

Parish Council of Newlands Co-Option Policy

Adopted by the Council at its meeting held on 20 June 2019 [Min ref:030/20C a]

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Parish Council of Newlands recognises that on occasion there may arise vacancies for Councillors due to uncontested elections.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the approach the Council shall take to ensure that vacancies for Councillors are filled in timely manner by suitable candidates through co-option on to the Council.
- 1.3 An up-to-date copy of this policy shall be published on the Council's website.

2. Notice of Vacancy

- 2.1 Following an uncontested election where insufficient Councillors have been returned, the Council, at its first meeting, shall instruct the Clerk to issue a Notice of Vacancy to the electors requesting applications to become a Councillor.
- 2.2 The Council shall determine the date on which applications close and at which subsequent Council meeting applications will be considered.

3. Applications

- 3.1 Applicants to be co-opted must meet the criteria set out in section 79 of the Local Government Act 1972 that they are:
 - Over 18 years old;
 - A citizen of the United Kingdom or a European Union country, or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen; and:
 - (a) is a local government elector for the area of the parish; or
 - (b) during the whole of the twelve months preceding occupied land or other premises in the parish; or
 - (c) has had their principal or only place of work during that twelve months in the parish; or
 - (d) has during the whole of those twelve months resided either in the parish or within three miles of it.
- 3.2 Applicants to be co-opted must not be disqualified from becoming a Councillor as set out in section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 3.3 Applicants to be co-opted should set out in their application the qualities and skills they can bring to the Council.
- 3.4 Applicants to be co-opted should in their application understand and commit to maintaining the standards set out in the Council's Code of Conduct.

- 3.5 All applications not disqualified shall be circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting at which co-options are to be considered.

4. Voting

- 4.1 No applicant to become a Councillor may be co-opted without receiving an absolute majority of the votes of the elected Councillors entitled to vote¹.
- 4.2 The Council shall vote on applicants by ballot counted by the Clerk with the applicants receiving an absolute majority of votes being successful.
- 4.3 Where no applicant is successful in the first round, the Council shall not co-opt any applicant at that meeting.
- 4.4 Where there are more successful applicants than vacancies, a second ballot of those successful candidates shall be held (those not receiving an absolute majority being eliminated) using a preferential vote.
- 4.5 Where there is a tie at either voting round, the Chairman shall have a casting vote.
- 4.6 The votes of Councillors and individual voting figures shall not be published.

5. Co-Option

- 5.1 Subject to section 4 above, the Council shall, at the same meeting, invite the successful applicant to be co-opted on to the Council.
- 5.2 Once co-opted, the successful applicant is a Councillor in their own right and is no different to any other member, saving any provision in law.

6. Remaining Vacancies

- 6.1 Where there are remaining vacancies, through no applications being received or insufficient successful applicants, the Council may re-issue a Notice of Vacancy.
- 6.2 The Council may defer any re-issue of a Notice of Vacancy for up to six months where it is felt that such a delay would better attract the necessary skills and expertise.

¹ Section 21 of The Representation of the People Act 1985