

COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION PROCEDURE

Town councils are permitted to co-opt a qualifying person on to the Council to fill a vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met. To ensure the open and transparent co-option of Councillors the following procedure will be followed.

1. Attleborough Town Council will advertise councillor vacancies on its website and social media. The Mayor of the Council, or Chair of the meeting if the Mayor of the Council is unavailable, will announce vacancies in a Full Town Council meeting.
2. Interested candidates who are eligible to stand as a Councillor are invited to send an email to enquiries@attleboroughtc.org.uk by a specified date of no less than 3 weeks from the announcement. This email should include:
 - a. The reason for them wishing to be a Councillor.
 - b. Previous community, council, educational, work, or vocational experience;
 - c. Other skills they can bring to the Council; and
 - d. Contact information (Please note councillors are required to have a means of contact by telephone and/or email publicly listed, and these emails will form part of a meeting pack prior to the meeting at which a Town Councillor is to be co-opted).
3. At the following Full Town Council meeting (after the deadline noted in point 2) candidates are invited to publicly say something about themselves. Each candidate will be allocated a maximum of 5 minutes. Councillors will be given an opportunity to ask the candidates questions before voting takes place. If there are a significant number of candidates, the Town Council may call an Extraordinary Full Council meeting to allow time for this process.
4. The Chair of the meeting will request the Councillors present to nominate any of the candidates. Candidates will require a proposer and seconder to progress to the voting stage. If there is only one vacancy, a Councillor may only nominate or second one candidate. One candidate needs to receive an absolute majority of votes to become a Councillor.
5. The Chair of the meeting will then place the names of those nominated into alphabetical order and proceed to vote. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled. Voting will be by a show of hands and will continue until one candidate has received an absolute majority of those Councillor's present. At this stage, the successful candidate will be declared co-opted. Should no single candidate receive a majority on the first vote, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated. Voting will then take place for the remaining candidates until one person receives an absolute majority.
6. The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Town Council and will be asked to join the meeting as a Councillor. The successful candidate is a Councillor in their own right and is no different to any other member; co-option is a legitimate form of election as part of the election process.