



# HIGHWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

**Adopted at the meeting of September 2020. Reviewed May 2024. Next review May 2025.**

## CO-OPTION POLICY

On receipt of notice from Chelmsford City that the Parish Council can go ahead to co-opt for a vacancy, the Clerk is to advertise the vacancy for co-option and the council is to fill the vacancy in a reasonable time by completing the following actions:

- The parish council is to advertise the vacancy for at least two weeks on the council noticeboard and any other council media. Applicants are to contact preferably the Clerk or a Councillor expressing their interest to be co-opted. The Clerk is to confirm eligibility.
- The Clerk is to advise the candidate of the role requirements and advise of procedure including acceptance of office declaration and declaration of Interests. The Clerk is also to advise of the council's financial position and copies of the council's Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are to be forwarded. A brief explanation of these may be necessary. Training or reference books should be offered.
- 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. 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. A vote shall be by show of hands, unless a paper vote is agreed to by vote before the co-option. Clerk to administer a paper vote. Candidates may be asked to briefly meet with the council along with other candidates or speak for 3 minutes at a council meeting or provide a short, written statement prior to the co-option vote. Candidates do not have to attend the meeting at which the co-option is considered. If a candidate is not in attendance then the council must also agree to the declaration of acceptance being signed later but before the next council meeting.
- Following the co-option, the Clerk is to advise the Elections Officer and Monitoring Officer at Chelmsford City Council and forward the candidate's acceptance of office declaration and interests forms.