



RHOSSILI COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Casual Vacancy Co-option Process

To promote best practice through a fair and transparent process that meets statutory requirements, Rhossili Community Council has approved the following process for co-option of a new councillor when a casual vacancy arises:

Seeking applications from the community

1) The Acting Clerk will:

- a) Advertise the vacancy for 4 weeks on the Council notice boards and website and more widely so as to reach as many groups as possible, including those under-represented on the Council.
- b) Ensure that the advert includes contact details for where to get further information about the vacancy, information about the process for selecting a person for co-opting, and the deadline for submission.
- c) Advise the council that the Co-option Policy has been instigated, by sending a memorandum to all Councillors.

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

- a) Submit a short, written application (not more than 2 sides of A4) including reasons why they want to become a councillor and what skills and experience they can contribute and any areas of special interest.
- b) Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules (see appendix).

3) All applicants will be provided with the same information about the selection process and will be treated equally, in a fair and open process.

Community Council Decision

4) Copies of the applicant's application form will be circulated to all Councillors by the Acting Clerk at least seven days prior to the Council meeting at which the co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and all councillors as private and confidential.

5) At the next available Council meeting, when the agenda item is reached, the Chair will call for nominations which should be duly proposed and seconded.

- 6) When all nominations have been received, a vote will be taken, with candidates' names put in alphabetical order.
- 7) A successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting.
- 8) If there are more candidates than vacancies, the candidate with the lowest number of votes will be excluded. If two candidates poll the same number of votes a separate vote to eliminate one of them will be held. Voting will continue with the lowest polling candidate being excluded until the number of candidates matches the number of vacancies.
- 9) Councillors shall vote by show of hands, or, if at least two members request it, by signed ballot. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair has a second or casting vote.
- 10) Only councillors present at the full council meeting may nominate, second or vote upon a person to fill the vacancy.
- 11) Once the vote has been taken, the Chair will declare that the candidate who received the highest number of votes is duly appointed.

After co-option

- 12) Before the successful candidate can participate in Council business s/he must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and deliver it to the Acting Clerk. The individual will be summonsed to attend the next full council meeting where s/he will sign the Declaration.
- 13) The term of office of the co-optee is the same as the elected members and the co-optee has the same voting rights.
- 14) The name and address of the person co-opted will be sent to the Senior Electoral Services Officer at Swansea.
- 15) The Chair and Acting Clerk will be responsible for providing the new councillor with an induction.

Appendix: Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to become a community councillor you must:

- be at least 18 years old
- be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of any member state of the European Union or a qualifying foreign citizen, **and**
- meet at least **one** of the following four criteria:
 1. You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the Rhossili community from the day of your nomination onwards.
 2. You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the Rhossili community area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.
 3. Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the Rhossili community area.
 4. You have lived in the Rhossili community area or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

Full details on eligibility can be viewed at

https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-02/Part%201%20Can%20you%20stand%20for%20election%20Community%20LGW_0.pdf