



Cofton Hackett Parish Council

**COFTON HACKETT PARISH COUNCIL
CO-OPTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**Reviewed and Adopted by Cofton Hackett Parish
Council: 9th December 2019**

INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the procedure to ensure there is compliance with legislation and continuity of procedures in the co-option of members to Cofton Hackett Parish Council. The co-option procedure is entirely managed by the Parish Council, and this policy will ensure that a fair and equitable process is carried out.

CO-OPTION

1. Elections to membership of the Parish Council are held every four years.
2. In the event of fewer candidates standing for election than there are seats available, then those candidates validly nominated will be elected unopposed and the remaining seats will be filled by co-option at the earliest opportunity and within 35 working days following the fourth day after the election.
3. If the vacancy occurs during the 4-year period of office, the notice publicising the opportunity for a by-election will be posted to the parish council website and notice boards. If, after the period of 14 working days has elapsed and there has been no call for a by-election, the Parish Council will be free to co-opt a suitable candidate.
4. Publicity posters advertising the vacancy/vacancies will be displayed on the notice boards and on the website.
5. The notice of co-option will be put into the parish newsletter if possible.
6. Members may point out the vacancies and this process to any qualifying candidate(s).
7. Candidates found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.
8. All candidates will be expected to put their request for consideration in writing using the standard form below, obtained from the parish council office or from the website, along with the following additional information where applicable: - reason for wishing to be councillor, previous community/council work, and other skills that will be appropriate to the council. It will be a condition of membership that a means of contact by telephone and/or e-mail will be public information.
9. The completed co-option request forms will be circulated to parish council members in advance of the meeting at which the co-option will be discussed. Discussion will take place in public council session without intervention from the candidates or public.
10. A resolution may be put at this stage that the vote be not taken at this stage but may be deferred whilst further enquiries are made.
11. A vote will then be taken in the manner described in the council's Standing Orders; all candidates will be considered.
12. If there are more applicants than seats, then the applicant with the least number of votes cast will be deleted and the vote taken again and again etc. until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies.
13. Candidates will be furnished with a full agenda of the meeting at which they are to be considered for selection, plus a copy of the members' code of conduct and standing orders of the council. The successful candidates will immediately sign their declaration of acceptance of office and can then act as councillors. They are to be reminded that their entry to the Members' Register of Interests must be filled in within 28 days and a copy passed on to the monitoring officer. Subsequent to the meeting a copy of the Financial Regulations will be issued to the newly co-opted member(s).
14. There will be opportunities for training during the subsequent term of office.

A copy of this procedure and associated documents will be given to all potential candidates.

Co-option Supporting Information

There are no educational qualifications needed to become a parish councillor, however as the Parish Council is a statutory body, to stand validly nominated you must fulfil the following:

You must be:

- At least 18 years old;
- A British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of any other Member State of the European Union;

and meet at least one of the following 4 qualifications:

- Be registered as a local government elector for the parish; or
- Have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of nomination; or
- Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of nomination has been in the parish area; or
- You have lived in the parish, or within 3 miles of it, during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination.

You cannot stand if you are disqualified from being elected by reason of any disqualification set out in section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 or section 79 of the Local Government Act 2000, and as shown on application form below.

It is desirable for members to have an interest in and understanding of local affairs and the local community, with a willingness to represent the Council and its residents and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively. Members should be willing and able to work with the parish council's partners such as local charities and voluntary groups, other parish councils and principal authorities as well as with fellow members.

Members must be willing 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.

Members will need to be computer literate and have access to suitable hardware and software to enable reading and sending of emails and electronic documents utilising a dedicated Parish Council email address.

The Parish Council's Members' Code of Conduct, provided with this application form, relates to the standards required of members of the Council and includes an outline of the Ten General Principles of Public Life.

If your application to be co-opted is successful you will be required to complete the Members' Register of Interests. The completed forms are held by the Monitoring Officer at Bromsgrove District Council and are published on both councils' websites. A blank copy is provided with this application form.

As a councillor you will be expected to attend all scheduled meetings; Cofton Hackett Parish Council meets 11 times per year and committees meet as scheduled, reporting to the full council. Basic councillor training will be available.



APPLICATION FOR CO-OPTION

Please complete this form and return either by post or email to the above **with a covering letter detailing how your experience and skills will be of benefit.**

You are deemed to have read and understood the attached “Co-option Supporting Information” and co-option procedure.

NAME : (Mr / Mrs / Other)

ADDRESS:.....

e-mail address:.....

telephone: landline..... / mobile.....

Qualifications (as provided in the Local Government Act 1972, s79):

- Will you be at least 18 years old on the date of co-option? Please tick if YES
- Are you a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of any other Member State of the European Union? Please tick if YES

In addition, you must be able to comply with at least one of the following four statements: please tick as many as apply to you.

1. My name is on the current electoral register for the parish. (The Parish Clerk can verify this)
2. I have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises within the parish for at least the last 12 months.
3. My main or only place of work has been in the parish for at least the last 12 months.
4. I have lived in the parish or within 3miles/4.8kms of the parish boundary (as the crow flies) for at least the last 12 months.

Disqualifications (as provided in the Local Government Act 1972, s80).

Please tick any of the following six statements if they apply to you, otherwise delete:

1. I hold a paid office or any other position of profit with Cofton Hackett Parish Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I have been surcharged by the District Auditor for £500 or more.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I have been disqualified by a court from holding public office.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I have been declared bankrupt at some point in my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I have been convicted of an offence where the sentence of imprisonment was more than 3 months (even if sentence suspended)	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I have been found guilty of corrupt or illegal practices under Election Laws.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed

Date.....