



# Swanton Morley Parish Council

## CO-OPTION POLICY

Last reviewed July 2019

Adopted 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019

Next review July 2020

## Introduction

This procedure is based on NALC Legal Briefing L15-08 – Good practice for selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils.

Parish Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more potential candidates.

## Policy and procedure for co-opting a new Councillor

Whenever the need for co-option arises, Swanton Morley Parish Council will consider advertising the vacancy to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone in the parish of Swanton Morley who is eligible to stand as a Parish Councillor. All potential candidates will be requested to complete an application form.

At the next Full Council meeting:

- i. Clerk to confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and s80;
- ii. Chairman to offer opportunity for debate on the order of priority to offer co-option;
- iii. Vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option, utilising the 'person specification' criteria set out below and any personal statements requested from and provided by candidates. An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39) (The applicant with the least number of votes will be deleted and the vote taken again. This process will be repeated until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies);
- iv. Vote to select the order in which acceptable candidates (decided by the vote at iii above) should be approached to offer co-option on this occasion.
- v. The Clerk to approach and offer co-option to candidate(s) after the meeting in the order of priority determined by the vote at iii above, if the first choice does not accept the post then the second is to be approached and so on until the ranking list is exhausted.

- vi. Assuming that the co-option position is filled and all paperwork completed, formally ratify the appointment at this or the next Full Council meeting.

The Clerk to notify Democratic Services of the new Councillor appointment, initiate 'acceptance of office' paperwork and 'registration of interests' on the Council website.

If no one accepts the vacant post(s), the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified.

The Co-Option Policy was adopted by Full Council at its Meeting held on 8th July 2019

To be reviewed July 2020.

## CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

### COMPETENCY ESSENTIAL / DESIRABLE

#### **Personal Attributes**

- Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local Parish.
- Forward thinking
- Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council.

#### **Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability**

- Ability to listen constructively
- A good team player
- Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects
- Solid interest in local matters
- Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their Parish
- Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others views and accept majority decisions.
- Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly.
- Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and the clerk.
- Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other Parish Councils, principal authority, charities).
- Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.
- Experience of working with voluntary and or local interest groups

#### **Circumstances**

Ability and willingness to regularly attend meetings of the Council. (Please note that the majority of Council meetings are held in an evening and, unfortunately, under present legislation the Parish Council is not permitted to contribute to the cost of Councillors' childcare or care of dependants.)