

WALDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Co-option Procedure

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This policy sets out the procedure for co-opting to a casual vacancy following an election process.

If no request for an election is received by Durham County 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 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:

Procedure

1. The vacancy or vacancies will be advertised on the Parish Council's noticeboards, website and social media channels. Interested candidates will be invited to write to the Clerk to request an application form which is to be completed and returned to the Clerk by a specified date. These applications will be circulated to the Council prior to the next meeting following the closing date.
2. Candidates will be invited to the next Parish Council meeting following the closing date and will be given a maximum of 5 minutes each to introduce themselves to the Council, and to answer any questions the Council may have.
3. All candidates will then be invited to stay for the rest of the meeting, to allow them to gain a better understanding of meeting procedure, and current Council matters under discussion.
4. At the end of the meeting, in a closed session of the Parish Council, members will consider the candidates and will vote on each in turn, in line with standing orders. Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders by a show of hands.
5. The Council is under no obligation to accept any applicant.
6. Should a vacancy or vacancies remain, they will be re-advertised, and the procedure will be repeated until the vacancy or vacancies are filled.
7. After the meeting, the Clerk will contact successful candidates to invite them to the next Council meeting, where they will be co-opted to the Council, and will be required to sign their declaration of acceptance.

8. 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.

Chairman: _____

Clerk: _____