

RYE TOWN COUNCIL

CO-OPTION PROCEDURE

Note (COVID-19 - February 2021) This procedure has been amended temporarily to enable the Council to appoint a candidate at a meeting held virtually – via the Zoom platform.

In the event of the Council being required to fill a vacancy by co-option the procedure following shall apply:

- 1** The vacancy will be advertised within the 10 working days following the deadline for electors to have requested that the vacancy be filled by election.
- 2** The closing date for applications will be the end of the 15th working day following the publication of the co-option notice.
- 3** The co-option notice will be published on the Council's noticeboard/s and web site.
- 4** Details of the vacancy will be made known via the *Rye Observer*, *Rye Fixtures* (publication deadline permitting), other relevant web sites, other noticeboards within the parish, the window space of supportive businesses/dwellings – and other suitable publicity vehicles.
- 5** Members may bring the vacancy to the attention of any (potentially) eligible candidate/s.
- 6** Prior to submitting their application candidates will be required to contact the Town Clerk to confirm that they are eligible to serve as a Rye Town Councillor. At this stage the Town Clerk shall provide eligible candidates with a copy of – or link to – *The Good Councillor's Guide* (for parish/town councillors) and encourage them to attend a meeting of the Council or one its committees (if they have not recently done so).
- 7** All candidates will be required to provide – by the advertised deadline – a written supporting statement of no more than 750 words which should include: their reasons for wishing to join the Council, any previous experience of council/community work, skills/knowledge they could bring to the Council, interests and any work history (paid/unpaid).
- 8** Candidates found to be offering inducements will be disqualified.
- 9** (Eligible) Candidates will be invited to attend the Council meeting at which the vacancy will be filled.
- 10** Each candidate will be invited – in alphabetical order (by last name) - to speak to their application for up to 3 minutes.

- 11** Whether or not the opportunity to speak is taken, the chairman of the meeting will invite the Council to ask each candidate present up to 3 questions.
- 12** The chairman of the meeting shall determine whether a question is relevant, reasonable and fair.
- 13** Contributions or questions from members of the public other than candidates shall not be permitted.
- 14** At each round of voting, voting will be conducted by those Members present sending a private Zoom 'chat' message, stating the name of their preferred candidate, to the Town Clerk – or by some other means agreed with the Clerk in advance of the meeting – for example, email, text message, social media message or telephone call.
- 15** *If there is more than one candidate:* The candidate with the least number of votes after each round of voting will be struck off, until one candidate remains with an absolute majority – ie more votes than the combined total of the candidates remaining.
- 16** *If there is a single candidate:* Members will be invited to vote either for or against co-option of the candidate. The candidate shall be declared appointed if a simple majority of the Members present vote in favour of their co-option.
- 17** At any time the chairman of the meeting may use a casting vote to break a deadlock. If s/he is unwilling, the situation shall be determined by the toss of a coin, undertaken by the Clerk.
- 18** If there is more than one vacancy, each shall be filled separately. Unless they elect to withdraw their interest, it shall be presumed that all unsuccessful candidates wish to contest any vacancies remaining.
- 19** Upon the filling of all the available vacancies, as soon as practicable, the Clerk will arrange for the successful candidates to sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office (the point at which they are lawfully able to act).
- 20** The entire procedure at the Council meeting shall be conducted in public.
- 21** If a single candidate is unsuccessful, within the 10 working days following the meeting the Council will re-advertise the vacancy and recommence this procedure from step 2.