

## **PROCEDURE FOR FILLING CASUAL VACANCIES**

### **Background**

Chearsley Parish Council (the Council) comprises a maximum of 7 Councillors plus a Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). This maximum number of Councillors is determined by statute and is based on the number of voters registered in the Parish.

The Clerk and RFO roles may be carried out by the same individual, although the Council has decided to appoint different people to the roles. The Council also makes 'officer' appointments from time to time. These are non-voting, informal appointments that are designed to bring additional expertise and resource to the work of the Council.

This document deals primarily with the procedure to be adopted when a Councillor vacancy occurs, although a similar process will be adopted for filling other roles on the Council.

When a Councillor vacancy occurs, the Council will at the earliest opportunity decide if it wishes to fill the vacancy. In general, the Council will try to fill vacancies, unless there are circumstances that make it undesirable or difficult, e.g. an imminent scheduled election of all Councillors.

### **Mandatory Actions**

If it decides to fill the vacancy, the Council must as a first step advertise the vacancy. This advertisement takes the form of a published notice that invites electors to seek an election to fill the vacancy. This process is overseen by Buckinghamshire Council which will organise an election if ten or more electors ask for it. The cost of the election falls to the Parish Council.

The form of the advertisement is at the Annex.

If fewer than ten electors ask for an election within the advertised time period, the Council is permitted to proceed to fill the vacancy by co-option, or to not fill the vacancy. There is no proscribed method for conducting the co-option, but for full transparency, the Council has laid out below the process it will use.

Buckinghamshire Council will be advised of the details of Councillors appointed following the co-option process, and any Councillor appointed this way enjoy the same rights and obligations as Councillors appointed following an election.

## **Process for Councillor Co-option**

At its first meeting after the expiry of the mandatory notice period, the Council will decide if it wishes to continue to try and fill the vacancy.

If it does, it will appoint 2 or 3 Councillors to act as an Appointment Panel. The role of this Panel is to ensure anyone interested in being co-opted is provided with appropriate information on the role of a Councillor and other relevant information, to receive expressions of interest and to make recommendations to the Council on subsequent appointments.

At the same time, the Council will advertise as widely as possible within the Parish its intention to co-opt, inviting anyone interested in being considered to put their names forward. A closing date for receipt of any expression of interest will be included in the advertisement which will normally be about 2 weeks from the advertisement date.

If there is just one expression of interest (or, if more than one vacancy, just one per vacancy), the Panel will assess their suitability. To do this it may just use existing personal knowledge of the individual or may additionally ask for a brief CV indicating qualifications for the role and/or conduct an informal interview.

If there is more than one expression of interest (per vacancy), the Panel will ask each for a brief CV indicating qualifications for the roles and/or conduct informal interviews. Once all candidates have been considered, the Panel will meet to determine which is preferred.

Having identified a preferred candidate, or suitable candidate if just one expression of interest received, the Panel will make an appointment recommendation to the Council. It may be that if no suitable candidate is identified, the recommendation is that no appointment be made at that time and the process be repeated or cancelled.

The Panel will aim to make such recommendation to the Council meeting following the one that initiated the process, i.e. normally within a month of starting the process.

The Panel will conduct all its activities privately and treat any information obtained, including the names of anyone expressing an interest, in confidence to the Council. The only name that will be mentioned in public and recorded in the minutes will be that of the successful candidate.

# NOTICE OF VACANCY

## CHEARSLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Local Government Act 1972- Sections 87 and 89

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that due to *<insert reason for vacancy>* a casual vacancy has arisen in the Office of a PARISH Councillor for CHEARSLEY PARISH COUNCIL.

If by *<insert expiry date>* (within 14 days excluding Dies Non after the date of this notice) a request for an election to fill the vacancy is made in writing to the Returning Officer, Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8FF or via email to [elections@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:elections@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)\* by TEN electors for the Town/Parish, or Town/Parish ward (if warded), then an election will be held to fill the vacancy, otherwise the vacancy will be filled by co-option.

Dated: *<insert date of notice>*

Signed: Helen Spurgeon (Parish Clerk)

41 Giffard Way, Long Crendon HP18 9DN

\* Residents of Chearsley parish who wish to request an election must include their names, addresses and a signature and if using the email address we recommend a scanned copy.