

Caldbeck Parish Council Procedure for co-option for a new Councillor

The Co-option Policy is to be adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting held on 26 July 2021.

This procedure is based on National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Legal Briefing: Good practice for selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils and draws on advice from Cumbria Association of Local Councils.

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 fewer than 10 registered electors have requested an election by the specified deadline date, 14 days (excluding Sundays and Bank Holidays) after publication of the public notice of a vacancy.

Whenever the need for co-option arises, Caldbeck Parish Council will consider advertising 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 asked to put their request for consideration in writing with the following additional information:-

- Reason for wishing to be Councillor;
- Previous Community/Council work; and
- Other skills they can bring to the Council.

At the next Full Council meeting:

- a) Clerk to confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and s80.
- b) Chairman to offer opportunity for debate on the order of priority to offer co-option.
- c) Vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option, utilising the 'person specification' criteria set out below and any personal statements requested from and provided by candidates. An absolute majority vote (i.e more than 50%) is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch.12. Para 39). The applicant with the least number of votes casted will be deleted and the vote taken again and again until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies.
- d) If more than one vacancy is to be filled, vote to select the order in which acceptable candidates should be approached to offer co-option.
- e) The Clerk to approach and offer co-option to candidate(s) after the meeting in the order of priority determined by the vote at d) above.
- f) Assuming that the co-option position is filled, formally ratify the appointment at the next Parish Council meeting.
- g) The Clerk to notify Allerdale Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment, initiate 'acceptance of office' paperwork and 'registration of interests' on the Parish Council website.
- h) If no one accepts the vacant post(s), the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified or until the next election.

Person Specification for Co-option

Competency	Essential	Desirable
Personal Attributes	<p>Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community</p> <p>Enthusiastic, forward looking, and flexible</p>	<p>Can bring a new skill, expertise, or key local knowledge to the Council</p>
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	<p>Ability to listen constructively</p> <p>A good team player</p> <p>Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects</p> <p>Ability and willingness to represent the Parish Council and the community</p> <p>Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others' views and accept majority decisions.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to work closely with other Councillors and the Clerk.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other parish councils, principal local authorities, charities, Parish Council contractors).</p> <p>Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.</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> <p>Experience of working with the media</p> <p>Experience in financial control/ budgeting</p>
Other requirements	<p>Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Parish Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time, including evenings and at weekends.</p>	

Please note it is a condition of being a Councillor that a means of contact by telephone and/or email will be public information.