Potton Town Council

Procedure for Co-option for a New Councillor

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Potton Town Council Procedure for co-option for a new Councillor

This procedure is based on NALC Legal Briefing L15-08 – Good practice for selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils.

Town Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met (i.e. The vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered electors have requested an election by a deadline date specified by the District Returning Officer).

Although seeking 'expressions of interest' is not a legal requirement, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more potential candidates.

Whenever the need for co-option arises, Potton Town Council will:

Consider advertising the vacancy to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone in the Town who is eligible to stand as a Town Councillor. All potential candidates will be requested to put their request for consideration in writing with the following additional information:

i. reason for wishing to be Councillor;
ii. previous Community/Council work; and
iii. other skills they can bring to the Council

Please note it is a condition of a Councillor that a means of contact by telephone and/or e-mail will be public information.

At the next Full Council meeting:

i. Clerk to confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and s80;
ii. Chairman to offer opportunity for debate on the order of priority to offer co-option;
iii. Vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option, utilising the 'person specification' criteria set out below and any personal statements requested from and provided by candidates. An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39) (The applicant with the least number of votes casted will be deleted and the vote taken again and again etc. until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies);
iv. Vote to select the order in which acceptable candidates (decided by the vote at iii above) should be approached to offer co-option on this occasion;
v. The Clerk to approach and offer co-option to candidate(s) after the meeting in the order of priority determined by the vote at iii above, if the first choice does not accept the post then the second is to be approached and so on until the ranking list is exhausted;
vi. If the co-option position is filled, formally ratify the appointment at the next Full Council meeting;
vii. The Clerk to notify Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment, initiate 'acceptance of office' paperwork and 'registration of interests';
viii. If no one accepts the vacant post(s), the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified or until the next election.

CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION 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	• Ability to listen constructively. • A good team player. • Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects. • Solid interest in local matters. • Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community. • 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. • Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff. • Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other local Councils, principal authority, charities). • Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.	• Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body. • Experience of working with voluntary and or local community / interest groups. • Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish Councils or local authorities. • Experience of delivering presentations.
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.	