

ARDLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL – CASUAL VACANCIES CO-OPTION POLICY

Adopted by the Council on date: 9 March 2020 Minute Number 20.045

Applying to join Ardleigh Parish Council as a co-opted member

Step 1 – Confirm that you are eligible to be a member of the council:-

Qualifications:

You must be a commonwealth citizen, a British subject or a citizen of a member state of the European Union;

You must be over 18 years old;

You must be on the electoral roll for Ardleigh OR

You must during the whole of the previous twelve months before election or co-option, have resided in the locality or within three miles of it or occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises therein or had his principal or only place of work in Ardleigh.

Disqualifications as follows;

You MUST NOT be a paid officer of the Council;

You MUST NOT be subject to a bankruptcy restriction order or an interim order;

You MUST NOT have been (within the last five years or since election or co-option) convicted of any offence and been sentenced to more than three months imprisonment (whether suspended or not) without the option of a fine;

You MUST NOT have been convicted at any time of corrupt or illegal practices;

You MUST NOT have been convicted at any time of failure to register or declare disclosable interests under the Localism Act 2011 or for breach of the Code of Conduct.

Step 2 – make sure you understand what is involved

It is recommended (but not compulsory) that you read the National Association of Local Council's publication 'The Good Councillors Guide' which explains more about the role and responsibilities of councillors – electronic copies are available on request and printed copies can be made available for a small charge of £7.50 to cover the costs of printing and postage. If you have any questions you can contact The Clerk to the Council.

Step 3 - Send an application letter to the Council via The Clerk to the Council

Your application letter should confirm that you are eligible to become a councillor and that you are not disqualified from becoming a councillor (see step 1). Your letter should explain why you are interested in applying and what you think you can bring to the role of parish councillor with

reference to the Person Specification in Appendix 'a'. That aside, we welcome people with a wide range of life skills and experience that reflects the local community and most of all we are looking for enthusiasm and commitment to Ardleigh and the role of parish councillor.

Step 4 - Informal interview

You may be invited to attend an informal interview where existing councillors will be able to talk with you and decide if they wish to vote for you to become a co-opted councillor at the next available parish council meeting. No decisions will be made at this meeting.

Step 5 - Parish Council Meeting

At the next parish council meeting your application to become a co-opted councillor will be an agenda item to be considered by the Council. Voting will be according to statutory requirements

- a) An existing councillor will need to propose that you are elected;
- b) This proposal will need to be seconded by another councillor;
- c) Voting will be by a show of hands of those councillors present at the meeting or if at least two members so request by signed ballot. A successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present at the meeting.

Any candidates who are not proposed or seconded or who do not receive sufficient votes at this stage will not be co-opted.

The Council may elect whom it pleases providing they are eligible to become a councillor (step 1) and if the applicant is not co-opted at the Parish Council meeting following the procedure outlined at Step 5 above this will be the Council's final decision and the Council will be under no obligation to engage in any further discussion or correspondence on the matter.

Step 6 – Joining the Council

If you are successfully co-opted then you will be invited to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Within 28 days of co-option you are also required to complete a Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests which will be publically displayed on the parish council website. Your contact telephone number and email will also be publically available.

Clerk Contact Details

Clerk to the Council

Ardleigh Parish Council

e-mail: ardleighpc@gmail.com

APPENDIX 'A' –

CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

Competency	Essential	Desirable
Relevant knowledge	Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community.	Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council

**Experience, skills,
knowledge and ability**

Good interpersonal skills

Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff

Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community (with support if necessary)

Ability to communicate clearly and concisely both orally and in writing

Good reading and analytic skills

Ability to see both sides of an argument

Ability to respond to issues in a timely manner

Willingness to undertake relevant training.

Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the council

Flexibility in approach

Enthusiasm to get involved

Patience

Experience of the work environment

Experience of working with voluntary and or local community or interest groups

Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to parish councils or local authorities

Ability and willingness to work with the council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other parish councils, principal authority, charities)

Ability and willingness to attend the meetings of other local authorities and local bodies in the evening and occasional events in the evening and at weekends