**South Luffenham Parish Council - Procedure for Co-option**

**PUBLIC NOTICE OF VACANCIES**

Section 87(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a local council to give public notice of casual vacancies. This ensures transparency and encourages applications from interested residents.

A formal Notice of Vacancy will be issued by Rutland County Council's Member Services department, and must be displayed by South Luffenham Parish Council in a prominent place (noticeboards and website) for a minimum of 14 days.

If 10 electors of the parish request an election in writing within that 14-day period, a by-election will be held. If no such request is received, the council may proceed to fill the vacancy by co-option.

**NOTICE OF CO-OPTION**

If no election is called, a Notice of Co-option will be issued by the Clerk, advertising the opportunity to join the council. This notice will outline the eligibility criteria and invite expressions of interest from residents.

Notices must be publicly displayed for at least three weeks. Interested individuals should submit a short statement to the Clerk, explaining their interest in joining and what they hope to contribute.

**ELIGIBILITY**

- To be able to stand as a candidate at a parish or town council election, you must:
- Be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights.
- Be 18 years of age or older.

Meet at least one of the following three qualifications: You are and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the parish you wish to attend from the day of your nomination onwards.

You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish area during the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of the election.

Your principal or only place of work during the 12 months before your nomination and the day of the election has been in the parish area.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

Applicants will be invited to attend the Parish Council meeting where the co-option will take place. They will be asked to give a short 3-4 minute presentation about their suitability and interest in the role.

If unable to attend, applicants may submit a written statement to be read aloud by the Clerk.

**VOTING PROCEDURE**

Each vacancy is considered separately. Voting will be by show of hands or paper ballot.

If there is more than one applicant, candidates are voted on in rounds. The candidate with the fewest votes is removed from the next round until a majority is achieved.

A successful candidate must receive an absolute majority of those present and voting. If only one applicant stands, they must still receive a majority vote to be co-opted.

Councillors must vote; abstentions are not permitted. The Chair may use a casting vote in the case of a tie after two rounds.

**FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL CO-OPTION**

- The Declaration of Acceptance of Office will be signed (usually at the meeting).

- The Clerk will notify Rutland County Council.

- The new councillor must complete the online Register of Interests form within 28 days.

- The new councillor will receive the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and other useful guidance.

- The bank mandate may be updated if required.

**CO-OPTION AFTER ELECTIONS**

If there are fewer nominations than vacancies following an ordinary election, the council has 35 working days to co-opt without the need to advertise.

If the number of elected councillors is insufficient to form a quorum, Rutland County Council may appoint councillors or call a new election.

**CONTACT**

For any questions regarding co-option, eligibility, or the role of a councillor, please contact:

Amie Fenech, Clerk to South Luffenham Parish Council

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