



BURGHILL PARISH COUNCIL

CO-OPTION PROCEDURE

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

ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2019

Amended February 2020

Introduction

If no request for an election is received by Herefordshire Council by the date on the Notice of Vacancy, the Electoral Services Department will advise the Parish Council that it may co-opt to fill the vacancy. The council can then choose a councillor. This person must be:

- A British, Commonwealth, Irish, or European Union citizen
- At least 18 years old
- Either on the list of electors for the parish, or during the whole of the previous twelve months has:
 - Occupied land in the parish as an owner or tenant
 - Had a principal place of work in the parish
 - Resided in, or within three miles, of the parish

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. Burghill 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 normally 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. Voting will be by paper ballot 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.
4. 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.
5. If, there is an equality of votes for two candidates there shall be a one further round of voting. If, after this, there is still equality between two candidates the Chair of the meeting shall have the casting vote. The casting vote will be declared to the Clerk. The Chair of the meeting will then confirm the newly co-opted member.
6. The successful candidate is then co-opted to the Parish Council and will be asked to join the meeting.
7. The successful candidate is a Councillor in their own right and is no different to any other member.