



Where there is a requirement to co-opt new members, Reepham Town Council will seek and encourage applications from anyone in the Town who is eligible to stand as a Town Councillor. The process for co-option must be open, fair and transparent.

The vacancy will be advertised within the parish via the noticeboards, Town Council website and local publications.

Co-option Policy

- 1.1 The advertisement to co-opt shall:
 - (i) State the method by which an interest can be expressed
 - (ii) Include a closing date for applications,
 - (iii) Highlight that further information is available on the website, including information about the roles and responsibilities of the council and eligibility.
- 1.2 Eligibility of the candidates will be confirmed by the Clerk.
- 1.3 All eligible candidates shall be invited to attend the next full meeting following the application deadline and notified of the date of the meeting and the co-option process either by email or by letter.
- 1.4 All members will receive copies of the candidate's application along with the summons to attend the next full council meeting following the application deadline. Applications are strictly confidential.
- 1.5 An agenda item will be set aside for candidates to make a brief verbal presentation to members outlining their relevant skills and experience. Each applicant will be allocated a maximum of three minutes. These presentations and the co-option of new members will be open to the press and public.
- 1.6 If candidates are unable to attend, the Council may decide to defer the agenda item until a subsequent Council meeting.
- 1.7 After the presentation/s, members may ask candidates a few questions before proceeding to vote.
- 1.8 Only Town Councillors present at the meeting may vote upon a person to fill the vacancy. Councillors will have only one vote per vacancy to be filled.
- 1.9 Councillors should declare a prejudicial interest and withdraw from the meeting where any existing relationship (of a personal or business nature) with the applicant could cause bias

- 2.0 The Town Council will appoint the co-opted members by voting according to Standing Orders.
- 2.1 A successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote by those councillors present.
- 2.2 If there is more than one vacancy and the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies all the vacancies may be filled by a single composite resolution, but if the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies each vacancy must be filled by a separate vote or series of votes.
- 2.3 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 chairman of the meeting.
- 2.4 The Council is not obliged to fill all vacancies, but must take steps to advertise for further co-options or hold an election to fill vacancies.
- 2.5 The co-opted members will be asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and a Declaration of Acceptance of the Town Council's Code of Conduct. They may then take their seat at Council.
- 2.6 As soon as practicable following their co-option members will be invited to attend an Induction session, the cost of which will be covered by the Town Council. A copy of the Good Councillors Guide will be emailed to new Councillors. The Clerk and Finance Office will be available for all queries.

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