

Councillor Co-option Policy

1. Introduction.

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.

2. Notice of Vacancy.

- a. If a vacancy arises within six months of an election, the Council can agree to wait until the elections to fill the vacancy.
- b. In all other instances, the following process must be followed:
 - 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 MBC.
 - The form is displayed on the notice board and the Council's website.
 - The Monitoring Officer at MBC is contacted to inform that a vacancy has occurred with a copy of the Notice of Vacancy.
- c. MBC 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.
- d. If a by-election is called by 10 or more electors, then MBC will be responsible for the election process.

3. Co-option Process.

- a. An advert should be displayed on the Council notice board and website asking electors to apply for the role of councillor.
- b. Person specification (see appendix 1) should be available from the Parish Office or the website. A personal statement should be submitted to the Clerk.
- c. The Clerk will review all applications to ensure that candidates are eligible to apply for the role.
- d. If they are assessed as eligible candidates, they will be invited to attend a Council meeting, where the decision to co-opt the candidate/s will be made.

4. Interview

- a. Candidates will be invited to attend a Council meeting and answer questions from Councillors. After this time, they will be asked to leave the meeting.
- b. During a closed session the person co-opted must receive a majority of votes of those councillors present at the meeting.

¹ Local Government Act 1972, section 87

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

- c. Successful candidates will be invited to join the Council following the voting when they will sign the declaration of acceptance of office.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Appendix

Councillor Person Specification.

Competency	Desired
Relevant knowledge, Education, Professional Qualifications & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community. • Other requirements as appropriate.
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 in a timely fashion. • Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff. • Good reading and analytic skills. • 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. • Ability to work under pressure. • Training is available for certain topics e.g. Planning, Finance etc.
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.