

# Co-option Procedure

## **A policy setting out the procedure for co-opting a casual vacancy following an election process**

If no request for an election is received by Suckley Parish Council by the date on the Notice of Vacancy, Malvern Hills Democratic Services 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 monthly parish council meeting.

The Parish Council manages the process of co-option by itself and strives to demonstrate that it is fair and equitable by following the procedure set out below:

### **Procedure**

1. Suckley Parish Council invites interested parties to attend the next parish council meeting to listen to proceedings. They are then requested to send in to the Clerk either a CV or a letter during the following two weeks. The CV or letter is then circulated to all Parish Councillors ahead of the meeting at which a Parish Councillor is to be co-opted. These form part of the meeting pack which Councillors receive for every Parish Council Meeting.
2. Prior to the Parish Council meeting candidates are invited to say something about themselves and the Councillors have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates. Each candidate will be allocated approximately ten minutes.
3. Without the public present, members consider the candidates and discuss their findings.
4. If only one candidate comes forward, if once an interview has taken Parish Council do not feel they would fit the role of Councillor, the Parish Council can vote against that applicant. The same being if more than one candidate applies.
5. The Clerk will place the names of the candidates into alphabetic order and proceed to administer the vote. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled. If needed, the Chairman has a casting vote.
6. Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders by a unanimous vote and will continue until one candidate has received an absolute majority of those councillors present. At this stage, the successful candidate will be declared co-opted.
7. Should no single candidate receive a majority on the first vote, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated. Voting will then take place for the remaining candidates until one person receives an absolute majority.
8. The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Parish Council and will be asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and to join the meeting.
9. 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.

Policy to be adopted by Suckley Parish Council 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025