

**FIRSDOWN PARISH COUNCIL**  
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## **POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR CO-OPTING A NEW COUNCILLOR**

### **Co-option Policy**

1. The Co-Option Policy was adopted by Firsdown Parish Council at its meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2021. This procedure is based on NALC Legal Briefing L15-08 – Good Practice for Selection of Candidates for Co-option to Local Councils.
2. Community 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 (i.e. the vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered electors have requested an election by a deadline date specified by the Wiltshire Council’s Returning Officer).
3. Although seeking “expressions of interest” is not a legal requirement, 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.
4. Whenever the need for co-option arises, Firsdown Parish Council will consider advertising the vacancy to seek and encourage “expressions of interest” by a specified date from anyone living or working in the Parish of Firsdown who is eligible to stand as a parish councillor. All potential candidates will be requested to put their request for consideration by completing an application form (See Appendix 2).
5. Please note it is a condition of a councillor that a means of contact by telephone and email will be public information. A council email address will be provided.
6. At the next parish council meeting:
  - a. The Parish 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.
  - b. Chairman to offer opportunity for debate on the order of priority to offer co-option.

- c. Vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option, utilising the “person specification” criteria set out at Appendix 1 and any personal statements requested from and provided by the candidates. An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Schedule 12 Paragraph 39). The applicant with the least number of votes casted will be deleted and the vote repeated until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies.
  - d. Vote to select the order in which acceptable candidates, decided by the vote at sub paragraph 6c. above, should be approached to offer co-option on this occasion.
  - e. The Parish Clerk to approach and offer co-option to candidate(s) after the meeting in the order of priority determined by the vote at 6c. 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.
7. The Parish Clerk to notify Electoral Services of the new councillor appointment, initiate “acceptance of office” paperwork and “registration of interests” on the Firsdowm Parish Council website.
8. Assuming that the co-option position is filled and all paperwork completed, formally ratify the appointment at the next Firsdowm Parish Council meeting. If no one accepts the vacant post(s), the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified.

**This policy was adopted at the FPC meeting July 2021.**

**Next review – July 2025, and every four years thereafter, unless required earlier by statute.**