



Lyng Parish Council – Co-option Policy

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.

To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken the following procedure will be followed by Lyng Parish Council:

1) On receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Services Office at Breckland District Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of Co-option, the Parish Clerk will:

- advertise the vacancy for 4 weeks on the Council notice board and website, and place an advert in the local magazine (where time scale permits)
- advise the Council that the Co-option Policy has been instigated, by sending an e-mail to all Councillors.

2) Applicants for co-option will be asked to:

- submit information about themselves, by way of completing a short application form.
- confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules, by completing an Eligibility Form

3) Copies of the applicant's application form will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk at least seven days prior to the meeting of the full Council, when the Co-option will be considered.

4) Applicants will be required to attend the meeting of the full Council, when the Co-option will be considered. At the meeting, applicants will be asked to give a short presentation (five minutes) and may be asked questions.

5) Discussion about the applications will take place in council session without intervention from the candidates or public. Voting will be according to the statutory requirements, in that, a successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again; this process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained. Councillors shall vote by card ballot. The Clerk shall record the names of members who voted on any question so as to show whether they voted for, against, or abstained. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote only if they voted in the first instance.

6) Voting procedure will be as follows. To achieve an absolute majority as per item 5, card voting will be taken individually for each candidate on the ballot paper. Voting will be For, Against or Abstain. This would be repeated until all candidates have been voted upon. Item 5 of this Policy will be applied until an absolute majority has been achieved by one candidate. If no absolute majority is achieved then no candidate will be elected.

7) After the vote has been concluded, the Chairman will declare the successful candidate duly elected. The successful candidate will join the council meeting as a councillor after signing the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Parish Councillor form.

8) As soon as is practicable following their co-option members will be offered the opportunity to attend a course for new Councillors, or other suitable course, according to the member's knowledge and experience, at the expense of Lyng Parish Council.

9) A copy of the Good Councillors Guide will be provided to all new Councillors, in either printed form or email form, according to their specified preference.

10) The Clerk will seek written permission from all Councillors prior to publishing their contact information on the website.