

Great Tey Parish Council

Co-Option Procedure Guidance

This guidance has been prepared to assist Members in conducting a fair, transparent and consistent co-option process for the current casual vacancy. As Parish Clerk, my role is to advise the Council on the correct procedure and governance requirements; the decision on whom to co-opt rests solely with Members.

1. Purpose:

The Council has one vacancy and three applicants. All applicants should be treated equally and considered on their merits.

2. Applicant Introductions:

Each applicant should be given up to five minutes to introduce themselves and answer the same questions from Members:

Suggested Questions:

- Why do you wish to become a Parish Councillor?
- What skills and experience would you bring?
- How much time can you commit?
- What local issues are important to you?

3. Declaration of Interests:

Members should declare any relevant interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Simply knowing an applicant is not normally a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. Where a relationship could reasonably be perceived to affect impartiality, the Member should declare it and consider whether to withdraw.

4. Discussion:

Following the interviews, applicants should leave the room. Members should discuss skills, experience, commitment and ability to serve the community.

5. Nominations:

The Chair invites nominations. Each nomination must be proposed and seconded.

6. Voting:

If there is more than one nomination, Members vote. Where permitted by Standing Orders, a secret ballot may be used. Otherwise, vote by show of hands. If no applicant receives a majority, eliminate the lowest polling candidate and vote again until a majority is achieved. Our Standing Orders state:

3. MEETINGS GENERALLY

s. Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave their vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.

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8. VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS:

A. *Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chair of the meeting.*

7. Resolution:

Resolve that the successful applicant be co-opted and arrange for the Declaration of Acceptance of Office to be signed before acting as a councillor.

Role of the Parish Clerk:

The Parish Clerk provides procedural and legal advice throughout the meeting, ensures all applicants are treated fairly, records the resolution in the minutes and supports the successful applicant with the necessary paperwork. The Clerk does not participate in the decision-making process.