

**Wentworth Parish Council**  
**Co-option Policy (for Casual Vacancies)**

The Co-option of a Parish Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen (where a Cllr has left the council) and no poll (by-election) has been called.

To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken the following procedure will be followed by Wentworth Parish Council:

- 1) On receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Services Office at Rotherham Metropolitan Brough Council, that the casual vacancy can be filled by means of Co-option, the Parish Clerk will advertise the vacancy on the notice board and Parish Council website. The length of time the advert will be advertised for will vary depending on the date of the next Parish Council meeting. Where possible co-option will take place at the next Parish Council meeting after advertising.
- 2) Applicants for co-option will be asked to:
  - a) complete the Co-option application form.
  - b) confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules, by completing an Eligibility Form
- 3) Copies of the applicant's application form will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk prior to the next Parish Council meeting when the co-option will be considered.
- 4) Applicants will be invited to attend the Parish Council meeting where the co-option will be considered. However, it is possible to co-opt without the candidate present. At the meeting, applicants may be asked to give a short presentation (five minutes) and may be asked questions. Any discussion about the applications will take place in council session without intervention from the candidates or public.
- 5) Voting will be according to the statutory requirements, in that a candidate must receive an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. (e.g. If 9 Councillors are present then an absolute majority would be 5 or more votes).

If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, then the candidate with the least number of votes will be discounted and the remainder must then be put to the vote again; this process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained (5 votes if 9 Councillors are voting). In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

If there are the same number of candidates as there are vacancies then each candidate will require a proposer and seconder and will need to receive a majority vote. If no absolute majority is achieved then the candidate will not be elected.

Voting will be by card ballot. Candidates may stay in the room for the vote.

- 7) After the vote has been concluded, the Chairman will declare the successful candidate duly elected. The successful candidate will join the council meeting as a Councillor after signing the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Parish Councillor form.

**Adopted by Council May 2024**

**Review date May 2025**