



# **CASUAL VACANCY AND CO-OPTION POLICY**

**Adopted on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020**

## Introduction

When a casual vacancy arises for a Councillor to the parish of Odiham and North Warnborough, more than six months from the date of the next normal elections, the procedure is to:

1. Notify Hart District Council about the vacancy.
2. Advertise the vacancy on the Council's notice board, website and Facebook page. Applicants should, in the first instance, apply in writing to Hart DC at the address published on vacancy notice.
3. An election to fill the vacancy shall be held if within fourteen days (calculated as per Section 4 of the Act) after public notice of the vacancy has been given, notice in writing of a request for such an election has been given to the Returning Officer at Hart DC by ten persons who are registered as local government electors in the parish (Local Elections [Parishes and Communities] Rules 2006).
4. On receipt of notification by the Returning Officer that an election has not been called, to place a Casual Vacancy notice on the Council's notice boards, website and Facebook page requesting applications to fill the vacancy be returned to the Parish Office within 14 days of the publication, or by a specified date. (Candidates will be requested to confirm they meet the eligibility criteria (Local Government Act 1972, section 79).
5. Applicants should apply in writing to [clerk@odham.org.uk](mailto:clerk@odham.org.uk) confirming that they meet the eligible criteria and providing a summary of the reasons why they have applied and any skills and experience they consider relevant.
6. Following receipt of completed applications, candidates will be invited to attend the next Full Council meeting. The meeting agenda will state that a co-option is being considered but personal information will be withheld from publication to the public.
7. Where the number of applicants is equal or less than the number of available positions, then one resolution shall be taken to co-opt those applicants.
8. Where the number of applicants exceed the number of available positions, each candidate will be given five minutes to elaborate on their submission and to allow members to ask questions of them.
9. To allow councillors to discuss the candidate/s the meeting will be closed to the public and press.
10. When there are more applicants than vacancies, OPC will attempt to fill a vacancy by:
  - a. Favouring applicants which will fairly and reasonably represent the parish geographically and demographically.
  - b. Selecting skills and experience which will complement and enhance those of current Members.
11. Once the meeting has been re-opened, voting will take place. Voting by means of a signed ballot may take place if requested and seconded by Councillors. If there are more candidates than vacancies, the candidate with the lowest number of votes will be excluded. If two candidates poll the same number of votes a separate vote to eliminate one of them will be held. Voting will continue with the lowest polling candidate being excluded until the number of candidates matches the number of vacancies.
12. This business to conclude by the Chairman of the meeting announcing the names of the successful candidate/s.

13. The Clerk will advise the Returning Officer of the District Council of the names of anyone co-opted to the Council.
14. Before the successful candidate can participate in Council business s/he must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and deliver it to the Clerk.
15. All new councillors must, within 28 days of appointment to office, Register their Interests with the District Council Monitoring Officer.

Vacancy six months BEFORE Parish Elections: Where a vacancy occurs within six months before the day on which a councillor would regularly have retired at the next four yearly election, Parish Councils **may** co-opt to fill the vacancy and will make this decision by resolution at a full Council meeting. During that final six month period there will be no formal election to fill any vacancies.