

MOBBERLEY PARISH COUNCIL



CO-OPTION POLICY

Last Review November 2022. Next Review June 2024

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to offer clear guidance of the co-option process.

1. Of paramount importance is that all applicants are treated alike so that arrangements are seen to be open, fair and transparent. This policy sets out the process to be followed by Mobberley Parish Council when co-option is under consideration.
2. Whenever the need for co-option arises, Mobberley Parish Council will seek and encourage applications from anyone who is eligible to stand as a Parish Councillor. Councillors and parishioners can legally approach individuals to suggest they might wish to consider putting their names forward for co-option and encourage them to register their expression of interest.
3. The Parish Council is not obliged to co-opt to fill any vacancy. Even if the Council invites applications for co-option, it is not obliged to select anyone from the candidates who apply.
4. The Parish Council will only co-opt parishioners who reside within the parish boundary.
5. Councillors elected by co-option are full members of the Parish Council.

Co-option Process

1. In the event of a vacancy occurring due to the resignation, death or ineligibility of a Councillor, the Clerk will immediately inform the Monitoring Officer at Cheshire East Council, and supply them with a copy of the requisite Notice of Vacancy for posting.
2. Should the requisite 10 electors of the Parish have not called for a poll (by-election) within the legally specified time period (currently 14 days) following the publication of the Notice of Vacancy, the Parish Clerk is notified by CEC that the vacancy(ies) may be filled by co-option.
3. On receipt of written notification from the Monitoring Officer at CEC that a casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option, the Clerk will place a notice announcing that the vacancy(ies) can be filled by co-option and invite expressions of interest. The notice will be placed on the Noticeboards and on the Parish Councils website, and will include: A contact point so that people considering putting their names forward for co-option can obtain more information on the role of a parish councillor. Contact details to where expressions of interest should be made (usually the Clerk, via email or hard copy)

Application Process

1. When expressions of interest are received, the Clerk will provide all applicants with the Parish Council's Application & Eligibility Form.

2. The Clerk will then consider completed forms to check that the individual(s) meets with the qualification requirements.
3. All candidates are asked to complete the Councillor Application & Eligibility Form and redacted copies will be circulated to all Parish Councillors with the agenda packs prior to a full meeting of the Council where the co-option is to be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and Councillors as strictly private and confidential.
4. Co-option Candidates will be informed of the date of the meeting at which the Parish Council will make its decision based on the application form submitted. Notice of the Intention to consider Co-option will be included on the agenda as a separate item at a Parish Council meeting.
5. Candidates will be invited to the meeting to introduce themselves and speak in support of their application. All candidates will be asked the same questions by Councillors. It will also provide Councillors with the opportunity to seek, through the Chair, clarification on submissions within the application form that they are not sure of, or the Council may decide to rely on the written submissions alone.
6. Candidates must attend the meeting in person to be considered for the vacancy. If a candidate fails to attend the meeting their application will automatically be declined.
7. Only Councillors present at the meeting may vote upon a person to fill the vacancy. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled.
8. If a candidate is a relative of a Councillor or has connections with any candidate which may be perceived as prejudicial, that Councillor should declare an interest and withdraw from the meeting. Under any of these circumstances a vote by the Councillor concerned is not allowed.
9. The Parish Council will appoint co-opted members by voting according to Standing Orders.
10. Any Candidates that are not present at the meeting, will be notified of the results by the Clerk, as soon as is reasonably possible (usually within 24 hours).
11. Successfully co-opted candidates become Councillors in their own right, with immediate effect, and are no different to any other member. As such, they must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and Registration of Interests Form at their first meeting, or within 28 calendar days of election whichever is the sooner.
12. The successful candidate(s) will also confirm that they will comply with and abide by the Parish Council's Code of Conduct, as they had previously indicated on their Application and Eligibility Form. Should the new Councillor not comply with or breach the Code of Conduct, then the Monitoring Officer at Cheshire East Council will be advised, who will then deal with the matter.
13. The successful candidate's term of office runs until the next quadrennial elections for the Parish Council.

ADOPTED BY MOBBERLEY PARISH COUNCIL (SIGNED BY CHAIR)

DATE

