



## **Headbourne Worthy Parish Council Policy for the Co-option of a new Councillor**

### **Procedure for Conducting Co-options**

#### **Casual Vacancies**

As soon as possible after a vacancy has occurred the Clerk shall notify WCC Electoral Services. On confirmation from Electoral Services that a casual vacancy must be filled by co-option, the Clerk will place advertisements on the Council website and the Council noticeboards, notifying that there is a vacancy and confirming that there is to be a co-option. The Clerk will inform the Council that the process of co-option is to be followed as per this policy. The advertisements for the position will state the rules for eligibility and direct interested parties to write to the Clerk. Applicants will be asked to confirm their eligibility to sit on the Parish Council and write a short statement explaining the reasons why she/he wants to become a Parish Councillor. There will be a deadline for responses of not less than 3 weeks from the date of posting. The date of the meeting when the co-option is to be made will be stated in the advertisement. As far as possible the co-option should take place at the next scheduled meeting of Headbourne Worthy Parish Council. If more than 2 applicants have come forward the Council may agree to hold an extraordinary meeting to decide the co-option or for the Council to meet half an hour earlier to the usual scheduled time for next meeting of Headbourne Worthy Parish Council.

Applicants should not canvass Council members before the co-option takes place. Applicants that do so will be disqualified from standing for the vacancy.

#### **At the Meeting**

At the Council meeting when the co-option takes place, each nominee will be invited to speak for up to 2 minutes. The applicants will be asked to leave the room when the voting takes place. The voting process will follow standing order 8a below and will be held in private. The candidate must receive an absolute majority of the vote of those present, in order for the co-option to take place. The Council should aim to select a candidate for co-option from the candidates that have come forward but reserves the right not to do so if candidates are considered inappropriate. The Council will be required to take a vote not to co-opt in the event that Councillors consider applicants inappropriate. The decision not to co-opt will be carried with the majority of Councillors.

#### **After the full Parish Council Elections**

In the event of vacancies following full Parish Council elections (if all vacancies have not been filled) the Clerk shall follow the above procedure to fill the vacancies. The co-option(s) will take place at the next Parish Council meeting. Advertisements for the vacancy will remain posted on the website and noticeboards until an applicant comes forward and co-option will be made at the next Council

meeting. If more than one candidate comes forward before the next Council meeting, then the Council will follow the co-option procedure as above.

**Standing Order 8a: Voting on Appointments**

Where more than 2 persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the Chair of the meeting.

*Adopted by the Council 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021*