



GRENDON UNDERWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

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CASUAL VACANCY POLICY

CP02.01

Authorised & Adopted: GRENDON UNDERWOOD PARISH COUNCIL
Reviewed as shown in the Policy Review Record CD08A

CHANGE LOG	
v.1 March 2025	To formalise relevant personnel terms of reference; recruitment guidance Adopted by resolution of full Council at a properly constituted general meeting held 27 th May 2025 - minute:

I PURPOSE

1. Pursuant to relevant section(s) of the Localism Act 2011, Grendon Underwood Parish Council ('the Council') is a duly authorised local authority coming under the Grendon Underwood Ward of Buckinghamshire County unitary authority with a mandated requirement to maintain a minimum number of Members as designated by the unitary authority.
2. This Policy addresses those legal and regulatory obligations such as to maintain and ensure a sustainable, effective membership for the consistent delivery of Parish Council statutory duties and obligations
3. This Policy provides the framework within which Council will effectively manage and conduct its administrative arrangements in relation to the requirements of the relevant legislation for the filling of casual vacancies either by election or by co-option of Members such as to ensure the timely and efficient compliance with its statutory obligations and delivery of its duties in regard to the expectations of the residents of the Parish.
4. In addition, it is also designed to ensure co-option of Members, as necessary from time to time, is carried out in a demonstrably public, fair, equal and transparent manner such as to maintain a viable working membership.
5. Council has made every effort to ensure all relevant statutory requirements to which a council is subject are encompassed in this Policy but confirm that, in any event, those requirements apply whether or not they are incorporated herein.
6. This Policy has been drawn up within the context of the Parish Council's Personnel Policy, its Freedom of Information Policy, its Equality Policy and its Data Protection Policy, which should be read in conjunction with this policy, and every effort has been made to ensure this Policy is consistent with other Council Policies where relevant.

NOTES:

- 'Council' means Grendon Underwood Parish Council.
- 'County' means the Democracy Dept of Buckinghamshire Council Unitary Authority.
- Unless otherwise expressed, a reference to a Member of the Council means elected Members and co-opted Members, with or without voting rights.
- A 'co-opted member' is a person who is not an elected member of the Council but who has been co-opted onto the Council, or a committee or sub-committee properly constituted by Council, by a majority of elected Councillors conforming to the requirements of this Policy, and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of Council or that committee or sub-committee.
- A 'meeting' is a properly constituted meeting of the Council, any of its committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.
- Where gender specific wording is used, meaning is intended to be gender neutral.

II SCOPE

Buckinghamshire Council has designated the viable membership of Grendon Underwood Parish Council, relative to the size of the electorate in the Parish, at seven (7) seats.

A Casual Vacancy will arise in the event of a Member resignation or other termination of membership resulting in Council membership being reduced below this maximum, for any reason. At such time Council is obliged to seek to supplement the remaining membership, subject to prevailing circumstances, but only up to the designated maximum, in order to ensure the effective delivery of its statutory duties and discretionary services to the community.

At the discretion of Council and in the public interest, the most expedient method for increasing membership will be through co-option and this Policy defines how this will be conducted whilst conforming to all legal requirements. Co-option will be substituted by an election, arranged by County, at the request of least ten (10) residents of the Parish. Co-option remains the only option for filling a casual vacancy within six (6) months of a Parish or County election. In the event of a casual vacancy for a Member arising, and falling within this Scope, Council shall initiate this Policy to supplement Council Membership.

III POLICY

1. Within seven (7) working days of notification of the vacancy, Council will publicise the vacancy on local council notice boards and its web site ONLY. Council shall use the County approved Notice of Member Vacancy, CD23, stating a closing date and requiring all applicants to register their interest by email to the Parish Clerk in the first instance.
2. Concurrently, Council will nominate two Councillors, not including the Chairman, to lead the co-option process in line with this Policy.

Co-option Procedure –

3. On the day after the closing date, the Clerk will consolidate all applications received and forward them to all Councillors.
4. In the event a Member recognises an applicant as having some relationship, association or dealings outside the Council with the Member or with his/her close family, the Member must immediately notify the Chairman of the association and its nature and exclude him/herself from any debate determining the progression of the candidate to co-option.
5. On the day after the closing date or as soon as practicable, the Clerk will acknowledge receipts and issue a co-option pack, comprising an Application/ Eligibility form and a Declaration of Pecuniary Interests to every applicant and outlining the selection process.
6. The acknowledgement will invite the applicant to attend the next Council meeting to enable introductions and ask/answer any questions or clarifications. This will NOT constitute a formal interview. The Clerk will also stress the importance of familiarisation with the Council website.
7. The applicant will be advised that any demonstration of commitment to the local community, such as having attended at least three council meetings and/or demonstrating an awareness of Council Policies, especially the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders as published on the Council web site, will be favourably considered and would help them to assess how they could best contribute to the workings of the Council to the benefit of the community.
8. The lead councillors will carry out an initial review of all application(s), using form CD12A, to assess relevance of qualifications, experience & achievements and to confirm eligibility for co-option and to consider any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI) for relevance to Council work.
9. The Chairman will advise unsuccessful candidates as soon as reasonably possible.
10. At the discretion of Council, the lead councillors may invite one, some or all applicants to a formal interview. This will be carried out using council document CD12 for impartiality and consistency, especially if the applicant is not well known or who has not worked with Council previously.
11. Invitation to interview is not necessarily a support or bar to appointment.
12. Following any discretionary interviews, the lead councillors will submit a recommendation regarding the suitability, or not, of applicants for co-option, to the next properly constituted, full council meeting.
13. The full Council will decide on co-option or not, by resolution, through a majority vote which shall be final. In the event of a tied vote, the Chairman will have the casting vote.
14. The resolution minute will not include any personal information for GDPR compliance.
15. On instruction, the Clerk will advise all candidate(s) of the Council decision.
16. The Clerk will email the successful candidate to include a Declaration of Acceptance form for signature and stress familiarity with Council Policies & Standing Orders.
17. The Clerk will also notify County of the Member co-option and forward mandatory forms.
18. The Clerk will update the Council website with Councillor details and Disclosable Interests.
19. The co-opted Councillor adopts voting rights at the next council meeting.
20. As soon as practically possible after co-option, the Chairman will issue the co-opted Member with an email address together with Council Policy CP07 Electronic Communications Policy, defining the stipulations governing its use exclusively for Council business, the prohibiting of its use for private business or for any illegal, casual or recreational purpose, or for purporting to represent the Council in the absence of an active, authorising, minuted council resolution to the contrary.

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