates and, following the discussion, the public are invited back into the meeting before the voting to takes place.
5. 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. One candidate needs to receive an absolute majority of votes.
6. The Chairman will then place the names of those nominated into alphabetical order and proceed to vote. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled.
7. 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 with effect from the next monthly meeting.
8. 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.
9. The successful candidate will be declared co-opted with effect from the next monthly meeting.
10. Any co-opted candidates are elected councillors and no different to any other member; co-option is a legitimate form of election as part of the election process.

Notes:

1. Residents are advised to contact the Clerk to check eligibility requirements prior to putting themselves forward for co-option.
2. In the case of a casual vacancy election due to there being more candidates than seats, Councillors may take the view that attendance at previous Parish Council meetings is an advantage.
3. Tisbury Parish Council is apolitical; and Councillors work as a team for the benefit of the community as a whole.