



Halesworth Town Council

Town Clerk: David Lines
E: enquiries@halesworthtowncouncil.gov.uk
P: 01986 874517

Co-option Policy, Procedure and Application Form

Co-option Procedure

Vacancies may exist following an election in which there were insufficient candidates, or during the term of a council due to resignation etc. The latter are known as 'casual vacancies' which must be notified to the local community. If a by-election is not required, the Town Council must endeavour to fill the vacancies by "co-option".

Qualifying criteria

Unless disqualified, under s.79, Local Government Act 1972, a person is qualified to be elected (or co-opted) to a council if they are a UK Citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of the Irish Republic, and are 18 years of age or over on the relevant day and:

- on that day they are and continue to be an elector for the Parish; **or**
- during the whole of the previous 12 months have occupied as owner/tenant any land or other premises in that area; **or**
- their principal or only place of work during that 12 months has been in that area; **or**
- has resided in, or within three miles of, the Parish for the past twelve months

Disqualification

Under s.80 of the 1972 Act, a person is disqualified from being a Town Councillor if they:

- hold any paid office or employment with the Town Council; **or**
- is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, an interim restrictions order, a debt relief restrictions order, or interim order; **or**
- have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) of not less than three months, without the option of a fine during the preceding five years; **or**
- have been disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal electoral practices.

Applications

Candidates are asked to submit the attached form which enables them to confirm that they meet the qualifying criteria and are not disqualified, as well as to provide some basic information to help the Council choose in the event of there being more applicants than vacant seats.



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At the meeting

When applications have been received, the co-option will be placed on the agenda of a suitable meeting of the Town Council.

If there are the same number of or fewer eligible candidates than vacancies, then the Council will consider their application(s) and vote (requiring an absolute majority of those members present) whether to co-opt them to the Council. Where there are more candidates than vacant seats, the Council will select the required number, as laid out below.

The selection will be an open, fair process with the public present, including candidates unless they choose to leave. Each candidate will be given an opportunity to briefly address the Council should they wish. All valid applications will be considered, including those of candidates not present.

In cases of more than one vacancy, each will be dealt with separately. Members will be asked to vote for their preferred candidate. An absolute majority is required and if there are more than two candidates, the process in section 8 of the Council's Standing Orders will be followed.

N.B. The Council reserves the lawful right to decline to co-opt any applicant, including a person who has made an unsuccessful application before.

Once the process has been completed, the Council then co-opts them to the Council with a formal resolution. The successful candidates take office immediately and can take part in the remainder of the meeting should they wish to do so.

New councillors must complete a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and, where possible, this will be dealt with at that meeting, but the law only requires it to be made at/before the next meeting (or at a later meeting, as agreed by Council).

All councillors are required under the Localism Act 2011 to complete a Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests form within 28 days of taking office. The Clerk to the Council will forward this to the Monitoring Officer of East Suffolk Council.



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Co-option Application Form

Name

Address

Telephone number

Email address

Please detail any experience you may have that is relevant to the Town Council (continue onto a separate sheet if necessary).



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Declaration and consent (please tick)

I confirm that

I am over 18 years old

I am a UK or Irish citizen or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen

I confirm that I am not disqualified from being a councillor

and meet one or more of the criteria under s.79, Local Government Act 1972, as below:

- I am registered as a local government elector for the parish
- I have, during the whole of the twelve months preceding the date of my co- option occupied, as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the parish
- My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in the parish
- I have during the whole of those twelve months resided in or within 3 miles of the parish

Signed.....

Name

Date.....

Please return this completed form to:

The Town Clerk at enquiries@halesworthtowncouncil.gov.uk



Use of personal information

The Town Council will use your information, including that which you provide on this application form, to assess your suitability as a Town Councillor.

For full details of how we manage personal information, please visit our website and our privacy notice.

<https://halesworthtowncouncil.org.uk/>