

ARDLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL – CASUAL VACANCIES CO-OPTION POLICY

Adopted by the Council on date: 13 March 2023 Minute Number 23.045

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:

- British or a citizen of the Commonwealth. You may also be eligible as a citizen of the European Union, however the criteria has changed now that the UK has left the European Union. Please check on the gov.uk website for advice about EU citizens' candidacy rights in local elections and
- At least 18 years old and
- During the whole of the twelve months preceding, occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in Ardleigh or
- has the principal or only place of work during the preceding twelve months has been in Ardleigh; or
- has during the whole of those twelve months resided in Ardleigh or within three miles of it.

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 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. If you have any questions, you can contact the Clerk to the Council.

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

Your application should confirm that you are eligible to become a councillor and that you are not disqualified from becoming a councillor (see step 1). Your email 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 discussion

You may be invited to attend an informal discussion where existing councillors will be able to talk with you and decide if they wish to propose or 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 co-opt 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 expected to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and associated documents such as the Code of Conduct. Within 28 days of co-option, you are also required to complete a Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests which will be publicly displayed on the Parish or District Council website. Your contact telephone number and email will also be publicly available. Further information to assist you with the role and access to training will be provided.

Clerk Contact Details

Parish Clerk
Ardleigh Parish Council
e-mail: info@ardleigh-pc.gov.uk

01206 414989 (answerphone)
PO Box 12865, Colchester, CO7 7EZ

APPENDIX A –

CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

Competency	Expected/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	Experience of the work environment
	Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff	Experience of working with voluntary and or local community or interest groups
	Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community (with support if necessary)	Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to Parish Councils or local authorities
	Ability to communicate clearly and concisely both orally and in writing	Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other Parish Tending District Council, local charities)
	Proficient reading and analytic skills	
	Ability to see both sides of an argument	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
	Ability to respond to issues in a timely manner	
	Willingness to undertake relevant training.	
	Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council and its Charities.	
	Flexibility in approach	
	Enthusiasm to get involved	
	Patience	