

NORTON ST PHILIP PARISH COUNCIL

MENDIP DISTRICT OF THE COUNTY OF SOMERSET

www.nortonstphilipparishcouncil.co.uk

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PROCEDURE FOR THE CO-OPTION OF A PARISH COUNCILLOR

The Parish Council has the power under the Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) Rules 1986 SI 1986/2215 r 8 (3) co-opt a parish councillor in the event that an election is not called for.

The Parish Council has received confirmation that no elections have been called in respect of the two casual vacancies and has therefore resolved to proceed to co-option (October 2020). The deadline for applications (to be made to the Parish Clerk) is **12 noon on Wednesday 4th November 2020**.

The below procedure will be followed at the PC meeting on 11th November 2020:

1. The interested parties will be invited to attend a meeting of the Parish Council. Please note that due to COVID-19 the meetings of the PC are currently taking place virtually, via Zoom.
2. Each candidate will be asked, at the appropriate point on the agenda, to address the Parish Council in respect of their application. Candidates will be invited to include information on the following:
 - a. Why they wish to become a parish councillor
 - b. What their particular skills and interests are
 - c. How much time they could allocate to support the parish council
 - d. What they consider to be the main issues facing the village
3. The candidates may present this information in any format they wish and each candidate will be allocated five minutes.
4. Following the presentations the Chairman will invite the parish councillors and candidates to raise any questions they may have.
5. When this process is concluded the Chairman will put the matter to the vote.
6. The vote will be taken by ballot via WhatsApp, with each member indicating their preferred candidate. Please note that the method for vote taking has been adjusted to allow for the fact that the PC is not meeting in person, due to COVID-19.
7. The Parish Clerk will record, count and report the vote.
8. The co-opted member will need to obtain an absolute majority of those present and voting – for example, in a parish council with seven members the successful candidate would need to obtain four votes.
9. In the event that a candidate does not achieve this in the first round of voting the candidate with the lowest number of votes drops off and the vote is taken again.
10. Once a successful candidate has been co-opted they will be asked to confirm their acceptance of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and will be able to join the parish council.. Following the meeting the Parish Clerk will issue the relevant form for the new member to sign.
11. Following acceptance of office an appointment will be made with the Parish Clerk for an induction, which will include training and support will be given in completion of the necessary Register of Interests form.

Eligibility criteria

To stand for election to become a parish councillor you must be at least 18 years old on the day of your nomination, and a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union.

In addition, candidates must also meet at least one of the following four qualifications:

- You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the parish in which you wish to stand from the day of the nomination onwards

- You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of the nomination and the day of election
- Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of the nomination and the day of election has been in the parish area
- You have lived in the parish area or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of the nomination and the day of election

Disqualifications from standing - there are certain people who are disqualified from being elected to a parish or community council in England and Wales. You cannot be a candidate if at the time of the nomination and on the day of the election, any of the following are true:

- You are employed by the parish council or hold a paid office under the parish/community council (including joint boards or committees),
- You are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order,
- You have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence), without the option of a fine, during the five years before polling day
- You have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations) or under the Audit Commission Act 1998