

Procedure for Co-option of a Parish Councillor.

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

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

1. On receipt, of written confirmation, from the Electoral Service of Cotswold District Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option; the Clerk will advertise the vacancy for at least two weeks on the council noticeboard and any other council media.
2. Applicants are to contact preferably the Clerk or a Councillor expressing their interest to be co-opted. The Clerk is to confirm eligibility.
3. The Clerk is to advise the candidate of the role requirements and advise of procedure including acceptance of office declaration and declaration of interests.
4. The council will have to vote to co-opt at a properly called meeting. The council will be required to vote even when only considering one candidate.
5. When more than one candidate is being considered then each council member shall vote for their choice. Should none of the candidates receive an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the candidate with the least number of votes shall be removed from the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the Chairman's casting vote.
6. Councillors may vote by secret ballot as long as Standing Orders permit this. (Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12, Section 13 (1)). The Clerk to officiate such a vote.
7. After the vote has been concluded, the Chairman will declare the successful candidate duly elected and the Declaration of office signed. Copies of the council's Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations will then be forwarded by the Clerk. Training and/or reference books should be offered.
8. Following the co-option, the Clerk is to advise the Elections Officer and Monitoring Officer and forward the candidate's acceptance of office declaration and interests forms.

Should the vacancy arise following insufficient nominees for an ordinary election, the total time period to complete a co-option is reduced to 35 days, without the necessity of advertising for a potential bye-election. The Election Officer's department will work with the council to carry out the required procedure. After the 35 days from the election date has elapsed the Elections Officer will advise the council whether the council has to announce a bye-election or otherwise.