

Willingham Parish Council

CO – OPTION POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

According to Section 87 of the Local Government Act 1972 a casual vacancy occurs when:

- A councillor fails to make his declaration of acceptance of office at the proper time
- A councillor resigns
- A councillor dies
- A councillor becomes disqualified
- A councillor fails for six months to attend meetings of a council committee or sub-committee or to attend as a representative of the Council a meeting of an outside body.

The Parish Council has to notify South Cambridgeshire District Council of a Casual Vacancy and then advertise the vacancy and give electors the opportunity to request an election. This occurs when ten electors write to South Cambridgeshire District Council stating that an election is requested. If more than one candidate is then nominated a by-election takes place but if only one candidate is put forward they are duly elected without a ballot.

2.0 CO-OPTION TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

If ten residents do not request a ballot within 14 days of the vacancy notice being posted, as advised by the Electoral Services Manager at South Cambridgeshire District Council, the Parish Council is able to co-opt a volunteer.

Eligibility

The Parish Council is able to consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that:

- He/she is over 18 years of age
- Is a UK, EU or Commonwealth citizen
- Is registered to vote in Willingham or has lived or worked in the parish (or within three miles of its boundary) for one year

A person is disqualified from being a Parish Councillor if within five years before his/her election or since election:

- He/she has served a prison sentence (including suspended sentences) of three months or more within the last five years
- Has been adjudged a bankrupt
- Is an employee of the Parish Council
- Is disqualified under legislation

Applications

Applicants for co-option will be asked to submit information about themselves by way of completing a short application form (Appendix 1) and submitting a personal statement of no more than 300 words.

Copies of the application forms and personal statements will be circulated to all Members for consideration at a meeting of the Parish Council.

Voting Process

Voting will be according to the statutory requirement in that a successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them receives an absolute majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to 'strike off' the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again. For example if Candidate A receives four votes and Candidates B and C receive two each, Candidate A is not elected as he has the same number of votes as B and C together. In such a case it is necessary to conduct a ballot between the tied candidates to eliminate one of them. In the case of a tie at such a point the Chairman of the Parish Council would have a casting vote.

This process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.

In each round of voting Councillors will be provided with ballot papers and have one vote each.

Ballot papers will be collected by the Parish Clerk who will then count and record the votes using the Verification and Count Sheet at Appendix 2.

Declaration of Interests

If an applicant is a relative or close friend of a serving Councillor, that Councillor is required to declare a personal interest. They will not be required to leave the room but CANNOT vote unless a dispensation has been given.

Adopted at meeting of Willingham Parish Council held on: 5th February 2020

Signed..........

Mandy Powell
Parish Clerk

APPLICATION FOR CO-OPTION TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

Name _____

Address for Correspondence _____

Telephone Number(s) _____

Email _____

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I confirm that I am eligible to apply for the vacancy of Willingham Parish Councillor in accordance with the above provisions:

_____ (Signed)

Date _____

VERIFICATION AND COUNT SHEET

VERIFICATION

Number of Councillors voting: _____

Number of Candidates: _____

COUNT

Name of Candidates	Number of Votes
TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES	

DECLARATION

The Chairman declared that following the _____ ballot

_____ was elected as a Councillor having received a total of _____ votes.

OR

The Chairman declared a tie on the first ballot with the following candidates going forward to a second ballot:
