

Carbrooke Parish Council

Co-option Procedures

Introduction

Co-option is a recruitment process to fill Parish Councillor vacancies. Parish Councils are able to co-opt new councillors after an election when all vacancies have not been filled, when a councillor resigns, is disqualified, or dies.

The following procedures outline the process for the co-option of councillors in both election and non-election years.

Procedures in a non-election year

1. On receipt of a resignation/notification of death of a councillor, the Clerk will contact Breckland District Council to request a formal Notice of Vacancy. The Clerk will display the notice on the Council's website and noticeboards. If after the statutory 14-day period a by-election has not been requested by at least ten electors then the Parish Council is able to co-opt. The Council will advertise the vacancy.
2. The Clerk will ask prospective candidates to:
 - Complete an application form providing personal details and information to support their application for consideration by the Council.
 - Attend a Parish Council meeting at which their application will be considered.
3. Prospective candidates will be provided with relevant information on the responsibilities of being a Parish Councillor, qualification criteria and the nature of their duties; and will be advised that the Parish Council is not obliged to co-opt any member if it is felt that a candidate is not suitable. The importance of regular attendance will be stressed, as well as the need to advise of absence from a meeting.
4. The Clerk will circulate to all Councillors the application form and any additional information provided by the candidate/s. If necessary an extra meeting of the Parish Council will be held to specifically consider the co-options.
5. At the co-option meeting, candidates will be asked to give information on their background and experience, and explain why they wish to become a member

of the Parish Council. The Council members will ask any questions as necessary and answer any questions from the candidate.

6. At a public meeting of the Parish Council, members will vote in open session on the candidate/s. In order for a candidate to be elected to the Council, it will be necessary for them to obtain an overall majority of votes cast. If there are more than two candidates and there is no candidate with an overall majority in the first round of voting, the candidate with the least number of votes will drop out of the process. Further rounds of voting will then take place with the process repeated until a candidate has an overall majority.
7. If insufficient candidates come forward for co-option, the process should continue, whereby the vacancies are advertised again.

Procedures in an election year

If following the close of nominations at an ordinary election of the Parish Council there is a quorum of elected members but some outstanding vacancies, the Clerk will advertise for interested candidates (as already detailed) after the date of the election.

The Council is able to co-opt any time after the election.

The procedures outlined from number 2 will then be followed.

Agreed: July 2022.

Review date: July 2024.