

MIDDLETON-ON-SEA PARISH COUNCIL



Co-option procedure

This procedure will invariably be used for filling a casual vacancy by co-option.

When a casual vacancy arises, the Returning Officer at Arun District Council must be notified and the vacancy must be advertised on the parish council noticeboards in accordance with the Local Government Act 1986. If within 14 days, ten electors write to the Returning Office requesting an election then matters will proceed accordingly. If no such request is received then the Parish Council may seek approval to co-opt a councillor.

Co-option is the process by which the Parish Council selects a new Councillor/s and it is undertaken as an agenda item within a parish council meeting.

The Parish Council manages the process of co-option by itself and strives to demonstrate that it is fair and equitable by following the procedure set out below.

Procedure

1. Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council invites interested parties to request an application form from the Clerk and return it by a specified date. The application form/s once received are then circulated to all Parish Councillors ahead of the meeting at which a Parish Councillor is to be co-opted. These application forms form part of the meeting pack which Councillors receive for every Parish Council Meeting.
2. All candidates will be asked to attend a training session covering the key aspects of being a Councillor (session lasts 1 hour) which will be organised and run by a nominated Councillor and the Parish Clerk. Candidates will also be given the dates of parish council and parish committee meetings that they may attend and meet with Councillors if they so wish.
3. The co-option process must take no longer than 2 months from the closing date of receiving application form/s to the date for the Parish Council meeting to co-opt.
4. At the Parish Council meeting, candidates will be invited to give a short presentation (3 minutes) and the Councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates.
5. The Parish Council meeting will then go into a “Confidential Business” session following the candidate presentations and the candidates and public will leave the meeting so Councillors can consider the candidates and discuss their findings.

6. When the “Confidential Business” session is closed the candidates and public will be requested to return to the “Public Session” of the meeting so that Councillors present at the meeting may vote on which Councillor to appoint. By voting with candidates and public present the procedure can be seen to be fair and equitable.
7. If one or more candidates come forward and they are deemed unsuitable to be co-opted then the councillors may vote accordingly and nobody will be elected. The co-option process will then have to be repeated.
8. The Clerk will place the names of the candidates into alphabetical order and proceed to administer the vote. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled in each voting round. If needed the Chairman has a casting vote.
9. Should no single candidate receive a majority on the first vote, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated.
10. Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders and will continue until one candidate has received an absolute majority of those councillors present at the meeting.
11. The successful candidate will then be declared co-opted to the Parish Council and will be asked to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and the Code of Conduct.
12. Finally, the successful candidate will be welcomed as the new co-opted Councillor