

Filling of Casual Vacancies

Casual vacancies can be filled either by election or co-option.

The Vacancy

The Parish Council will advertise the vacancy. This will be done by displaying a notice on the Village Notice Boards and a copy of the notice sent immediately to the Returning Officer at Herefordshire Council. Notices will be displayed for 14 days which must not include weekends or Bank Holidays.

Filling the Vacancy by Election

If during the 14 days of the notice being displayed, ten electors from within the Parish call for an election to be held, they will need to make their request in writing to the Returning Officer at Herefordshire Council. In the event of this happening, the Parish Clerk will be notified. The Returning Officer will decide on the date of the election, which must fall within 60 working days from the date of the Notice. In the case of a casual vacancy occurring within six months before the day on which that councillor would regularly have retired, then an election will not be held. The Parish Council may co-opt a person to fill the vacancy and any vacancy not so filled shall be filled at the next ordinary election.

Official Poll Cards

Where the poll at a Parish Council election is not combined with another election, the Parish Council may, not later than noon on the nineteenth day before Election Day, request in writing, for the Returning Officer to issue Poll cards for that election to every eligible voter in the Parish. Where the Parish Council election is combined with either a National Election or a District Election, the Poll card issued will refer to the Parish Council election taking place on the same day.

Filling the Vacancy by Co-option

If an election is not requested, the Parish Clerk will be notified that the Parish Council can co-opt a member to fill the vacancy as soon as practicable. The name and address of the person co-opted should be sent to the Returning Officer. If the number of casual vacancies leaves the Parish Council without a quorum, Herefordshire Council may order an election to be held and in the meantime may by order appoint people to fill all or any of the vacancies until other Parish Councillors are elected to take up office.

Co-option Procedure

Advertise the casual vacancy within the Parish and local press.

Set the date by which prospective candidate(s) must write to the Parish Council Chairman or Parish Clerk expressing interest in the casual vacancy(s). Candidate(s) will be invited to the next Parish Council meeting to gain experience of how the Parish Council operates. If the person(s) indicate(s) their interest in proceeding they will be invited to make a short presentation (either written or verbal) at the next Parish Council meeting regarding their interest in becoming a Parish Councillor.

The notice of the Co-option will be given in the Agenda for that meeting of the Parish Council.

When the item is reached on the Agenda, the Chairman will call for nominations which must be duly proposed and seconded.

Candidate(s) will either then be interviewed or their letter of interest read out at the

Parish Council meeting.

The prospective candidate(s) must fulfil the same criteria requirements as those for qualification for an election.

When the nomination(s) has (have) been received a vote will be taken. If only one candidate is standing for co-option the decision will be decided by means of a simple majority vote. Should such a candidate fail to obtain a majority vote they will not be co-opted but the Parish Council, if later challenged, must be able to offer reasonable grounds for the candidate's failure to obtain a majority vote.

It is usual, if more than one candidate is standing for co-option, for the candidate's names to be processed in alphabetical order.

A successful candidate should receive an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. It follows that if there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps should be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder should then be put to the vote again. This process should be repeated, if necessary, until an absolute majority is obtained.

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 should be filled by a separate vote or series of votes.

Candidate(s) will be required to temporarily leave the meeting whilst voting and counting are taking place.

After the vote has been taken, the Chairman of the meeting will declare the candidate who received the highest number of votes duly elected.

The person(s) elected must make a declaration of acceptance of office before or at the first meeting of the Parish Council following their election in the presence of the Parish Clerk.

Adopted July 2015