

## St Albans Parish Council

# Policy and procedure for co-opting a new Councillor

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.

Whenever the need for co-option arises, St Albans Parish Council will approach Gedling Borough Council and ask for a notice to advertise the vacancy. If an election is not called, the Parish Council will seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone in the parish of St Albans who is eligible to stand as a Parish Councillor.

**All potential candidates will be requested to complete an application form (See Appendix A) and submit it by the specified date.**

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. Chair 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 (or whilst meeting is adjourned) 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.

## 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.
- Treat all members, members of the public and staff with respect.

#### 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
- Ability to send and receive files electronically and access information on a web page.

#### 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.)

## St Albans Parish Council

### APPLICATION FORM FOR THE ROLE OF PARISH COUNCILLOR ON ST ALBANS PARISH COUNCIL

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Full name                     |  |
| Home address<br>Inc. Postcode |  |
| Telephone number              |  |
| Mobile number                 |  |
| Email                         |  |

#### LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR BEING A PARISH COUNCILLOR QUALIFICATIONS

**(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to both of the questions below)**

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Are you a British citizen, a Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of a European Union country? | Yes / No |
| Are you 18 or over?   | Yes / No |

**(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to at least one of the questions below)**

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Are you on the electoral register for the parish ward of St. Albans?   | Yes / No |
| Have you lived either in the ward of St. Albans, or within three miles of its boundary, for at least a year? | Yes / No |
| Have you been the owner or tenant of land in the ward of St. Albans for at least a year?                     | Yes / No |
| Have you had your only or main place of work in ward of St. Albans for at least a year?                      | Yes / No |

#### DISQUALIFICATIONS

**(You must be able to answer No to all of the questions below to be eligible to serve as a councillor)**

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order?  | Yes / No |
| Have you within the last five years been convicted of an offence in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man which resulted in a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of three months or more without the option of a fine? | Yes / No |
| Are you disqualified by order of a court from being a member of a local authority?  | Yes / No |

Please briefly outline of why you are interested in being a Parish councillor.

Please tell us something about the life experience you will bring to the Council, for example, previous local government experience, work in the voluntary or charitable sector, business or trade union experience.

Please tell us something about the skills you feel you will bring to the Council, for example, professional qualifications, financial or project management expertise, listening and organisational skills.

Are there any questions you would like to ask the council?

Signed.....

Date: .....