



## **HORNINGLOW AND ETON PARISH COUNCIL - CO OPTION POLICY**

### **1. Introduction**

This policy sets out the procedure to ensure there is compliance with legislation and continuity of procedures in the co-option of members to Horninglow and Eton Parish Council. The Co-option procedure is entirely managed by HEPC and this policy will ensure that a fair and equitable process is carried out.

HEPC is not obliged to fill any vacancy. Even if the Council invites applications for co-option, it is not obliged to select anyone from the candidates who apply. However, it is not desirable that electors in a particular ward be left partially or full under represented for a significant length of time. Neither does it contribute to effective and efficient working of the Council if there are insufficient councillors to share the workload; equitably; to provide a broad cross-section of skills and interests; or achieve meeting quorums without difficulty.

Councillors elected by co-option are full members of HEPC.

### **2. Eligibility of Candidates**

HEPC is able to consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that:

- He/she is an elector for the parish; or
- has resided in the parish for the past twelve months or rented/tenanted land or other premises in the parish; or
- had his/her principal place of work in the parish; or
- has lived within three miles (direct) of the parish.

There are certain disqualification's for election, of which the main are (see 5. 80 of the Local Government Act 1972):

- holding a paid office under the local authority;
- bankruptcy
- having been sentenced to a term of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) of not less than three months, without the option of a fine during the five years preceding the election; and
- being disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal practices.

Candidates found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.

### **3. Applications**

Members may point out the vacancies and the process to any qualifying candidate(s).

Although there is no Statutory Requirement to do so, candidates will be requested to:

- Submit information about themselves, by way of completing a short application form (Appendix A)
- Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules (Appendix B).

Following receipt of applications, the next suitable council meeting will have an agenda item 'To receive written applications for the office of Parish councillor and to Co-opt a candidate to fill the existing vacancy'.



Copies of the candidates applications will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk at least 3 clear days prior to the meeting of the full Council, when the Co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and all Councillors as Strictly Private and Confidential. Applicants when presenting the completed documents give authorisation for the documents to be circulated to all parish councillors.

Candidates will be sent a full agenda of the meeting at which they are to be considered for appointment, together with a copy of the Code of Conduct. Candidates will also be informed that they will be invited to speak about their application at the meeting.

#### **4. At the Co-option Meeting**

At the co-option meeting, candidate/s will be given five minutes maximum to introduce themselves to Members, give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a Member of HEPC. The councillors will then be able to ask questions should they wish to do so. The process will be carried out by adjourning the meeting to allow the candidate to speak. Where the Council wishes to discuss the merits of candidates and inevitably their personal attributes, this could be prejudicial and the Council will resolve to exclude the members of the press and public.

As soon as candidate/s have finished giving their submissions, the candidate shall leave the room and the council will proceed to a vote on the acceptability and co-option of each candidate utilising the 'person specification' criteria set out in Appendix C and any personal statements provided by candidate/s. The vote will be recorded so as to show whether each Councillor present and voting gave his/her vote for or against that question.

In order for a candidate to be elected to HEPC, it will be necessary for them to obtain an absolute majority of votes cast (50% + 1 of the votes available at the meeting). If there are more than two or more candidates for one place in HEPC and there is no candidate with an overall majority in the first round of voting the candidate with the least number of votes will drop out of the process. Further rounds of voting will then take place with the process repeated until a candidate has an absolute majority. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second of casting vote.

After the votes have been concluded, the Chairman will declare if each candidate was either successful or unsuccessful. If duly elected and after signing their declaration of acceptance of office, may take their seat immediately.

The Clerk will notify Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment. The successful candidate/s must complete the 'registration of interests' and acceptance of office within 28 days of being elected. The form should be handed to the Clerk for forwarding to the Monitoring Officer.



**APPENDIX A**  
**Application for Co-option Horninglow & Eton Parish Council**

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Parish Councillor. Please provide the below information to assist the council in making their decision.

<b>Full Name &amp; Title</b>	
<b>Home Address</b>	
<b>Home Telephone</b>	
<b>Email Address</b>	

<b>About You</b> Please provide the council with some back ground information about yourself.



**Reasons for applying**

Please provide the council with your reasons for wanting to become a Parish Councillor for Horninglow and Eton Parish Council.

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<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

Please return your completed application to the Clerk to the council. Your application will be considered at the next available Parish Council meeting, where a vote will be held to decide whether the council agrees to co-opt you in to Horninglow and Eton Parish Council

Data Protection Act: The information provided on this application will remain private and Confidential.



**APPENDIX B**

**Co-option Eligibility Form**

**1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Horninglow and Eton Parish Councillor you must be a British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union; and on the 'relevant date' (i.e. the day on which you are nominated or if there is a poll the day of the election) 18 years of age or over; and additionally able to meet one of the following qualifications set out below. Please tick which applies to you:**

- a) I am registered as a local government elector for the parish; or
- b) I have, during the whole of the twelve months preceding the date of my co-option, occupied as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the parish; or
- c) My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in the parish; or
- d) I have during the whole of twelve months resided in the parish of within 3 miles of it.

**2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 a person is disqualified from being elected as a Local Councillor or being a member of a Local Council if he/she:**

- a) Holds any paid office or employment of the local council (other than the office of Chairman) or of a joint committee on which the Council is represented; or
- b) Is a person who has been adjudged bankrupt or has made a composition or arrangement with his/her creditors (but see below); or
- c) Has within five years before the day of election, or since his/her election, been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man of any offence and has been sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for not less than three months without the option of a fine; or
- d) Is otherwise disqualified under Part III of the representation of the People Act 1983 for corrupt or illegal practices.

**This disqualification for bankruptcy ceases in the following circumstances:**

- i. If the bankruptcy is annulled on the grounds that either the person ought not to have been adjudged bankrupt or that his/her debts have been fully discharged;
- ii. If the person is discharged with a certificate that the bankruptcy was caused by misfortune without misconduct on his/her part;
- iii. If the person is discharged without such a certificate.

In i and ii above, the disqualification ceases on the date of the annulment and discharge respectively.

In iii, it ceases on the expiry of five years from the date of discharge.

**DECLARATION**

I..... hereby confirm that I am eligible for the vacancy of Horninglow and Eton Parish Councillor, and the information given on this form is true and accurate record.

Signature..... Date: .....

**Horninglow and Eton Parish Council is duty bound to treat this information as strictly confidential.**



## APPENDIX C

### CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

COMPETENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<b>Personal Attributes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community.</li> <li>• Forward Thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council.</li> </ul>
<b>Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to listen constructively</li> <li>• A good team player</li> <li>• Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects Solid Interest in local matters</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community</li> <li>• Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others views and accept majority decisions.</li> <li>• Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly.</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff.</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other parish Councils, principal authority, charities).</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body</li> <li>• Experience of working with voluntary and or local community / interest groups</li> <li>• Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish Councils or local authorities</li> <li>• Experience of delivering presentations</li> </ul>
<b>Circumstances</b>	Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time and events in the evening and at weekends.	