

## **Limpley Stoke Parish Council -New Councillor Co-option Procedure**

January 2021 B Kohn

Reviewed September 2023 B Kohn

The Co-Option Policy was adopted by LSPC at its meeting held on 2nd February 2021. This procedure is based on NALC Legal Briefing L15-08 – Good practice for selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils.

Parish Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met (i.e. The vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered electors have requested an election by a deadline date specified by the District Returning Officer). Although seeking ‘expressions of interest’ is not a legal requirement, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more potential candidates. Whenever the need for co-option arises, Limpley Stoke Parish Council will: Consider advertising the vacancy to seek and encourage ‘expressions of interest’ by a specified date from anyone in the Parish who is eligible to stand as a Parish Councillor.

All potential candidates will be requested to put their request for consideration in writing with the following additional information: i. reason for wishing to be Councillor; ii. previous Community/Council work; iii. Background, experience and other skills they can bring to the Council; v. Specific areas of Parish Council interest.

Please note it is a condition of a Councillor that a means of contact by telephone and/or email will be public information.

All applicants for co-option must be proposed and seconded by current councillors. However, in the interests of efficiency where several vacancies are to be filled at the same time, the PC may at its discretion, remove this requirement.

At the next Limpley Stoke Parish Council meeting:

- i. The Clerk will confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and s80;
- ii. If there is more than one vacancy, each vacancy will be co-opted separately.
- iii. Councillors will vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option using any personal statements requested from and provided by candidates. The Clerk will announce each vacancy separately. The clerk will then ask for votes for each alphabetically listed candidate for each individual vacancy.
- iv. An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39). Any candidate with a straight majority of votes will be co-opted for the first vacancy. If there is no clear majority, the applicant with the least number of votes cast will be deleted and the vote taken again and again etc. until there is a majority. The voting will then move to the second vacancy and the process repeated. In the case of a tied result, the Chair has a casting vote.
- iv. The voting process will be repeated until all vacancies are decided.

v. The Clerk will give the successful applicant(s) the Declaration of Acceptance form to sign and formally ratify the appointment during the Limpley Stoke Parish Council meeting.

vii. The Clerk will notify Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment(s), initiate "Declaration of Acceptance of office" paperwork if not already undertaken and ensure that the 'Register of Interests' section on the Wiltshire CC website is completed as soon as possible by the successful applicant(s).

viii. If no one accepts the vacant post(s), the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified or until the next election.

ix. The Limpley Stoke Parish Council is not obliged to fill all vacancies.