

Ermington Parish Council

Co-Option Policy

This procedure is based on NALC Legal Briefing L15-08 – Good practice for selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils.

Local 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 District Returning Officer).

Whenever the need for co-option arises, Ermington Parish Council will advertise the vacancy to seek 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone living or working in the parish of Ermington or within 3 miles of its boundaries who is eligible to stand as a Local Councillor. All potential candidates will be required to submit an application form and complete the co-option process (See below and Appendix A).

The applicant should attend at least three Council meetings as a member of the public following the co-option procedure below.

Please note that it is a condition of a Councillor that a means of contact by telephone and e-mail will be public information. A Council email address will be provided. A Declaration of Interests Form must be completed and will be published.

The Co-option process is as follows:

1. Co-option candidate to contact Clerk with an expression of interest in becoming a Councillor by submitting a completed application form and CV which will then be circulated to Councillors.
2. Candidate to attend a minimum of three Council meetings and following close of business after the third meeting attend an informal Q & A session with Councillors, giving the candidate the opportunity to gain further insights into the role of the Parish Council, Councillors and its objectives.
3. Candidate invited to attend an interview with a convened panel of Councillors (Minimum two), which will be measured against, but not limited to, the co-opted Councillor specification as per Appendix B.
4. Interview feedback given to serving Councillors.

It should be noted that completing one stage of the co-option process does not guarantee automatic progression to the next.

At the next Full Council meeting following the interview:

- i. Clerk to confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and s80;
- ii. Chair to offer the opportunity for debate on the order of priority to offer co-option and require that each individual application is proposed and seconded by Councillors prior to voting.

At the next Full Council meeting following the interview: (continued)

iii. A vote will be held on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option, utilising the person specification criteria set out in Appendix B, the completed application form and CV provided by candidates and feedback from interview.

An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39) (In the event of there being more candidates than positions available, the applicant with the least number of votes casted will be deleted and the vote taken again and again etc. until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies).

iv. Having signed 'acceptance of office' paperwork the new member joins the Council. The Clerk to notify Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment and submit 'registration of interests'.

The whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified.

Date adopted: 30 April 2024

Ermington Parish Council Minute Reference = 152/2023

Reviewed annually in April

APPENDIX A

Email: ermingtonparishclerk@gmail.com

Telephone Number: 01752 893691

APPLICATION FORM FOR THE ROLE OF PARISH COUNCILLOR ON ERMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Full name

Home address

Postcode

Telephone numbers

Email

It is a condition of being a Community Councillor for Ermington that your phone number and email address (official email address will be supplied) be made public via notice boards and website.

LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR BECOMING A PARISH COUNCILLOR

- To qualify you must be able to answer **Yes** to both of the questions below

Are you a British citizen, a Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of a European Union country?

Yes / No

Are you 18 or over?

Yes / No

- To qualify you must be able to answer **Yes** to at least one of the questions below

Are you on the electoral register for the Parish of Ermington?

Yes / No

Have you lived either in the Parish of Ermington, or within three miles of its boundary, for at least a year?

Yes / No

Have you been the owner or tenant of land in the Parish of Ermington for at least a year?

Yes / No

Have you had your only or main place of work in the Parish of Ermington for at least a year?

Yes / No

DISQUALIFICATIONS

- You must be able to answer **No** to all of the questions below to be eligible to serve as a Councillor

Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order? Yes / No

Have you within the last five years been convicted of an offence in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man which resulted in a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of three months or more without the option of a fine? Yes / No

Are you disqualified by order of a court from being a member of a local authority? Yes / No

Please briefly outline why you are interested in being a parish councillor.

Please tell us something about the life experience you will bring to the Council, for example, previous local government experience, work in the voluntary or charitable sector, business or trade union experience.

Please tell us something about the skills you feel you will bring to the Council, for example, professional qualifications, financial or project management expertise, maintenance skills.

Signed..... Date:

Appendix B

CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Attributes:

- Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community.
- Forward thinking
- Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council.

Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability:

- 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 Local Councils, principal authorities, charities).
- Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.
- Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and Community Councils or local Authorities

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.