

Stanhoe Parish Council Co-option Policy

1. Background

The process for co option is only partially prescribed in law but there is best practice and guidelines around certain aspects of the process. **Items marked in bold are prescribed in law.**

2. Scope and purpose

This policy aims to explain the procedure regarding co-option and to ensure the process is seen as open, fair and transparent.

3. When a vacancy arises

A co-option vacancy arises when a member of the Council leaves, and the position is formally advertised for a period of 14 working days. At the end of this 14 day period if insufficient names have submitted a request to the Borough Council to call for an election (this is 10 names) then the Parish Council can fill the vacancy by co-option (Refer Local Government Act 1972 s86 and 87(2)(b).

4. Applications

1. When the Electoral Service of the Borough Council writes to confirm that the vacancy can be filled by co-option, the Clerk will:

- a. Advertise the vacancy for 14 days for the public to view.
- b. Send an email to all councillors to let them know there will be a co-option.

2. Applicants for co-option will be asked to:

- a. Provide information about themselves by completing a short application form. [A copy of the application form is attached.]
- b. Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules. [A copy of the Eligibility Form is attached.]

3. Copies of the application and eligibility forms will be circulated to all councillors by the Clerk, at least seven days before the meeting of the full council where the co-option will be considered. The Clerk and councillors will treat these documents as strictly private and confidential.

5. The process of co-option at the Council meeting

1. There is an early agenda item at which each candidate will have a maximum of 5 minutes to stand and tell the Parish Council, other candidates and any members of the public why they feel they would be a good Councillor and what experience and skills they could bring to the Parish Council. All of this, including voting, will be in public. Candidates may be asked questions by the Councillors. In the event of a candidate being unable to attend, the application will still be considered by Council. In the event of a candidate

being related to a Councillor, then the Councillor would be expected to declare an interest and request a dispensation to declare an interest to speak and vote.

6. Voting

Only Councillors present at the meeting may vote. There will be one vote per vacancy to be filled. **The successful candidate must receive an absolute majority of those present and voting (Local Government Act 1972 s12).**

If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one, at the first count, receives a clear majority over the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes. The remainder must then be put to the vote again; this process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained. Councillors shall vote by show of hands. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

After the vote has been concluded, the Chairman will declare the successful candidate duly elected.

7. Starting as a Councillor

The successful candidate will be asked to start as a councillor immediately after completing their declarations of acceptance of office. If an absent candidate is successful, council must agree for them to sign the declaration before or at the start of the next meeting. New Councillors will also be made aware that the Declaration of Interests Form will need to be completed within 28 days of co-option.

October 2023

Reviewed October 2024

Co-option Application Form

Name.....

Address for Correspondence.....

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.....Postcode.....

Tel.....Mobile.....

Are you over 18? Yes/No

Please detail any experience you have that may be relevant to Stanhoe Parish Council. (If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet of paper)

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Is there any other information you would like to tell us about regarding your application? (If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet of paper)

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Signed..... Dated.....

Please return your completed form, together with the Co-option Eligibility Form to: Nicola Smith, Clerk, Mallard House, Brancaster Road, Docking, Norfolk PE31 8NB

October 2023