



# NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

## Co-option Procedure

This Co-option procedure was adopted by the Council at its meeting held on 29.6.20

### 1 General

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- 1.1 This document sets out the procedures regarding the co-option of Councillors to fill vacancies on the Council. The aim of the policy is to show that the Council endeavours to treat all applicants fairly and alike, and to ensure that the process is fair, open and transparent.
- 1.2 The council must fill co-option vacancies 'as soon as is practicable'. If the Council only has 6 months left of its 4-year term, there is no obligation to do this
- 1.3 The council does not have to consider claims of candidates who were unsuccessful at previous elections

### 2 When a Vacancy Arises

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- 2.1 **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 been submitted for a request to the District Council to call for an election (this is 10 names) then the Council can fill the vacancy by co-option.** (Refer Local Government Act 1972 s86 and 87(2)(b))
- 2.2 We aim to encourage applications from anyone in the parish who is eligible to stand. Councillors or parishioners can approach individuals to suggest that they might wish to consider putting their names forward for co-option. Co-option vacancies will be advertised on the website, on noticeboards and on social media. The advertisement for the co-option will include:
  - a. Applications to be made in writing/email to the Clerk.
  - b. The closing date for applications.
  - c. That further information is available via the website - a form to complete which includes name; address, contact details and a maximum of 100 words asking the candidate why they would like to be a Councillor

### 3 Eligibility for co-option

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- 3.1 The rules on eligibility are the same as those for candidates seeking election.
- 3.2 The Council may consider any person to fill a casual vacancy provided that he/she
  - Is over 18 years of age,
  - Is a UK, EU or Commonwealth citizen, or
  - Is on the North Walsham Electoral Roll or lived in North Walsham (or within three miles of its boundary) for 12 months, or worked in North Walsham for the last 12 months.
- 3.3 A person is disqualified from being a Town Councillor if, within the previous five years he/she
  - Has served a prison sentence (including suspended sentences) of three months or more
  - Has been adjudged a bankrupt,
  - Is an employee of the Council, or
  - Is disqualified under legislation.

## 4 The Process of Co-option

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- 4.1 All candidates will be asked to fill out an application form, which will be circulated to all Councillors prior to the Council meeting where the Co-option will be considered.
- 4.2 Eligible candidates will be invited to attend the Council meeting. This meeting will not be rearranged to accommodate candidates who are unable to attend.
- 4.3 Candidates will be invited to introduce themselves within public participation and Councillors will have the opportunity to ask them questions. In the event of a candidate is unable to attend, his/her application will still be considered by members.
- 4.4 If candidates do not want to speak at the meeting, they can still attend
- 4.5 In the event of a candidate being related to a Councillor, that Councillor would be expected to declare an interest and leave the meeting or request a dispensation to speak, but not vote.
- 4.6 The Co-option must be decided in public session and should be an early agenda item, allowing the successful candidate to sign the 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' and become a Councillor with immediate effect and join the rest of the meeting.
- 4.7 Any candidate(s) found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified from the process.

## 5 Voting process

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- 5.1 Only Councillors present at the meeting may vote. There will be one vote per vacancy to be filled. (Chairman may have a casting vote). **The successful candidate must receive an absolute majority of those present and voting.** (Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12).
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one candidate receives an absolute majority in the first vote, the candidate with the least number of votes shall be removed from consideration and the remainder put to the vote again. The process must be repeated until an absolute majority is gained.

## 6 Starting as a Councillor

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- 6.1 Successful candidates become Councillors, with immediate effect,
- 6.2 They will be asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Once the form has been completed, the new Members may formally take their seat on the Council.
- 6.3 Newly co-opted member who are not present at the meeting and their application has been successful in their absence must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office before the next meeting
- 6.3 Newly co-opted Members must also complete the Register of Members' Interests form and return this to the Town Clerk as soon as possible. This form must be returned to the Returning Officer with 28 days of the co-option.
- 6.4 As soon as practicable following co-option, new Members will be invited to attend an induction/training session.



# NORTH WALSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

## Co-option Form

Name: .....

Address.....

.....Post code: .....

Email: .....Phone No: .....

You must declare that you qualify for the following:-

a.	I am over 18 years of age	
b.	I am a British Citizen or a citizen of the commonwealth or a citizen of any other member of the European Union with residency	
c.	I am registered to vote in North Walsham or have lived/worked in North Walsham (or within three miles of its boundary) in the last 12 months	

Under section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 there are some reasons why a person is disqualified from being a Town Councillor, including these reasons:-

i.	I have not been employed by the Town Council in the last 12 months	
ii.	I have not been declared bankrupt	
iii.	I have not in the last 5 years been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment	
iv.	I have not been disqualified under Part iii of the Representation of the people Act 1983 (relating to corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations)	

Please give a personnel statement and any relevant experience for consideration i.e. **forward thinking, knowledge of the area, being a team player, representing the community, willing to represent the Council, previous experience, etc.**

I declare the information given on this form to be true and correct

Signature.....

Date.....

The Council will use the information provided on this form to assess your eligibility to be co-opted as a Town Councillor. The information will be treated as confidential by the Council and Councillors and will be destroyed within 6 months of the co-option meeting unless your application is successful