



CO-OPTION POLICY

This policy sets out the procedure to ensure there is compliance with legislation and continuity of procedures in the co-option of Parish Council members to Pucklechurch Parish council (PPC). This procedure is based on NALC Legal Briefing L15-08 – Good practice for selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils.

The Co-option process is entirely managed by Pucklechurch Parish council. Co-option of a Parish Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council or in an election year a vacancy has not been filled via the election process.

The Principal Authority for Pucklechurch Parish council is South Gloucestershire council.

A casual vacancy occurs when:

- A Councillor fails to make their declaration of acceptance of office at the proper time
- A Councillor resigns
- A Councillor dies
- A Councillor becomes disqualified or
- A Councillor fails to attend a Parish Council meeting or committee meeting for six (6) months.

Pucklechurch parish council must notify the Principal Authority of a Casual Vacancy and then advertise the vacancy and give the electors the opportunity to request an election in line with legislative requirements. If ten electors write to the Principal Authority stating that an election is requested, an election is called and will be organised by the Principal Authority. The cost of the election will be paid by PPC.

If an election is not called this will be confirmed in writing by the Principal Authority to the Parish Council and the casual vacancy can then be filled by means of co-option.

The Clerk advertise the vacancy on Parish Council noticeboards, website and social media pages and a deadline will be set in accordance with legislation.

Any candidate who wishes to apply for co-option to the Parish council will be asked to confirm in writing that they are qualified to be a Councillor as set out below:

Qualifications to be a Councillor.

- A person is qualified to be elected and to be a Councillor if they are a British, Commonwealth, Irish or European Union citizen and on the relevant day (that is, the day of nomination or election) they are 18 or over.

In addition, the person must meet at least one of the following criteria.

- On the relevant day and thereafter they continue to be on the electoral register for the Parish.
- During the whole of the twelve months before that day they have owned or tenanted land or premises in the Parish.
- During the whole of the twelve months before that day their principal or only place of work has been in the Parish.
- During the whole of the twelve months before that day they have resided in the parish or within three miles of it.



- Except for qualification (a), these qualifications then continue for the full term of office, until the next ordinary elections.

Co-Option Process

Any candidate wishing to apply for co-option to the parish council will be asked to put any request in writing to the parish council. All candidates applying for co-option to the parish council will be invited to a meeting of the Parish.

At the Parish Council meeting candidates will be invited to speak about themselves and why they wish to be considered as a councillor and what skills/expertise/experience they bring to the council.

Once candidates have presented and answered any questions, they may be asked to withdraw from the parish council meeting until the discussions and voting has been completed.

In the parish council meeting, with the public present, Councillors will discuss and consider the Candidates and will vote. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy and in the event of a tie between candidates for one vacancy the Chair of council will exercise their casting vote.

If there are multiple candidates for co-option, then voting will take place in rounds. An example would be if four candidates were up for co-option voting would take place as follows:

Round 1

Votes take place and candidate with the least votes is eliminated.

Round 2

Voting takes place and candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated.

Round 3

Voting takes place and the candidate with the most votes is co-opted if Parish Councillors are happy to co-opt at this point.

If there is only one candidate for one vacancy, they are not automatically co-opted – a yes/no vote will take place. Should no candidate be deemed suitable then the Parish Council can declare a 'no contest' and arrange for the process to be rerun in the future.

The successful candidate/s will be declared co-opted to the Parish Council and after signing the declaration of acceptance of office paperwork, will be invited to join the meeting.

A co-opted member of the Council is no different to any other elected representative (member).