

Co-Option Procedure

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

Introduction

If no request for an election is received by Broadland District Council by the date on the Notice of Vacancy, the Election 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 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. Reedham Parish Council invites interested candidates to complete an application form and return this to the Clerk by a specified date. All applications received will be circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting at which a Parish Councillor is to be co-opted.
2. 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.
3. In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, s.1(2), the Council may resolve to exclude the press and public when considering personal information relating to candidates. This includes discussion of applications, suitability, or any matter where disclosure would be prejudicial to the individuals concerned. The resolution shall state the reason for exclusion.
The Council aims to conduct its business openly; however, the personal nature of co-option applications may require certain discussions to be held in confidential session to protect applicants' privacy.
4. 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. For each vacancy, a Councillor may only nominate or second one candidate.
Where more than one vacancy exists, each vacancy shall be treated as a separate co-option process. If the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, the Council shall vote on each vacancy individually. A candidate who is unsuccessful for one vacancy may remain eligible for any remaining vacancies unless they withdraw.
5. The Chairman will then place the names of those nominated into alphabetical order and proceed to vote. Voting will be conducted separately for each vacancy. Councillors may cast one vote for each vacancy being filled. For each vacancy, the successful candidate must receive an absolute majority of those present and voting.
6. 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.

7. 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.
In the event of a tied vote, the Council shall take a further vote. If the vote remains tied, the Chairman shall exercise a casting vote in accordance with Standing Orders.
8. The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Parish Council and will be asked to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and join the meeting.
9. 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: April 2021
Review Period: Bi-Annually
This Review April 2026
Next Review: April 2028