

CO-OPTION POLICY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

According to Section 87 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 Town Council has to notify Huntingdonshire District Council of a Casual Vacancy and then advertise the vacancy and give electors the opportunity to request an election. This occurs when ten electors write to Huntingdonshire District Council stating that an election is requested. If more than one candidate is then nominated a by-election takes place but if only one candidate is put forward they are duly elected without a ballot.

2.0 CO-OPTION TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

If ten residents do not request a ballot the Town Council is able to co-opt a volunteer.

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
- Is registered to vote in St Ives or has lived or worked in St Ives (or within three miles of its boundary) for one year

A person is disqualified from being a Town 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 adjudged a bankrupt
- Is an employee of the Town Council
- Is disqualified under legislation

Applications

Applicants for co-option will be asked to submit information about themselves by way of completing a short application form (available from the Town Hall) 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 Town Council consideration of applications will be dealt with in public session.

Voting Process

Voting will be according to the statutory requirement in that a 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 no 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 candidate to eliminate one of them. In the case of a tie at such a point the Town Mayor would have a casting vote.

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

In each round of voting Councillors will be provided with ballot papers and have one vote each.

Ballot papers will be collected by the Town Clerk who will then count and record the votes using the Verification and Count Sheet.

Responsible Officer	Town Clerk	Date effective from	2011	Review date	March 2017
Author	Town Clerk	Date last amended	May 2016		