

WHIMPLE PARISH COUNCIL CO-OPTION POLICY

Parish Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person onto the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met.

The co-option of a Parish Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no poll (by-election) has been called (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).

To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken the following procedure will be followed by Whimple Parish Council:

Advertising a casual vacancy

On receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Services Office at East Devon District Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option, the Parish Clerk will:

- a) advertise the vacancy for 4 weeks on the Council notice boards and website, and place an advert in the local press,
- b) advise the Council that the Co-option Policy has been instigated, by sending an e-mail to all councillors.

Applicants for co-option will be asked to complete the Co-option application form confirming their eligibility for the position of councillor, and providing information about themselves.

Prior to the next Parish Council meeting:

Copies of the applicant's application form will be circulated to all councillor by the Parish Clerk at least seven days prior to the meeting of the full Council, when the co-option will be considered.

Immediately prior to the next meeting of the council, applicants will be asked to give a short presentation and may be asked questions.

At the next Parish Council meeting:

- Applicants will be required to attend the meeting of the full Council when the co-option will be considered.
- The Parish Clerk will 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.
- Discussion about the applications will take place in council session without

intervention from the candidates or public.

- Voting for the new Councillor will be by a show of hands.
- Candidates may stay in the room for the vote.
- The Chair will initiate a vote in alphabetical order (based on the applicants surnames).
- Councillors have one vote each. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting has a second or casting vote.
- An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote. If there are no more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority, the candidate with the least number of votes will be eliminated and the remainder must be put to the vote again until an absolute majority is obtained (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39). One person will be chosen for each vacancy.
- After the voting has been concluded, the Chair will declare successful candidate duly co-opted to the Council.
- The new councillor will be summoned to attend the next Council meeting.
- 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.

At the new councillors first council meeting:

The newly elected Councillor will publicly make the declaration of acceptance of office statement and sign the paperwork to officially join the Council.

After the new councillors first council meeting:

Within 28 days of making the declaration of acceptance of office, the new councillor must complete a declaration of Interests form which must be returned to the Parish Clerk. A copy of the form will be sent to and published by East Devon District Council's Monitoring Officer.