

Westbury Town Council

CO-OPTION PROCEDURE

A policy setting out the procedure for co-opting to a casual vacancy following an election process

ADOPTED May 2017

Introduction

The preferred option for any vacancy is an election but should an election not be called then this Co-Option procedure outlines the process to be undertaken.

Wiltshire Council will advertise the vacancy and if no request for an election is received by the closing date, or it's within the six-month period before the next ordinary election, then co-option may be a way to fill that vacancy.

If no request for an election is received by Wiltshire Council by the date on the Notice of Vacancy, the Democratic Services Department will advise the Town Council that it may Co-Opt to the vacancy. Co-option is the process by which the Town Council selects a new Councillor and it is done as an agenda item within the normal Town Council meeting.

The Town 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 Westbury Town Council invites interested candidates via all media platforms to contact the Clerk in writing by a specified date (as advertised).
- 2 If there is only one applicant for one vacancy, the applicant is automatically invited before the Town Council for interview.
- 3 If there is more than one candidate, the letters received are circulated to existing Councillors ahead of the meeting at which a Town/Parish Councillor is to be co-opted. Candidates will be sent an application form, which together with the letter, form part of the agenda and meeting pack which Councillors receive ahead of every Council meeting. Only the full Town Council can decide on co-option.
- 4 At the Council meeting candidates will be 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 5 minutes. This will not take place in front of other candidates seeking co-option.

- 5 It is recommended that all interviews of prospective councillors should take place at 6pm prior to the full council meeting. Voting to take place at the commencement of the meeting by a show of hands with a recorded vote.
- 6 Councillors should not feel that they necessarily have to select from the list in front of them, restarting the process should always be an option.
- 7 Councillors will have one vote only and 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 a majority.
- 8 The Clerk will maintain an accurate record of all votes cast.
- 9 The Town Council then passes a resolution confirming that person is co-opted and they sign a declaration of acceptance of office. The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Council and will be asked to join the meeting.
- 10 The successful candidate is a councillor in their own right and is no different to any other member.