

Parish Council Co-option Procedure

1. Vacancy & Advertisement

The Parish Council will advertise vacancies for co-option and invite applications by a specified deadline.

The advertisement will include:

- Interview date(s) and the Full Council meeting date for co-option
- Expectation that candidates **attend at least one Council meeting** prior to interview (desirable but not mandatory)
- Format of interviews (preferably in person; remote attendance may be accommodated where necessary)
- Notice that **technical issues (for remote interviews)** may affect allocated time
- Statement that **interview scheduling is fixed**, and candidates are expected to be available
- Encouragement for unsuccessful candidates to remain engaged and attend future Council activities

2. Application Stage

Interested candidates must submit, [either online](#) or by email to clerk@haydonwick.gov.uk

- A written expression of interest (to the Chief Officer)
- Relevant background, skills, and reasons for applying

If only one eligible applicant applies for a single vacancy, the Council may wish to proceed directly to co-option at Full Council (subject to resolution). However, the Council is not obliged to appoint the candidate and may choose not to fill the vacancy at that time.

3. Formation of Co-option Panel

- A **Co-option Panel** (of 3 Councillors) will be formed following discussion at Full Council and overseen by the Chief Officer
- Panel members will have substantial experience in parish council governance, finances, council work and community engagement
- Councillors involved will be selected based on **skills and objectivity**, not availability alone



4. Pre-Interview Preparation

The Panel, with oversight from the Chief Officer, will:

- Agree **key qualities and competencies** required for the role (e.g. community awareness, teamwork, integrity, communication)
- Establish a **shared benchmark** using the first candidate interview as a reference point (flexible, not rigid scoring)
- Avoid overly complex scoring systems; focus on **comparative discussion and evidence-based judgement**

5. Interview Process

- Interviews will last up to **30 minutes**
- Preferably conducted **in person**, though remote interviews may be permitted where necessary
- Each candidate will:
 - Introduce themselves and outline their interest
 - Respond to structured but conversational questions
- Panel members should:
 - Encourage candidates to **speak openly**
 - Focus on understanding motivation, values, and contribution potential
- The process should be **consistent but not overly rigid**, allowing natural discussion

6. Panel Deliberation

After interviews:

- The Panel will **discuss candidates collectively**, rather than relying solely on numerical scores
- The first candidate may be used as a **benchmark**, with subsequent candidates assessed relative to this
- The Panel will agree on a **recommended candidate** based on merit and fit

7. Recommendation & Notification

- The Panel will propose their candidate to Full Council
- The Chair of the Panel (or the Chief Officer) will:
 - Inform the successful candidate
 - Inform unsuccessful candidates and encourage continued involvement

8. Formal Co-option at Full Council

At the next Full Council meeting:

- A Councillor must **propose and second** the recommended candidate



- Councillors must vote in accordance with Standing Orders

Voting process:

- By **show of hands**
- Candidate must receive an **absolute majority**

If no majority is reached:

- The candidate with the lowest votes is eliminated
- Voting continues until a majority is achieved

9. Declaration & Induction

- The successful candidate is formally declared co-opted
- They join the meeting table and sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office
- They hold the same status and responsibilities as any elected councillor

10. Additional Notes

- Co-option is a **legitimate and lawful part of the electoral process**
- Co-opted councillors serve the community equally alongside elected members
- As they are not elected by public vote, **Councillor allowances cannot be claimed**