

# Little Missenden Parish Council

## POLICY FOR CO-OPTION OF A NEW COUNCILLOR

Parish Councils are permitted to exercise their powers to co-opt a person to the Council in order to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met. This means that the vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and less than ten registered electors have requested an election by a deadline date specified by the District Returning Officer.

There is not a legal requirement to seek 'expressions of interest' however the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends that public notice of vacancies be given in order to demonstrate an open and transparent co-option method and also has the potential to attract more potential candidates.

Whenever the situation for co-option arises Little Missenden Parish Council (LMPC) will:

Advertise the vacancy to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone in the Parish who is eligible to stand as a Parish Councillor. All potential candidates will be requested to put their application for consideration in writing with the following additional information: -

- Reason for application to the role
- Previous community and / or council work
- Additional skills

*It is a condition of a Councillor that a means of contact by telephone and / or email will be public information.*

At the next Parish Council Meeting the following process will take place: -

- i. Clerk to confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified as set out in the Local Government Act (LGA) 1972 s79 and s80.
- ii. Chair to offer the opportunity for debate on the order of priority to offer co-option.
- iii. Council will vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option in conjunction with the 'person specification' below and any personal statements and CVS's requested from, and supplied by each candidate. An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote as per the LGA 1972 Sch. 12 Para 39. If there are more candidates than vacancies available the applicant with the least number of votes will be deleted and the vote taken again as necessary until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies.
- iv. A vote will be taken to select the order in which acceptable candidates (decided by the vote at iii above) should be approached to offer co-option.
- v. Clerk to approach and offer co-option to candidate(s) after the meeting in the order of priority determined by the vote at iii above. If the first choice does not accept the post then the second is to be approached and so on until the ranking list is exhausted.
- vi. Assuming the co-option position is filled this will be formally ratified at the next Parish Council Meeting.
- vii. Clerk to notify Electoral Services of the new appointment(s), initiate acceptance of office paperwork, and registration of interests on LMPC website.
- viii. If no-one accepts the vacant post(s) the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals express an interest or until the next election. Co-option cannot take place within three months of the date of an election. Elections are held every four years.

## Little Missenden Parish Council

### Person Specification for Co-Option to Council

COMPETENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<b>Personal Attributes</b>	<p>Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local communities within the Parish.</p> <p>Forward thinking.</p>	<p>Able to bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to LMPC.</p>
<b>Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability</b>	<p>Constructive listener.</p> <p>Good team player.</p> <p>Ability to pick up and run with a range of projects.</p> <p>Keen interest in local matters.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to represent LMPC and the community it serves.</p> <p>Good interpersonal skills, able to contribute, see the opinions of others and accept majority decisions.</p> <p>Communicate succinctly and clearly.</p> <p>Ability to work closely with others to maintain good working relationships with Councillors and staff.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners such as the Principal Authority, charities, voluntary groups, etc.</p> <p>Able to undertake induction and other relevant training.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) in the evenings and very occasionally at weekends.</p>	<p>Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body.</p> <p>Experience of working with voluntary and / or local community / interest groups.</p> <p>Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish councils or local authorities.</p> <p>Experience of delivering presentations.</p>