



# Welshampton and Lyneal Parish Council

## CO-OPTION OF A PARISH COUNCILLOR POLICY

This Co-option of a Parish Councillor Policy was adopted by the Council at the Meeting held on 8 April 2026

### Introduction

This policy sets out the procedure to ensure there is compliance with legislation and continuity of procedures in the co-option of Parish Councillors to Welshampton and Lyneal Parish Council. The co-option procedure is entirely managed by the Parish Council, and this will ensure that a fair and equitable process is carried out.

### Co-option

The Co-option of a Parish Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council, and no poll (by election) has been called. A casual vacancy occurs when:

- A Councillor fails to make his declaration of acceptance of office at the proper time;
- A Councillor resigns;
- A Councillor dies;
- A Councillor becomes disqualified; or
- A Councillor fails for six (6) months to attend meetings of the full council committee or a committee or to attend as a representative of the Council a meeting of an outside body.

The Parish Council must notify Shropshire Council of a Casual Vacancy and then advertise the vacancy. The electors from the Parish Ward where the vacancy occurs, have fourteen days from the date of notice (not including weekends, bank holidays and other notable days), to request a by-election to fill the vacancy. A by-election will be held when ten electors, from the Parish Ward where the vacancy occurs, write to Shropshire Council stating that an election is requested. If ten electors do not request a by-election within fourteen days of the vacancy notice being posted, the Parish Council is able to co-opt a Councillor.

If a by-election is called, Shropshire Council will organise the election process in accordance with statutory procedures. The Parish Council will pay the costs of the election.

If more than one candidate is nominated a by-election will take place but if only one candidate is put forward, they are duly elected without a ballot.

### Confirmation of Co-option

On receipt, of written confirmation, from Shropshire Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option, the Parish Clerk will:

- Advertise the vacancy on the Parish Council notice boards and website
- Advise Parish Councillors that the co-option procedures have been instigated

The Parish Council is not obliged to fill any vacancy. Even if the Parish Council invites applications for co-option, it is not obliged to select anyone from the candidates who apply. However, it is not desirable that electors in a particular ward be left partially or full underrepresented for a significant length of time. Neither does it contribute to effective and efficient working of the Parish Council if there are insufficient Councillors to share the workload equitably, to provide a broad cross-section of skills and interests or to achieve meeting quorums without difficulty. Councillors elected by co-option are full members of Welshampton and Lyneal Parish Council.

### Eligibility of Candidates for the Role of Parish Councillor

The Parish Council is able to consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that:

- he/she is an elector for the parish; or has resided in the parish for the past twelve months or rented/tenanted land or other premises in the parish; or

- had his/her principal place of work in the parish; or
- has lived within three miles (direct) of the parish.

There are certain disqualifications for election, of which the main are (see Local Government Act 1972):

- holding a paid office under the local authority;
- being the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, or a debt relief restrictions order under schedule 4ZB of the Insolvency Act 1986;
- having been sentenced to a term of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) of not less than three months, without the option of a fine during the five years preceding the election; and
- being disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal practices.

Candidates found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.

### **Applications for Co-option**

Parish Councillor may publicise the vacancy and the process to any qualifying candidate(s). Although there is no Statutory Requirement to do so, candidates will be requested to:

- Submit information about themselves, by way of providing a short summary of their experience, both work experience and personal.
- Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules.

A form may be available for making an application.

Following receipt of applications, the next suitable Parish Council meeting will have an agenda item 'To co-opt a candidate to fill the existing Parish Councillor vacancy'. Copies of each candidate's application will be circulated to all Parish Councillors by the Parish Clerk at least 3 clear days prior to the meeting. All such documents will be treated by the Parish Clerk and all Parish Councillors as strictly private and confidential.

Candidates will be sent a copy of the agenda of the meeting at which they are to be considered for appointment. Candidates will also be informed that they will be invited to speak about their application at the meeting.

### **At the Co-option Meeting**

During the Public Statements section of the meeting, candidates will be given the opportunity to confirm they meet the requirements to qualify as a Parish Councillor as above, give a brief personal background, explain to the Parish Council why they have applied to become a Parish Councillor (lasting no more than 5 minutes) and then be prepared to answer any questions from the Parish Council.

When the item is reached on the agenda, the Chair will ask for the candidates to be proposed and seconded en bloc. When all the nominations have been received a vote will be taken by paper ballot if resolved to do so at the meeting. It is usual for the candidates' names to be put in alphabetical order.

The successful candidate will have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. If there are more than two candidates for the vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps will be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder will then be put to the vote again; this process will, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained. The Chair may have to exercise his casting vote.

After the vote has been taken, the Chairman will declare the candidate who received the highest number of votes, duly elected.

The successful candidate will be invited to formally join the meeting. Prior to joining the meeting, the successful candidate must sign a declaration of acceptance of office.

The Parish Clerk will notify Shropshire Council of the new Parish Councillor appointment. The successful candidate(s) must complete a Declaration of Pecuniary and Personal Interests in accordance with the procedure advised by Shropshire Council.

If insufficient candidates come forward for co-option, the process should continue, whereby the vacancies are again advertised.

**Six Month Rule**

In the event of a vacancy occurring within the six months preceding the regular council elections, the Parish Council shall not make a co-option and shall leave the seat vacant for the remainder of the council term.

Policy adopted 8 April 2026

Next review date April 2028