

**Huish Champflower Parish Council Co-option Policy**

The co-option of a Parish Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no poll (election) has been called.

To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken the following procedures will take place:

- 1) On receipt on written confirmation from the Returning Officer, Somerset Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of Co- option. The Parish Clerk will:
  - a) advertise the vacancy for 4 weeks on the Council’s official notice boards, on the Councils website, and in local magazines as deemed appropriate
  - b) advise the Council by way of e-mail that the Co-option Policy has been instigated
- 2) Applicants for Co-option will be asked to:
  - a) submit information about themselves by way of completing a short application form
  - b) confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the Statutory rules by completing an Eligibility Form
- 3) Copies of the applicant’s application form will be circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting of the full Council during which the Co-option will be considered.
- 4) Applicants will not be required to attend the meeting but will be invited to do so and to give a short presentation on why they feel they should be co-opted onto the Council. The Council may take this opportunity to ask questions of the applicants.
- 5) Discussion about the applicants will take place in Council session (not closed session) without interruption from the public or applicants and voting will be in accordance with statutory requirements and in line with the Council’s Standing Orders. The successful applicant must receive a majority vote of those present and voting. So, if there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and none of them at the first count has an overall majority, the candidate with the fewest votes should be eliminated and the remainder put to the vote again. The process should be repeated as necessary until one candidate has an overall majority. Councillors are to vote by show of hands and only by ballot if at least two members of the Council so request. How each Councillor votes should not be recorded unless the Clerk is asked to do so.
- 6) After the vote has been concluded the Chair will declare the successful candidate duly elected and welcome them to the Council. The newly elected member of the Council will sign the declaration of office paperwork organised by the Clerk prior to taking a seat on the Council.

Adopted by Huish Champflower Parish Council on .....10 January 2023.....

Signed ....  Chairman

Signed ....  Clerk