

# MICKLETON PARISH COUNCIL CO-OPTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This policy aims to explain the procedure regarding co-option, and the procedure is entirely managed by the parish council. The information contained in it is to be used by members of the council and members of the public. The aim of the policy is also to show that the council endeavours to treat all applicants fairly and alike, and to ensure that the process is also seen as fair, open and transparent. This policy details the processes to be followed regarding co-option.

## 2. CO-OPTING A PARISH COUNCILLOR

The co-option of a parish councillor occurs in two instances:

- A co-option vacancy arises when a member of the council leaves, and the position is formally advertised for 14 days. At the end of this 14-day period, if insufficient names have submitted a request to the Cotswold District Council to call for an election, then Mickleton Parish Council can fill the vacancy by co-option.
- When an ordinary vacancy has arisen on the parish council after the ordinary elections held every four years.

## 3. APPLICATIONS FROM CANDIDATES

Candidates will be requested to:

- Submit information about themselves, by completing a short application form.
- Confirm their eligibility for the position of parish councillor.

The form and eligibility information can be requested from the clerk.

When applications are received, the clerk will confirm eligibility. All council members will receive copies of applications ahead of the meeting, but all applications are to be treated as confidential.

Following receipt of applications, the next suitable parish council meeting will have an agenda item to consider the co-option of eligible candidate(s) to fill the existing vacancy (vacancies). Eligible candidates will be invited to attend the meeting.

Copies of the eligible candidates' applications must be received by noon least 14 days prior to the next full meeting of the parish council meeting, meeting dates can be found at [Meetings – Mickleton Parish Council](#).

The council is keen that potential candidates understand the commitment which is required from councillors. Anyone interested in standing will be encouraged to look at the website for more information on the role of being a councillor, and to speak to other councillors and/or the clerk. Candidates are also expected to attend training, as per Mickleton Parish Council's training policy.

#### **4. AT THE MEETING**

At the council meeting when the co-option takes place, each candidate will be invited to make a brief verbal presentation (3 minutes maximum per candidate) in public. In the event of a candidate being related to a councillor, the councillor would be expected to declare an interest and request a dispensation to speak and vote. In the event of a candidate being unable to attend, his/her application will still be considered by members. Only councillors present at the meeting may vote.

Candidates may be asked to leave the meeting while the parish council deliberates, which will be voted on by councillors present. The chairman shall seek proposers and seconders for each nomination (whether or not they have spoken) and the vote will follow. The voting process will follow the process as set out below which is in accordance with Mickleton Parish Council's Standing Orders (8a.) In order to be co-opted onto the council, the candidate must receive an absolute majority of the vote of those present.

Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chair of the meeting.

If there is more than one vacancy and the number of candidates equal the number of vacancies, all the vacancies may be filled by a single composite resolution. If the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, each vacancy must be filled by a separate vote or series of votes.

If present, a candidate who is co-opted will sign at the co-option meeting a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, including an undertaking to abide by the Parish Council's code of conduct, and may take office thereafter. If not present, a co-opted candidate will sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office either before or at the next meeting of the parish council.

#### **5. FOLLOWING THE MEETING**

The clerk will notify Cotswold District Council of the co-option of the new parish councillor(s).

The co-opted parish councillor(s) will complete a Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests form which the clerk will send to the Monitoring Officer at Cotswold District Council within 28 days of the co-option.

If insufficient candidates are co-opted, the process should continue, whereby the vacancies are again advertised.