

Frodsham Town Council Co-option Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 There are two circumstances under which the Electoral Officer of Cheshire West and Chester Council will notify Frodsham Town Council that it may proceed to fill a casual vacancy by co-option:

- a) when a seat has been left vacant because no eligible candidate stood for election at the full elections for a new council. In this instance the Town Clerk would be notified of vacancies by CWAC and that efforts may be made to fill the vacancies by co-option.
- b) during the life of a council when a seat has fallen vacant (because of a resignation, death or ineligibility). The Town Clerk will immediately notify the Electoral Officer and the vacancy will be advertised. If the required 10 electors of the have not called for a poll (by-election) within the legally specified time period (currently 14 days) following publication of the Notice of Vacancy, the Town Clerk would be notified by CWAC and that the vacancies can be filled by co-option. The Council will be notified and they must give public notice of the vacancy if their intention is to co-opt.

1.2 The Town Council is not obliged to co-opt to fill any vacancy. Even if the Council invites applications for co-option it is not obliged to select anyone from the candidates who apply.

1.3 However, it is not desirable that electors be left partially or fully unrepresented for a significant length of time. Neither does it contribute to effective and efficient working of the 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, given that some absence is unavoidable at times.

1.4 Councillors elected by co-option are full members of the Council. Frodsham Town Councillors are volunteers who receive no remuneration or allowances.

1.5 To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken this policy sets out the process to be followed by Frodsham Town Council when co-option is under consideration.

2. APPLICATION PROCESS TO BE FOLLOWED

2.1 On receipt, of written notification, from the Electoral Officer at Cheshire West and Chester Council that a casual vacancy may be filled by means of co- option and on instruction from the Council:

- a) The Town Clerk will announce the vacancy or vacancies to be filled by co-option within 21 days of receipt of the written notification by means of displaying a Notice on the Council Notice board and website. A copy of the Notice will also be sent to the local press.
- b) The Co-option Notice will include the closing date of requests for consideration (between 14 and 30 days after the date of the display) and the number of vacancies.
- c) The Co-option Notice will also be displayed in other locations if instructed by the Council.
- d) The Town Clerk will advise the council when the Co-option Policy has been instigated by notifying all councillors.

2.2 Members may draw attention to the vacancies and the process to any qualifying applicant(s).

2.3 Applicants are recommended to read the publication, “The Good Councillor Guide” which explains more about the role and the responsibilities of councillors – copies can be downloaded from www.frodsham.gov.uk. If you have any questions you are welcome to raise them with the Town Clerk.

2.4 Applicants can apply for a vacancy in more than one ward however a separate application will need to be submitted for each ward vacancy.

2.5 Applications will be considered at the next available full Council meeting. To ensure that applications are included on the agenda they should be sent to the Town Clerk by the date indicated on the application form.

2.6 Application letters should explain how you are eligible and confirm that you are not disqualified (by completing the co-option eligibility form). Application letters should also explain why you are interested in applying and what you think you can bring to the role of Town Councillor. Some topics that you might like to consider are shown in the table below, but please note that applicants are not expected to be able to demonstrate all of these competencies.

COMPETENCY	DEMONSTRATED BY:
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	We welcome people with a wide range of life skills and experience that reflects the local community. We are looking for councillors who can bring enthusiasm and commitment as well as some of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in local matters. • Knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the

	<p>local community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community. • Good interpersonal skills. • Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly . • Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff. • Ability and willingness to work with the council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other Town councils, principal authority, charities). • Ability and willingness to undertake relevant training.
Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the council (or the meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) in the evening and events in the evening and at weekends. • Flexible and committed to the Council • Enthusiastic.

2.7 Applicants will be invited to attend the next full Town Council meeting at which their application will be considered. The Town Clerk will provide applicants with an agenda for the meeting, which will normally be held at the Town Council offices, Castle House, Castle Park, Frodsham, WA6 6SB. Details of Town Council meeting dates are available on the website or from the Clerk.

At the meeting, applicants will be given the opportunity to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes to introduce themselves and explain why they want to join the council.

If there are more candidates than vacancies the co-option will be decided by a ballot of the members. 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 none 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 show of hands, or, if at least two members so request, by signed ballot. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

2.8 On successful co-option applicants will be invited to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office which completes the process for joining the council. Within 28 days of co-option, applicants are also required to complete a Register of Interests which will be provided by the Town Clerk.

2.9 Applicants found to be offering inducements of any kind, at any stage in the co-option process, will be disqualified.