

Puxton Parish Council

Guidance for Co-option of a Councillor

1. This guidance is based on NALC Legal Briefing L15-08 – Good practice for selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils.
2. Parish Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met (i.e. The vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered electors have requested an election by a deadline date specified by the NSC Returning Officer).
3. Although seeking ‘expressions of interest’ is not a legal requirement, NALC recommends that Councils give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and may attract potential candidates. Formal advertising may form part of this process.

4. Procedures for cooption of a Councillor

- Any potential candidate will be requested to put their application for consideration in writing with the following particular information:
 - reason for wishing to be Councillor
 - previous Community/Council work, if any
 - other skills they can bring to the Council
 - A brief and simple CV
 - a telephone and/or e-mail contact that will be published if the candidate is coopted
- At the full council meeting next following receipt of the application:
 - The Clerk will confirm that the candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified within the terms of the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and s80
 - The Chair will then offer an opportunity for debate on the merits of the application(s)
 - After this debate the Chair will, if there is more than one application, offer a vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option, utilising the ‘person specification’ criteria set out below and any personal statements requested from and provided by candidates. The applicant with the least number of votes cast will be deleted and the vote taken again until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies;
 - The final vote for the cooption(s) must be an absolute majority of all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39) for a candidate to be coopted.
 - The Clerk will offer co-option to the candidate(s) after the meeting in the order of priority determined by the vote. If the first choice does not accept the post then the second is to be approached and so on until the ranking list is exhausted.
 - Assuming that the co-option position is filled, it will be formally ratified at the next full council meeting.
 - The Clerk will notify NSC Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment, initiate ‘Acceptance of Office’ and ‘Registration of Interests’ forms. The Registration of Interests form must be posted on the Parish Council website.
 - Where the council is considering the co-option of a councillor to fill a vacancy under s.89 of the Local Government Act 1972, it shall be under no obligation to accept any candidate.
 - If a vacant post(s) is offered but not accepted, the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified or until the next election.

PUXTON PARISH COUNCIL

CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Attributes

Essential

Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community.
Forward thinking

Desirable

Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council.

Circumstances, Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability

Circumstances

Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time and events in the evening and at weekends.

Essential

Ability to listen constructively

A good team player

Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects

Solid interest in local matters

Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community

Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others views and accept majority decisions.

Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly.

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 induction training and other relevant training.

Desirable

Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body

Experience of working with voluntary and or local community / interest groups

Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish Councils or local authorities

Experience of delivering presentations