

# Didmarton Parish Council

## CO-OPTION PROCEDURE – April 2024

Parish Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met (i.e. The vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered electors have requested an election by a deadline date specified by the District Returning Officer).

Although seeking 'expressions of interest' is not a legal requirement, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more potential candidates.

Whenever the need for co-option arises, Didmarton Parish Council will:

- Advertise the vacancy to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' from anyone in the Parish who is eligible to stand as a Parish Councillor.
- At the next full council meeting:
- The clerk will confirm the names of persons wishing to fill the vacancy / vacancies.
- The chairman is to offer opportunity for debate on candidates for co-option.
- The chairman will then place the names of those nominated into alphabetical order and proceed to vote. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled.
- Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders by a show of hands and will continue until one candidate has received an absolute majority of those Councillors present. At this stage, the successful candidate will be declared co-opted.
- Should no single candidate receive a majority on the first vote, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated. Voting will then take place for the remaining candidates until one person receives an absolute majority, (NOTE: A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting).
- The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Parish Council and will be asked to join the meeting.
- The successful candidate is a councillor in their own right and is no different to any other member; co-option is a legitimate form of election as part of the election process.

Adopted on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 – minute reference number 24.04.9.2

Review date, April 2026