

ODSTOCK PARISH COUNCIL CO-OPTION PROCEDURE

Introduction

If no request for an election is received by Wiltshire Council by the date of the Notice of Vacancy, the Electoral Services Department will advise Odstock 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 by closed discussion and ballot, after the close of 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. Odstock Parish Council invites interested candidates to contact 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 (ref. Appendix A) and have read and understood the NALC Good Councillor Guide and OPC's Code of Conduct Policy. (In particular, an Odstock Parish Councillor is expected to attend all Parish Council meetings, or else to deliver their apologies for absence in a timely manner.)
2. Candidates will be asked to submit a short written explanation of why they would like to be a Parish Councillor, and what they believe they could contribute as a councillor (no more than 200 words). Copies of the information received from candidates will be circulated by the Clerk to all Councillors prior to the Parish Council meeting during which the co-option will be considered.
3. In a closed session of the Parish Council meeting, without the public present, Councillors will discuss and consider the candidates.
4. Voting will take place by secret ballot. Councillors will have a single transferrable vote, and will number candidates in order of preference on their ballot paper. 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 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 and to be a Councillor if they are a British, Commonwealth, Irish or European Union citizen and on the relevant day (that is, the day of nomination or election) they are 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, or
- (2) during the whole of the twelve months before that day they have owned or tenanted land or premises in the parish, or
- (3) during the whole of the twelve months before that day their principal or only place of work has been in the parish, or
- (4) during the whole of the twelve months before that day they have resided in the parish or within three miles of it.

Except for qualification (1), these qualifications then continue for the full term of office, until the next ordinary elections.

Certain people are disqualified from standing, and these include paid officers (including the Clerks)

of the council, bankrupts and those subject to recent sentences of imprisonment.