

# Laceby Village Council

## Co-option Policy

### 1. Introduction

This policy outlines the procedure the Council will use when filling a casual vacancy through co-option.

### 2. Notification

If there is an insufficient number of candidates at an election, the council has 35 working days to co-opt. If the vacancies are not filled within the timeframe, North East Lincolnshire Council may act to fill the vacant seats.

Outside of an election, casual vacancies can arise for a number of reasons. The most common being resignation, disqualification, failure to attend meetings or death. A complete list can be found at [the Electoral Commission website](#).

As soon as a casual vacancy arises the Council will inform North East Lincolnshire Council and a notice issued.

### 3. Eligibility

To be co-opted someone must be eligible to be a councillor and not disqualified. Detailed information about eligibility and disqualification can be found on [the Electoral Commission website](#).

### 4. Application

The application process will be as follows:

- A public notice will be displayed inviting applications for the vacancy. It will clearly specify a closing date for applications. The notice will be displayed on the Council's notice board, and website.
- Applicants will be provided with an application form (appendix A).
- Applicants must confirm in writing (appendix B) that they are eligible to be co-opted and that they have no disqualifications.
- The Clerk will review the applications to ensure eligibility.
- All valid applications will be considered at the next suitable meeting of Council.

### 5. Co-option

The co-option process will be as follows:

- Applicants will be invited to attend the meeting of Council where the co-options will be considered. An applicant will be given three minutes to speak before the meeting resolves to co-opt.
- To be co-opted an applicant must receive an absolute majority of votes of those present and voting. An absolute majority is 50% of the votes plus one. For example, where 10 people are voting six votes would be required.

Council will consider co-option in the following way:

- Where there is one applicant for one vacancy they will be co-opted if they meet eligibility criteria.
- If there are two applicants for one vacancy voting will take place. The applicant with the least votes will be removed from voting until an absolute majority is achieved.

Following co-option, the successful applicant will sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Local Government Act 1972 Section 83(4) states that person elected to the office of chairman of a parish or community council or parish or community councillor shall —

- in the case of the chairman, at the meeting at which he is elected;
- in the case of a councillor, before or at the first meeting of the parish or community council after his election; or
- in either case if the council at that meeting so permit, before or at a later meeting fixed by the council;

make in the presence of a member of the council or of the proper officer of the council and deliver to the council a declaration of acceptance of office in a form prescribed by an order made by the Secretary of State, and if he fails to do so his office shall thereupon become vacant.

Once signed the new councillor will take their seat on the Council.

The Council will inform North East Lincolnshire Council of the co-option.

The new councillor will within 28 days, complete the 'Register of Interests' form and submit it to the Clerk.

The new councillor will be provided with the Code of Conduct, induction materials and a copy of 'The Good Councillor's Guide.' They will also be informed of upcoming training opportunities.

If an insufficient number of applications are received the process will continue until all the vacancies are filled.

## Appendix A – Application Form

Thank you for your interest in becoming a co-opted Councillor.

A candidate for co-option must be eligible and not disqualified. [Please visit the Electoral Commission website for detailed information.](#) It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure their eligibility for office.

If someone is successfully co-opted, they will hold office until the next ordinary elections. These are held every four years.

Please provide the below information to assist the Council in making its decision.

### About you

Name:		
Address:		
Telephone:		
Email:		

In the space below please provide the Council with some background information about yourself.

### Reasons for applying

In the space below please provide the Council with your reasons for wanting to become a Councillor.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return your completed application and declaration forms to the Clerk via email – [clerk@laceby-village-council.net](mailto:clerk@laceby-village-council.net)

## Appendix B: Eligibility Declaration form

### Eligibility

To be co-opted to Laceby Village Council you must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights.

You must also meet at least one of the four qualifications below. **Please tick which qualification or qualifications you meet.**

- ☐ You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the parish.
- ☐ You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish area during the last 12 months.
- ☐ Your main or only place of work during the last 12 months has been in the parish.
- ☐ You have lived in the parish or within three miles of it during the whole of the last 12 months.

### Disqualifications

You cannot be considered for co-option for one or more of the following reasons:

- You are employed by the parish council or hold a paid office under the parish council (including joint boards or committees).
- You are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order.
- You have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence), without the option of a fine.
- You have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices).
- You are subject to the notification requirement of or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- You have been convicted of an intimidatory criminal offence motivated by hostility towards a candidate, future candidate or campaigner or holder of a relevant elective office. A disqualification order will mean someone is disqualified from holding any relevant elective office for five years.

### Declaration

I confirm that I am eligible to be co-opted, not disqualified and that the information I have provided is both true and accurate.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C: Template Declaration of Acceptance of Office

### Declaration of Acceptance of Office - Chair

I ..... having become the Chair of Laceby Village Council declare that I will take that office upon myself and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgement and ability.

Signed ..... Date .....  
**Chair**

This undertaking was made and signed before me.

Signed ..... Date .....  
**Proper Officer**

.....  
Under the Local Government Act 1972 section 83, every councillor and chairman must make, in the presence of a member of the council or the proper officer of the council and deliver to the council, a written declaration of acceptance of office. Failure to do so shall render his/her office vacant.

### Declaration of Acceptance of Office - Member

I ..... having become the Member of Laceby Village Council declare that I will take that office upon myself and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgement and ability.

Signed ..... Date .....  
**Member**

This undertaking was made and signed before me.

Signed ..... Date .....  
**Proper Officer**

.....  
Under the Local Government Act 1972 section 83, every councillor and chairman must make, in the presence of a member of the council or the proper officer of the council and deliver to the council, a written declaration of acceptance of office. Failure to do so shall render his/her office vacant.