

Broughton Parish Council

Co-Option Process

1. Casual Vacancies

On confirmation from Electoral Services of Cumberland Council that a casual vacancy must be filled by co-option, the Clerk will place an advertisement on the Parish Council website and noticeboard notifying that there is a vacancy with the reason for it and confirming there is to be a co-option. The co-option questionnaire will be uploaded alongside this notice of vacancy, this questionnaire will state the rules of eligibility. Interested parties should write/email the Clerk with the completed Co-option questionnaire including a short statement explaining the reasons s/he wants to become a Parish Councillor.

The meeting dates for the Parish Council are published on the website so that potential co-optees are aware of when their application maybe considered.

2. Process prior to the meeting

Copies of the Co-option Questionnaire will be circulated to all councillors by the Clerk at least seven days prior to the meeting of the Council at which the co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk & all Councillors as private & confidential. (Application documents from successful candidates will be retained until they cease to be a co-opted Member of the Council). Application documents from unsuccessful candidates will be destroyed when all successful candidates have signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

3. At the meeting

The applications will be considered at the next available Parish Council meeting. The Press & Public will be asked to leave the Council meeting whilst the application(s) is(are) considered. (Though the vote on the applications can be taken in public).

At the Council meeting when the co-option takes place, each nominee will be invited to speak for up to 3 minutes. When all the nominees have spoken the Chairman will seek proposers & seconders for each nomination (whether or not they have spoken) and the vote will follow. The Council may choose whom they like but they person must satisfy the eligibility requirements to be a candidate.

The voting process will follow standing order 8 below. In order to be co-opted onto the Council, the candidate must receive an absolute majority of the vote of those present & voting.

After the vote has been conducted, this business is concluded when the chairman of the meeting declares that the successful candidate (s) is (are) duly elected. The successful candidate (s) is (are) then declared co-opted to the Council and summoned to the next Council meeting.

4. After the Full Parish Council elections

In the event of vacancies following the closure of nominations for the full Parish Council elections, the Clerk shall follow the above procedure to fill the vacancies and the co-option (s) will take place at the first possible parish Council meeting.

5. Standing Order 8: Voting on Appointments

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 Chairman of the meeting.

6. After the meeting

The Clerk will advise the Monitoring Officer of Cumberland Council of the names of anyone co-opted to the Council.

The Parish Clerk is responsible for providing each new Councillor with a copy of the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders & Financial Regulations.

It is the responsibility of any new member to read and to have understood the Councils Code of Conduct, Standing Orders & Financial Regulations prior to attendance at their first meeting.

Before a candidate can participate in Council business he/she must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office (at the co-option meeting) & a Declaration of Pecuniary Interest Form and deliver it to the Clerk (who will then file it on the Council website & with ABC). Successful candidates should be aware that the Declaration of Pecuniary Interest form is a public document and will be displayed on the website of both the Parish Council & Cumberland Council.

Date of policy: April 2020

Review: Annually to see most recent review date please visit <https://broughtonparishcouncil.co.uk/policies-procedures/>