



Councillor Co-option Procedure

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1.0	16/07/2018	01/07/2020
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1. Introduction

1.1. A casual vacancy occurs¹ when a councillor fails to deliver his declaration of acceptance of office at the proper time, a councillor resigns, a councillor dies, a councillor is disqualified by virtue of a criminal conviction² or a councillor fails to attend meetings for six consecutive months without the authority of the Council.

1.2. For the avoidance of doubt, a meeting can be either physical or virtual.

2. Notice of Vacancy

2.1. If a vacancy arises within six months of an election, the Council can agree to wait until the elections to fill the vacancy.

2.2. In all other instances, the following process must be followed:

2.2.1. The Clerk will complete a Notice of Vacancy form stating who and what has caused the vacancy, e.g. resignation, the date of the notice, the deadline for electors to call a by-election and the address of the Returning Officer at TWBC.

2.2.2. The form is displayed on the notice board and the Council's website.

2.2.3. An email is sent to elections@tunbridgewells.gov.uk to inform TWBC that a vacancy has occurred with a copy of the Notice of Vacancy.

2.3. TWBC will notify the Council if a by-election has been called. If not, the Council will be entitled to fill the vacancy by Co-option.

2.4. If a by-election is called by 10 or more electors, then TWBC will be responsible for the election process.

3. Co-option Process

3.1. An advert should be displayed on the Council notice board and website asking electors to apply for the role of councillor.

3.2. An application form and person specification (see appendix 1) should be available from the Parish Office or the website. Application forms should be submitted to the Clerk.

3.3. The Clerk will review all applications to ensure that candidates are qualified to apply for the role.

3.4. Informal interviews with the Parish Council Chairman and Vice Chairman will be arranged with all qualified candidates to ensure they are suitable for co-option by assessment against the criteria in the approved person specification.

3.5. If they are assessed as suitable candidates, they will be invited to attend a Council meeting for a formal interview, where the decision to co-opt the candidate/s will be made. Copies of the Applicant's application form will be shared with the Council at the same time as the other meeting papers wherever possible.

¹ Local Government Act 1972, section 87

² Local Government Act 2000, section 79 and Localism Act 2011 (England), section 34

4. Interview

- 4.1. Candidates will be invited to attend a Council meeting and answer questions from Councillors in a confidential session. After they have been interviewed they will be asked to leave the meeting.
- 4.2. The person co-opted must receive a majority of votes of those councillors present at the meeting.
- 4.3. The Clerk will inform candidates of the Council's decision in writing after the meeting.
- 4.4. Successful candidates will be invited to join the Council from the next Council meeting when they will sign the declaration of acceptance of office.

APPENDIX 1

Councillor Person Specification

COMPETENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Relevant knowledge, Education, Professional Qualifications & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Vocational training or professional qualification (e.g. accountant, teacher, surveyor, architect)
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid interest in local matters. • Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community. • Good interpersonal skills. • Ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing. • Ability and willingness to use personal IT equipment to receive emails and documents for review and respond timeously. • 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 parish councils, principal authority, charities). • Ability and willingness to undertake relevant training. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good reading and analytical skills • Ability to work under pressure • Knowledge of HR, procurement, contract management, financial control or risk management and compliance, public relations, grounds maintenance, allotments and/or • Experience of working in another public body or not for profit organisation and/or • Experience of working with voluntary and or local community/ interest groups and/or • Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish councils or local authorities and/or. • Experience of delivering presentations and/or. • Experience of working with the media and/or. • Experience in financial control/budgeting and/or • Experience of staff management
Other requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the council (or the meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) in the evening and events in the evening and at weekends. • Flexible • Enthusiastic 	