
CO-OPTION PROCEDURE

Co-option is the process by which the Council selects new councillors to fill vacancies on the Council.

Vacancies may occur after uncontested elections where the number of candidates standing is fewer than the number of seats on the council.

So-called casual vacancies may also occur following a mid-term resignation by a councillor, if a councillor fails to sign the declaration of acceptance of office, if a councillor dies or becomes disqualified or a councillor fails to attend any Council meetings for a period of six months. In that case, the Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 stipulate a period of fourteen days during which any ten electors can give notice to the returning officer requiring an election to fill the vacancy. If no requests or an insufficient number of requests for an election are received by the returning officer, the latter will advise a council that it may co-opt to the vacancy.

Cranbrook Town Council manages a fair and equitable process of co-option by following the procedure set out below.

Application

The Clerk will ask each candidate for co-option to submit an application which responds to the three questions below.

- a) Why would you like to become a Cranbrook Town Councillor?
- b) What skills and experience do you bring which would help the Council to achieve outcomes, and what barriers do you think may need to be overcome?
- c) What would you want to see the Council achieve in the next three years, and how can Cranbrook Town Council be different from other councils?

The Clerk will also confirm each candidate's [eligibility](#) to become a councillor.

An item will be placed on the next available full Council meeting agenda.

The Co-option meeting

The Chair will give each candidate an opportunity to address the Council.

The Council will have an opportunity to ask questions.

Where the number of candidates is equal to or fewer than the number of vacancies on the Council, the Council will co-opt the candidate(s) without a vote.

Where the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies the Council will co-opt with a vote. Where a vote is required this will be by a show of hands.

When voting there must be a clear majority for a candidate(s) in order to co-opt. A clear majority means more than half of the votes of the councillors present at the meeting who are not required or permitted to abstain from voting. For example, if 7 votes are cast, the clear majority (more than 3.5) is 4. Where there are two or more candidates for one seat and a clear majority is not reached on the first ballot, the candidate with the fewest votes shall be removed from consideration and the vote repeated until a clear majority is achieved.

The new councillor(s) will sign the declaration of acceptance of office.

The new co-opted councillor(s) will then join the Council table.

As soon as the item is concluded, any new councillor(s) can fully participate in the meeting as a councillor. The summons for the meeting and all supporting documents are available in the public domain four clear working days ahead of meetings. Any new councillor(s) may elect not to participate in any Part B items at their discretion.

Cranbrook Town Council

Date of Approval: 30 October 2023

Date of Review: May 2027
