

ASHINGDON PARISH COUNCIL



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Rochford
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Co-option Policy for Ashingdon Parish Council

The Council has drawn up this policy to ensure that residents and potential candidate/s can see that the Council has a clear and transparent process to follow when considering the Co-option of Parish Councillors. This policy details exactly the qualifications required to be met by a potential candidate/s.

Procedure

1. Applications can be considered by the Council at any one of the 11 parish council meetings during the year.
2. The Council can invite candidates to apply by including an invitation within the Council Newsletter when there are vacancies on the Council. The council can also include an invitation on any leaflet or flyer it produces that is suitable for that purpose.
3. The Council will also include an item on the Agenda of every council meeting for Councillors to consider applications when there are vacancies.
4. The candidate/s will be required to provide a letter confirming that they are eligible to stand and the Clerk will make due diligence to check the details provided..
5. The candidate/s will be asked to provide a short written document detailing why they wish to become a parish councillor and what skills or experience they have that would benefit the Council and the Community.
6. The candidate/s will be expected to attend at least one parish council meeting to observe what takes place before their application is considered by the full Council at the next monthly meeting.
7. In a closed session of the Parish Council without the public present, members consider the candidates and, following the discussion, the public are invited back into the meeting before the voting takes place.
8. The candidate/s will be invited to address the Council and say something about themselves and why they wish to become a Councillor and Councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidate/s. Each candidate/s will be allocated a maximum of three minutes.

9. The candidate/s must be in attendance when their application is considered by the Council and should be aware that members of the public are entitled to be at such a meeting.
10. The Chairman will request the Councillors present to nominate any of the candidates. Candidates will require a proposer and seconder to progress to the voting stage. If there is only one vacancy, a Councillor may only nominate or second one candidate. One candidate needs to receive an absolute majority of votes.
11. The Chairman will then place the names of those nominated into alphabetical order and proceed to vote. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled.
12. Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders by a show of hands and will continue until one candidate has received an absolute majority of those Councillors present. At this stage, the successful candidate will be declared co-opted.
13. Should no single candidate receive a majority on the first vote, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated. Voting will then take place for the remaining candidates until one person receives an absolute majority.
14. The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Parish Council and will be asked to join the meeting.
15. The successful candidate is a councillor in their own right and is no different to any other member; co-option is a legitimate form of election as part of the election process.
16. The Clerk to notify Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment, initiate 'acceptance of office' paperwork and 'registration of interests' on the Parish Council website.

The Co-Option Policy was adopted by Full Council at its Meeting held on:
2nd September 2024.

Reviewed : 2nd September 2024
Annually.

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APPLICATION FORM FOR CO-OPTION TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

Personal Details:

Full Name and Title: _____

Address: _____

Tel. No: _____

Email: _____

Brief details of why you wish to be a Parish Councillor for Ashingdon Parish.

(Additional blank pages can be used)

Extract from Local Government Act 1972 sections 79 and 80 regarding eligibility and qualifications for office as a Parish Councillor.

1. Be over 18 years of age.
2. Registered as an elector
3. Resident or have principal place of work (including volunteering) within three miles of the Parish Boundary during the past twelve months.
4. Not hold paid office in any organisation connected with the Parish Council
5. Not be subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order
6. Not be convicted of any offence within the past five years and been sentenced to not less than three months' imprisonment (whether suspended or not) without the option of a fine.

Additional requirements of Ashingdon Parish Council:-

1. Is able to commit to attending Council/Committee meetings regularly, including additional training sessions.
2. Will be required to carry out additional duties i.e. assisting at events etc. (including evenings and weekends)
3. Understand that the position is a voluntary one and no allowances are paid.

I confirm that I meet all the criteria above and wish to be considered for co-option to Ashingdon Parish Council

Signed.....

Date