



Rusthall

Parish Council

CO-OPTION POLICY

Introduction

Rusthall Parish Council consists of nine councillors and an election is held every four years. Should a councillor leave the council mid-term the clerk will immediately inform the parishioners of the casual vacancy by posting a notice on all notice boards; on the website and, if time allows, in the village magazine.

The announcement (which is open for 14 working days) will advise that there is a vacancy and if ten electors wish to give notice in writing to the Returning Officer an election will be held (within 60 days). The aim of this policy is to explain the procedure for co-opting a councillor when an election has not been requested by the public.

Procedure

Notices are posted advising the community that the Parish Council will now co-opt. Qualified persons are invited to contact the clerk within 14 working days. An interview panel will be established by the council to conduct interviews. The panel will normally consist of a minimum of three councillors and no more than five.

Interview and Voting Process

The principle of fairness is paramount and any councillor who knows an applicant personally should make this known prior to the interview. The panel is obliged to ask each applicant the same questions and will take notes. At the end of the interviews councillors will vote for the candidate they consider to be the best qualified.

The successful candidate must receive an absolute majority of the votes from councillors on the panel. In cases where there are more than two applicants a process of elimination may need to be employed to arrive at an absolute majority.

Example 1

Candidate A gets 4 votes

Candidate B gets 3 votes

Candidate C gets 1 vote

Candidate A is not elected because he does not have a clear majority over the other two candidates votes put together.

Candidate C is eliminated and a final vote is taken between Candidates A & B.

Example 2

Candidate A gets 3 votes

Candidate B gets 1 vote

Candidate C gets 1 vote

Candidate A is elected because he has more votes than the other two put together.

Applicants will be informed of the decision within three days of the interview.