

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

BURY PARISH COUNCIL

CO-OPTION PROCEDURE

A policy setting out the procedure for co-opting to a casual vacancy following an election process

ADOPTED September 2017

Introduction

If no request for an election is received by Huntingdon Council by the date on the Notice of Vacancy, the Democratic Services Department will advise the Parish Council that it may co-opt to the vacancy. Co-option is the process by which the Bury Parish Council selects a new Councillor and it is done as an agenda item within a monthly Parish Council meeting. The Parish Council manages the process of co-option by itself and strives to demonstrate that it is fair and equitable by following the procedure set out below:

Whenever the need for co-option arises, Bury Parish Council. Parish Council will consider advertising the vacancy to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone in the parish of Bury who is eligible to stand as a Parish Councillor. All potential candidates will be requested to complete an application form (See ANNEX A)

Procedure

1. Bury Parish Council invites interested candidates to write to the Clerk by a specified date. If there is only one applicant for one vacancy, the applicant is automatically co-opted to the Parish Council. If there is more than one candidate, the letters received are circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting at which a Parish Councillor is to be co-opted. These letters form part of the meeting pack which Councillors receive for every Parish Council meeting.
2. At the Parish Council meeting candidates are invited to say something about themselves and Councillors have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates. Each candidate will be allocated a maximum of three minutes.
3. 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 to takes place.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39) 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.
7. 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.

8. The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Parish Council and will be asked to join the meeting.
9. 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.

CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Attributes

- Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local Parish.
- 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 Parish
- 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 the clerk.
- Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other Parish Councils, principal authority, charities).
- Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.
- Experience of working with voluntary and or local interest groups

Circumstances

- Ability and willingness to regularly attend meetings of the Council. (Please note that the majority of Council meetings are held in an evening and, unfortunately, under present legislation the Parish Council is not permitted to contribute to the cost of Councillors' childcare or care of dependants.)

ANNEX A

Bury Parish Council
Bury Village Hall, Brookfield Way Bury PE26 2LA buryparish@aol.com

Full name	
Home address Inc. Postcode	
Telephone number	
Mobile number	
Email	

LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR BEING A PARISH COUNCILLOR QUALIFICATIONS

(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 one of the wards of Warboys & Bury?	Yes / No
Have you lived either in the ward of Warboys & Bury, 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 ward of Warboys & Bury for at least a year?	Yes / No
Have you had your only or main place of work in ward of Warboys & Bury 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 of 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, listening and organisational skills.

Are there any questions you would like to ask the council?

Signed.....

Date.....