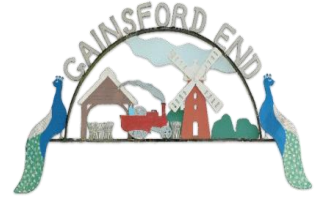




Toppesfield Parish Council



Co-option Policy

The co-option of a Parish Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Parish Council and no poll (by-election) has been called.

To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken, the procedure below will be followed by Toppesfield Parish Council:

1. On receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Service of the District Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option. In this instance the Clerk will:

a. Advertise the vacancy for four weeks on the council notice boards and website, and place an advertisement in the Parish Council newsletter, if the date of the publication is appropriate.

b. Advise the Parish Council that the co-option policy has been instigated by sending a memorandum to all Councillors.

c. Speak with any prospective candidates to advise them on the role, responsibilities and conduct required of the office.

2. Applicants for co-option will be asked to:

a. Provide information about themselves by way of completing a short application form (A copy of which is attached).

b. Confirm their eligibility for the position of Parish Councillor within the statutory rules (A copy of which is attached).

All written submissions will be considered by the Council at the meeting upon which such matter has been placed on the agenda. Any discussion about the submissions will take place in council session without intervention from the candidates or public.

4. Copies of the application forms will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk, with the agenda and meeting pack prior to the meeting of the Full Council where the co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and Councillors as strictly private and confidential.

5. Voting procedure

Voting will be according to the statutory requirements (as set out below). It should be noted that the council does not have to appoint a candidate if they are considered unsuitable. Therefore, Councillors may decline to vote for a candidate if they wish.

For this procedure only, Standing Orders will be set aside, and Councillors will vote by a secret ballot and not by show of hands

In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

	One candidate	Multiple candidates
One position	Candidate must receive the absolute majority vote of those present and voting	If no one, at the first count, receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again; this process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.
Multiple positions	Candidate must receive the absolute majority vote of those present and voting	<p>If the number of candidates equals the number of positions Each candidate must receive the absolute majority vote of those present and voting. Councillors will have the same number of votes as positions but are not required to use all of their votes if they wish.</p> <p>If the number of candidates is greater than the number of positions If no one, at the first count, receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidates with the least number of votes in order to obtain an equal number of candidates to positions. Then the above procedure will be followed.</p> <p>If the number of candidates is less than the number of positions Each candidate must receive the absolute majority vote of those present and voting</p>

6. After the vote has been concluded, the Chairman will declare the successful candidate duly elected. The successful candidate(s) will immediately sign their declaration of acceptance of office and can then act as councillors. The Register of Interest will be filled in within 28 days and handed to the Clerk.



Toppesfield Parish Council



Co-option Application Form

Name: _____

Address for Correspondence: _____

Tel: _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Are you over 18? Yes / No

What experience can you bring to Toppesfield Parish Council and what in particular would you like to be involved with? (Please use an additional sheet if necessary)

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Please return your completed form, together with your eligibility form to: The Parish Clerk, Toppesfield Parish Council, C/O Toppesfield Community Shop, Church Lane, Toppesfield, CO9 4DR no later than: _____

Alternatively, please email your completed form to: clerk.toppesfieldparishcouncil@gmail.com

Co-option Eligibility Form

1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Parish Councillor you must be a British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or European Union. You must be 18 years of age or over on the "relevant date", that being the day on which you are nominated. You must additionally be able to agree with the following qualifications set out below:

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

Please circle all those criteria that apply to you

2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972, a person is disqualified from being elected as Local Councillor or being a member of a Local Council if he / she:

- a. Holds any paid office or employment of the local council (other than the office of Chairman) or of a joint committee on which the Council is represented OR
- b. Is a person who has been adjudged bankrupt or has made a composition or arrangement with his / her creditors (but see below) OR
- c. Has within five years before the day of election, or since his / her election, been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man of any offence and has been sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for not less than three months without the option of fine OR
- d. Is otherwise disqualified under Part III of the Representation of People Act 1983 for corrupt or illegal practices.

This disqualification for bankruptcy ceases in the following circumstances:

- a. If the bankruptcy is annulled on the grounds that either the period ought not to have been adjudged bankrupt or that his / her debts have been fully discharged OR
- b. If the person is discharged with a certificate that the bankruptcy was caused by misfortune without misconduct on her / her part OR
- c. If the person is discharged without such a certificate

In a and b above, the disqualification ceases on the date of the annulment and discharge respectively. In c above, it ceases on the expiry of five years from the date of discharge.

I (insert name) _____ hereby confirm, that I am eligible to apply for the vacancy of Parish Councillor and that this information given on this form is a true and accurate record.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____