



TOLLESBURY
PARISH
COUNCIL

PARISH COUNCIL POLICY

Co-Option Policy V2.0

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TOLLESBURY PARISH COUNCIL CO-OPTION POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the procedures to ensure compliance with legislation and continuity of Co-option of members to Tollesbury Parish Council.

2. Co-Option

The Co-option of a Councillor at Tollesbury Parish Council occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no poll (by-election) has been called. A casual vacancy occurs when:

- A Councillor fails to make their declaration of acceptance of office on time;
- A Councillors resigns;
- A Councillor dies;
- A Councillor fails for 6 months to attend meetings of a council, committee or sub-committee or to attend as a representative of the Council at a meeting of an outside body.

Tollesbury Parish Council has to notify the District Council of a casual vacancy and then advertise the vacancy and give electors the opportunity to request an election.

3. Eligibility of Candidates

Tollesbury Parish Council is able to consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that they are a qualifying UK, Commonwealth or Republic of Ireland citizen, over the age of 18 and:

- On the day the candidate is a Parish Council elector; or
- They have for the past 12 months rented/tenanted land or other premises in the Parish; or
- Their principal place of work during those 12 months is in the Parish; or
- They have lived either in the Parish or within 3 miles of it during the whole of those 12 months.

There are certain disqualifications for elections, of which the main are:

- Holding a paid office under the local authority;



- Being the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order;
- Having been sentenced to a term of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) of no less than 3 months, without the option of a fine during the 5 years preceding the election; and
- Having been disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or legal practices.

4. Confirmation of Co-Option

To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken, the procedure below will be followed by Tollesbury Parish Council.

- 4.1** On receipt, of written confirmation, from the Electoral Service of the District Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of Co-option, in this instance the Clerk will:
- a. Advertise the vacancy for two weeks on the Councils noticeboards and website;
 - b. Advise the Council that the Co-option policy has been instigated by sending an email to all Councillors.
- 4.2** Applicants for Co-option will be asked to
- a. Provide information about themselves by way of an application form.
 - b. Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules.
- 4.3** It is policy to encourage applicants to attend a minimum of one Council, Committee and Working Party meetings in advance of Co-option taking place to ensure they are comfortable with the Council's processes and happy to move forward with their application.
- 4.4** Copies of the candidate's details from 4.2(a) will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk at least 7 days prior to a meeting* of the full council where the Co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and Councillors as strictly private and confidential.
- 4.5** Voting must not be undertaken "in Committee" and will be according to the statutory requirements, in that, a successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting.



- 4.6** There will be a separate item on the Parish Council meeting Agenda to deal with the application/applications.
- 4.7** Each applicant will be invited to attend the Parish Council meeting to present themselves to the Parish Council and to allow the Councillors present to ask them questions in the open meeting.
- 4.8** If an applicant does not present themselves to the Parish Council meeting and they cannot provide a valid reason for not attending then they will not be considered for the vacancy/vacancies.
- 4.9** The Parish Council will resolve to exclude members of the press, public and the candidates under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 to enable it to discuss the merits or otherwise of the applicants.
- 4.10** The Parish Council meeting will then re-convene as an open meeting and a vote will take place in accordance with the adopted voting protocol (Standing Order 8. The successful candidate should receive an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. So if there are more than two candidates for the 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. The Chairman has a second and casting vote in the event of a tie.
- 4.11** The Chairman will declare the result. The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the council. The candidate will sign the Acceptance of Office and join the meeting.
- 4.12** The result will be recorded in the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting.
- 4.13** The Parish Clerk will notify all Parish Council Councillors of the voting count and the result of the selection process as soon as possible afterwards.
- 4.14** No feedback will be given to any applicant in respect of the Parish Council discussions that took place in the closed part of the meeting unless agreed by the Parish Council.
- 4.15** The successful applicant/applicants will be provided with an electronic copy of the following:
 - i. A copy of the Parish Councils Standing Orders.
 - ii. A copy of the Parish Councils Financial Regulations.
 - iii. A copy of the Parish Councils Code of Conduct.
 - iv. A copy of the map showing the Parish boundary.
 - v. A copy of the set of the Good Councillors Guide.



- 4.16** The successful candidate to complete the Register of Interest online via a link provided by the Parish Clerk. The form must be completed within 28 days.
- 4.17** If for any reason an applicant/applicants are not selected then the vacancy/vacancies will be re-advertised in accordance with this procedure.

*The co-option meeting will be arranged on an occasion when as many Councillors as possible can attend.

Version	Details of Changes	Date	Approver
V1.0	Adopted Policy	07/09/2021	TPC
V2.0	Reviewed and updated by the Finance Committee	04/10/2023	F&PC
V2.0	Updated policy adopted by Full Council	17/10/2023	TPC
	NEXT REVIEW – OCTOBER 2024		