

# **WEST HUNTSPILL PARISH COUNCIL**

## **CO-OPTION POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

This policy sets out the procedures for the co-option of Councillors.

According to section 86 of the Local Government Act 1972 a casual vacancy occurs when:

- A Councillor fails to make his declaration of acceptance of office at the proper time
- A Councillor resigns
- A Councillor dies
- A Councillor becomes disqualified
- A Councillor fails for six months to attend meetings of a council committee or sub-committee or to attend as a representative of the Council a meeting of an outside body.

The Parish Council must notify Sedgemoor District Councils Monitoring Officer of the Casual Vacancy and then advertise the vacancy on the Parish Councils notice boards, website. The closing date will be fourteen days from the date of the notice. Advertising the vacancy will give electors the opportunity to request an election. An election occurs when ten electors write to Central Sedgemoor District Council stating that an election is requested. If more than one candidate is nominated a by-election takes place but if only one candidate is put forward then they are duly elected.

### **2. Co-option to the Parish Council**

If ten residents do not request an election the Parish Council is able to co-opt, unless the casual vacancy occurs within a 6-month period of general election in which case the Council may decide not to co-opt.

### **3. Eligibility**

The Parish Council is able to consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that:

- He/she is over 18 years of age
- Is a UK, EU or Commonwealth citizen
  
- Has lived in West Huntspill (or within three miles of its boundary) for the whole of the previous 12 months

- Has had their main or only place of work in west Huntspill for the whole of the previous 12 months
- Has occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in West Huntspill for the whole of the previous 12 months

A person is disqualified from being a Parish Councillor if within five years before his/her election or since election:

- Has served a prison sentence (including suspended sentences) of three months or more within the last five years
- Has been subject to a bankruptcy restriction order
- Is disqualified under legislation

#### **4. Applications**

Applicants for co-option will be asked to submit information about themselves by way of completing a short application form and submitting a personal statement of no more than 300 words.

Copies of the application forms and personal statements will be circulated to all Members for consideration at a meeting of the Town Council. At the meeting of the Parish Council consideration of applications will be dealt with in public session.

#### **5. Voting Process**

Voting will be according to the statutory requirement in that each successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and neither one of them receives an absolute majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to 'strike off' the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again. For example if Candidate A receives four votes and Candidates B and C receive two each, Candidate A is not elected as he has the same number of votes as B and C together. In such a case it is necessary to conduct a ballot between the tied candidates to eliminate one of them. In the case of a tie at such a point the Chairman would have a casting vote.

This process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.

In each round voting will be counted by the showing of hands and recorded on the Verification and Count sheet (**Appendix '2'**).

Adopted by Council 30 September 2013

**APPLICATION FOR CO-OPTION TO  
West Huntspill Parish Council**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Eligibility**

The Town Council is able to consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that:

- He/she is over 18 years of age
- Is a UK, EU or Commonwealth citizen

At least one of the following criteria are met:

- Has lived in West Huntspill (or within three miles of its boundary) for the whole of the previous 12 months
- Has had their main or only place of work in West Huntspill for the whole of the previous 12 months
- Has occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in West Huntspill for the whole of the previous 12 months

A person is disqualified from being a Parish Councillor if within five years before his/her election or since election:

- He/she has served a prison sentence (including suspended sentences) of three months or more within the last five years
- Has been subject to a bankruptcy restriction order
- Is disqualified under legislation

I confirm that I am eligible to apply for the vacancy of West Huntspill Parish Councillor in accordance with the above provisions:

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# VERIFICATION AND COUNT SHEET

## VERIFICATION

Number of Councillors voting: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Candidates: \_\_\_\_\_

## COUNT

Name of Candidates	Number of Votes
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES</b>	

## DECLARATION

The Chairman declared that

\_\_\_\_\_ was elected as a

Councillor having received a total of \_\_\_\_\_ votes.

OR

The Parish Council declared a tie on the first count with the following candidates going forward to a second count:

\_\_\_\_\_