



STONEHOUSE

TOWN COUNCIL

Stonehouse Co-option Policy

1. Public notice of a vacancy

The co-option of a Town Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and there is no demand to hold a by-election. The Council will co-opt membership to the Town Council in accordance with legislation as defined in the Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006, SI 2006/3305 Rule 8(3) and the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12, para 3.

The Council will advertise the vacancy on its public noticeboards, Council website and Stonehouse Town Council social media sites.

2. Qualifying Criteria for Co-Option

In line with its Diversity and Equality Policy, the Council will follow a process which is fair, open and transparent and will encourage involvement from people from a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences and abilities.

Individuals must meet the eligibility criteria, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, Section 79 and must:

- be at least 18 years old
- be a British citizen or an eligible Commonwealth citizen and
- meet at least one of the following four qualifications:
 - a. You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the parish/community in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards.
 - b. You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish/community area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.
 - c. Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the parish/community area.
 - d. You have lived in the parish/community area or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

Disqualification would occur if the candidate holds paid office or other place of profit in the gift or disposal of the Council or Committee, or under a company controlled by the council; is subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order, or has within 5 years before the election or since his/her election been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands, or Isle of Man with a sentence of not less than 3 months imprisonment, or any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal practices.

3. Information for Candidates

Candidates who have the time and energy and are interested in contributing to a vital, thriving community are encouraged to take on an active role and join Stonehouse Town Council.

Helpful guidance can be found by visiting www.local.gov.uk/becoming-councillor

Candidates are welcome to speak to the Town Clerk and other Councillors at any convenient time. Candidates are encouraged to attend a committee meeting and/or a Town Council meeting if they can.

4. Procedure

4.1 Interested candidates are asked to submit a completed application form to the Town Clerk (Proper Officer) by the date specified in the Vacancy Notice.

4.2 Completed application forms will be circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting date set for Co-option.

4.3 The candidates will be invited to attend the Town Council meeting at which their application will be decided. Candidates will be advised in advance of the date, time, place and co-option item number on the agenda of the meeting.

4.4 At the meeting councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates.

4.5 When there is more than one candidate, the Chairman will place the names of those nominated in alphabetical order and proceed to vote. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled.

4.6 Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders by a show of hands after the candidates have left the room and will continue until one candidate has received an absolute majority of those Councillors present.

4.7. 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.

4.8. When voting for all vacancies has been completed successful candidates will be declared co-opted to the TC and will be asked to join the meeting.

4.9. A candidate will fail to become elected if not receiving an absolute majority from those present and voting. If the vacancy remains unfilled and is re-advertised, an unsuccessful candidate who stood unopposed will not be reconsidered for the same vacancy.

4.10 Successful candidates are then Councillors in their own right, with rights, roles and responsibilities no different from those of any other member; co-option is a legitimate form of the election process.

5. Co-Option Application Form

Full name:

Address:.....

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.....Length of time at that address:years.....months

Date of Birth (optional):

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Business or place of work within the parish:

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Telephone.....

Email.....

The Council requires a statement in writing from candidates, that they:

- meet the criteria for eligibility, set out in s.79 of the 1972 Act, to be a member of the Council, and
- are not disqualified, pursuant to s.80 of the 1972 Act, to be a member of the Council.

I confirm that I meet the eligibility criteria above.

Signature

Date.....

My application is supported by the following statement:

(See separate sheet if necessary.)

Last reviewed: 14th February 2022 (TC2752)

Next Review: 2025