

ILTON PARISH COUNCIL CO-OPTION PROCEDURE

ADOPTED 13TH DECEMBER 2022

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 Somerset 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 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 Ilton Parish Council invites interested candidates to apply in writing to the Clerk by a specified date, using the Co-option Application Form. Applications will be circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting at which a Parish Councillor is to be co-opted.
- 2 Ilton Parish Council is not obliged to fill any vacancy. Even if the Parish Council invites applications for co-option, it is not obliged to select any of the candidates who apply.
- 3 If a candidate is a relative of a Councillor or has connections with any candidate which may be perceived as prejudicial, that Councillor should declare an interest and withdraw from the meeting. Under any of these circumstances, a vote by the Councillor concerned is not allowed.
- 4 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.
- 5 Once all candidates have spoken, the Councillors' debate and vote on the co-option will be conducted in a public section of its meeting, considering the criteria as set out in Appendix A – Person Specification. It follows that the candidates, as members of the public, will be entitled to be present during the proceedings.
- 6 To be appointed to the Council any applicant must secure an absolute majority in a ballot at a Full Council meeting. If there is more than one candidate for the vacancy the process will be that the person with the least votes gets taken off the list and a fresh vote is taken until an overall majority is reached. In the event of a tie the Chairman shall have the casting vote. If a majority is not attained an appointment will not be made.
- 7 Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled.
- 8 The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Parish Council and will be asked to join the meeting.
- 9 Successfully co-opted applicants become Councillors in their own right with immediate effect, having signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, and are no different from any other member. Their term of office runs until the next quadrennial elections for the Parish Council. They must fill in an entry to the Members' Register of Interests within 28 days with a copy passed on to the Monitoring Officer at Somerset Council.

Description of Office: Parish Councillor

Competency	Essential	Desirable
Personal Attributes	Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community. Forward thinking	Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	Solid interest in local matters	Experience of working in another public body or not for profit organisation
	Ability to listen constructively. A good team player	Experience of working with voluntary and/or local community/interest groups
	Ability to pick up and move forward with a variety of projects	Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish councils or local authorities
	Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community. Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff	Experience of delivering presentations
	Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others views and accept majority decisions.	
	Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly.	
	Experience in using IT e.g., e mail & internet	
Circumstances	Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time and events in the evening and at weekends.	