



Castle Hedingham Parish Council

Parish Councillor Co-option Policy

Introduction

If the required 10 requests from electors are not received by the Electoral Services Department of Braintree District Council by the date of the Notice of Vacancy, the Electoral Services Department will advise the Parish Council that it may co-opt to the vacancy.

Co-option is the process by which the Parish Council selects a new Councillor and it is done as an agenda item within a regular Parish Council meeting. The Parish Council manages the process of co-option by itself and aims to demonstrate that it is fair and transparent by following the procedure set out below:

Procedure

1. Castle Hedingham Parish Council invites interested candidates to write to the Clerk by a specified date via notices placed on its noticeboards and website. Candidates will be asked to confirm that they are qualified to be a Councillor (see **Appendix A**) and to include a brief explanation of why they would like to be a Parish Councillor as well as the skills and experience they can bring to the role. A CV may be enclosed but this is optional. Copies of the information received from candidates will be circulated by the Clerk to all Councillors prior to the meeting of the Parish Council during which the co-option will be considered.
2. At the Parish Council Meeting candidates will be invited to say something about themselves and what they would like to achieve as a Castle Hedingham Parish Councillor. Each candidate will be allocated a maximum of five minutes.
3. In a closed session of the Parish Council meeting, without the public present, Councillors will discuss and consider the candidates. The public are invited back into the meeting before voting takes place.
4. Voting will take place by secret ballot. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy. In the event of a tie between two candidates for one vacancy the Chairman will exercise his casting vote.
5. If there is only one candidate for one vacancy they are not automatically co-opted – a yes/no vote will take place.
6. The successful candidate/s will be declared co-opted to the Parish Council and, after signing the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, will be asked to join the meeting.
7. The successful candidate is a Councillor in their own right and is no different to any other member; co-option is a legitimate form of election as part of the election process.

Appendix A

Qualifications to be a Councillor

A person is qualified to be elected or co-opted to be a Councillor if they are a British, Commonwealth, Irish or European Union citizen and on the day of election or co-option they are age 18 or over.

In addition, the person must meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. on the relevant day and thereafter they continue to be on the electoral register for the parish, **and/or**
2. during the whole of the twelve months before that day they have owned or tenanted land or premises in the parish, **and/or**
3. during the whole of the twelve months before that day their principal or only place of work has been in the parish, **and/or**
4. during the whole of the twelve months before that day they have resided in the parish or within three miles (4.8km) of it.

Except for qualification 1, these qualifications then continue for the full term of office, until the next ordinary elections which will be in May 2027

Certain people are disqualified from standing, and these include paid officers (including the Clerk) of the council, bankrupts and those subject to recent sentences of imprisonment.