

# **LAVERSTOCK & FORD PARISH COUNCIL**

**Subject:** Enhanced Recruitment Pathway for Parish Councillors

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## **1. Report Summary**

This report proposes recommendations for a policy and procedure to recruit residents who volunteer to become Parish Councillors.

The Enhanced Recruitment Pathway recommends how candidates will be assessed from two perspectives:

- To ensure the person is of good character and has the resolve and commitment to make a full contribution to the Councillor role.
- Information giving, to ensure the person has a full understanding of the role of Parish Councillor and the full implications of accepting this responsibility.

## **2. Background**

The co-option process presently adopted by Laverstock & Ford Parish Council (PC) offers little or no opportunity to assess the resolve, commitment, and good character of candidates before they are co-opted. In effect the PC votes a candidate in after they turn up as an observer for a minimum of two meetings and express a desire to serve. Informal meetings with the Chair and/or a nominated Councillor are recommended but these are in essence 'information giving meetings'. No assessment is made of suitability before a candidate is voted in.

## **4. Recommendations**

The Council are asked to consider the draft Policy and Procedures and approve them at the next Parish Council meeting.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE  
FOR THE  
CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLORS TO LAVERSTOCK AND FORD PARISH COUNCIL

### **Introduction**

The co-option of Parish Councillors can occur either where a vacancy remains after an election or where the resignation of a councillor causes a 'casual vacancy' to occur. This guidance assumes that, where a casual vacancy has arisen, the Clerk has complied with the statutory requirements that will allow co-option to proceed lawfully.

### **Purpose**

This policy identifies the procedures to be undertaken when recruiting candidates to become Parish Councillors. The purpose is to ensure that candidates fully understand the role of a Parish Councillor and all the implications of accepting the position. The Council, for its part has ensured to the best of its ability, that the candidate is of good character and understands the resolve and commitment required to fulfil the responsibility.

### **Related Policies**

Related policies which may have a bearing on the Co-option of Councillors policy  
Code of Conduct July 2012  
Good Councillors Guide 2018  
Activities Sheet VRB Aug 2019  
Declaration of Acceptance of Office.  
Statutory Instrument July 2012

### **Pre Co-option process**

This process is intended to ensure that the prospective Councillor is fully aware of the day-to-day activity and workload of the PC, the role of Councillors serving the Parish and the limitations of their authority.

- The candidate will be assigned two Councillors who act as sponsors and oversee the pre co-option process. Normally the Chair plus one other
- The candidate will be expected to attend a minimum of two Parish Council meetings as an observer, before being considered for co-option.
- At an initial (informal) meeting with the Chair, after the Candidate has attended one PC meeting, a full set of documents will be made available to him/her. These to include: Good Councillor Guide, Code of Conduct, Activities Sheet and Statutory Instrument.
- After the candidate has attended a second PC meeting, the Sponsors will arrange a formal interview to discuss the documentation and assess suitability. This will include:
  - Minutes of the last meeting observed, to provide an opportunity for a two-way discussion on the events.
  - The Candidate's reasons for wishing to join the Parish Council.

- Structure of the Parish Council.
- Current and future activities of the Parish Council.
- Roles and responsibilities of Councillors within the parish
- Subgroups and the candidate choice
- The Question/Scoring Sheet will be completed.
- The outcome of the interview and recommendation of the Sponsors will be reported to Councillors who will then have the opportunity to vote on co-option.

### **Post Co-option process**

A number of actions are essential to assist the integration of new Councillors, post co-option, into the Laverstock and Ford Parish Council. The following process should be adopted:

- Plans, policy, and guidance documents should be identified, both on-line and by provision of hard copy where appropriate.
- Formal follow-up training should be encouraged post co-option.
- A Councillor should be appointed to mentor each new Councillor, with the level and duration of mentoring dependent on their experience and knowledge of parish issues.

### **References**

Prospective candidates will be required to provide two references of good character.

### **Appendices**

1. Scored Questions: for use by the Sponsors during their meeting with the candidate.
2. Briefing Pack: to include a map showing the parish boundaries, location of Open Spaces and facilities for which the PC has responsibility and identification of ward boundaries.

Summary of current PC workload with a brief description of each.

Organisational structure of the PC to identify subgroup structure and other responsibilities.

### 3. SCORED QUESTIONS

V2. 18/01/21

### COUNCILLOR RECRUITMENT PATHWAY

#### Scoring Sheet

Number	Question	Score
0	Not read the Code of Conduct Answers irrelevant. Hesitant about working collectively. No experience of working with a team Not forthcoming about personal goals	1
1	Has read the Code of Conduct and shows some effort to understand the fundamentals. No examples of collective initiatives. Enthusiastic to learn. Forthcoming when prompted	2
2	Good answers Has read the Code of Conduct and shows enthusiasm to learn and participate. Some examples given of previous collective initiatives. Recognises the importance of working as team No hidden agendas	
1	A matter comes before the PC which is outside your experience/expertise. Would you: - Listen to the debate and try to form your own opinion, asking questions if you need to. - Try to identify which Councillors seem to be knowledgeable on the subject and vote with them - Abstain from voting on the matter	
2	A matter comes before the PC for discussion, but it is in a different Ward from the one you represent. Would you: - Leave it to the Councillors representing that particular Ward - Try to participate in the debate - Abstain from the vote on grounds that it is not in your patch	
3	Can you explain what the rules are about Declaration of Interests. In particular the significance of Pecuniary and non-Pecuniary Interests. How might this effect the way you participate in PC matters and why it is relevant when Councillors debate. The code of conduct gives examples of two different types of interest councillors might have, relevant to council business. Can you give examples of situations where councillors would have a Pecuniary and a non-Pecuniary interest?	
4	<u>Party Political influences</u> You may have Party Political allegiances as is your right to do so. To what extent do you believe such political loyalties will have an influence on your decision making when engaged in debate with other Councillors	
5	<u>Previous experience with a Collective Responsibility</u> Give an example of a recent activity/project where you worked with a group of other people. what did you achieve and what did you find was most rewarding about it	
6	Taking in to account what you know about the work of the PC, do you have any personal goals you would like to achieve in the first twelve months of becoming a Councillor	
7	From the Activities Sheet sent to you in advance of this meeting, could you identify which activities/projects you would like to get involved with if you become a Councillor	
8	The council's work involves spending public money and representing the views of the local community on issues such as planning. How can we ensure the decisions we make reflect the views of the local community?	
total		

