

HYDE PARISH COUNCIL

Co-option Procedure

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

A policy setting out the procedure for co-opting to a casual vacancy following resignation of a councillor more than six months prior to the quadrennial elections, if an election is not called by residents of the parish.

2. PROCESS

If no request for an election is received by New Forest District Council by the date on the Notice of Vacancy, the Democratic Services Department 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 is taken as an agenda item within a normal 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.

3. PROCEDURE

- i. Hyde Parish Council invites interested candidates to write to the Clerk by a specified date.
- ii. The Clerk will check that each applicant is eligible to become a Councillor and will supply information about the role of a Councillor – this will include A Good Councillors Guide, Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Action Plan for Hyde - which each applicant is expected to follow should they be appointed. Applicants will be advised to discuss the role with existing members if they are unsure of the role.
- iii. The Clerk will confirm, after the above information has been made available, whether the candidate wishes to be considered for the vacancy and invite them to attend the next Parish Council meeting.
- iv. The letter(s) received from confirmed candidates will be circulated to the Councillors ahead of the meeting at which the co-option is to take place. These letters are included with the normal meeting papers circulated prior to each meeting.
- v. At the Parish Council meeting candidates are invited to explain why they are interested in becoming a councillor, each candidate will be allowed up to 5 minutes. Councillors will have the opportunity to explain the expectations of the Parish Council so that they are clearly understood and to ask questions of the candidates.
- vi. Following the presentation by prospective candidates, the meeting will then enter closed session (without the public present) to allow members to consider the candidates. The meeting will return to open session and the public will be invited to return to the meeting before the voting takes place.
- vii. The Chairman will request the Councillors present to nominate a candidate. 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. **If no candidate is nominated, the vacancy will remain unfilled.**
- viii. 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.
- ix. Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders by a show of hands and will continue until one candidate has received the absolute majority of those Councillors present. At this stage the successful candidate will be declared co-opted.
- x. Should no single candidate receive a majority on the first vote, the candidate with the lowest number of votes will be eliminated. Voting will then take place for the remaining candidates until one person receives an absolute majority.
- xi. Once co-opted the successful candidate will be asked to join the meeting.

- xii. 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.

Adopted by Hyde Parish Council

Chair A Sevier

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