

OTTERTON PARISH COUNCIL

Membership of the Parish Council – Casual Vacancies

When a vacancy occurs the Parish Clerk must notify Electoral Services at East Devon District Council with the details of which Councillor has caused the vacancy. The vacancy must then be advertised on the Parish noticeboard and website for a period of 14 working days excluding bank holidays and weekends. During this time an election can be requested by 10 electors from the electoral area in writing to Electoral Services at East Devon District Council. The request must be received by the last date on the notice for an election to be held.

If the 14 days have passed and no request for an election has been received by the last date shown on the notice, the Council will be informed that they can co-opt a suitable person onto the Council to fill the vacancy.

The procedure for co-opting is as follows:

1. Casual vacancies will be advertised on the Council noticeboard, the Parish web site and through any other medium which the Council or Clerk consider suitable.
2. Prospective candidates will be asked to submit information about themselves to the Parish Clerk, to include:
 - Length of residence in the Parish
 - Membership and involvement with any community associations within the Parish or elsewhere
 - Particular interests and concerns in the Parish
 - Professional or work related experience which could be utilised for the benefit of the Parish
 - Confirmation that they have the time available to attend meetings and deal with Council business
3. Applications for co-option will be considered at the next meeting of the Council. The Clerk will invite prospective candidates to attend the meeting.
4. Prior to the meeting at which applications will be considered the Clerk will circulate to all Councillors the information provided by the prospective candidates.
5. At the Council meeting prospective candidates will be given five minutes to introduce themselves, give information on their background and experience and

explain why they wish to become a member of the Council. The process will be carried out in public session and there will be no private discussions between Councillors prior to a vote being taken. Voting will take place in the normal way as soon as all candidates have finished giving their submissions.

6. In order for a candidate to be elected to the Council, it will be necessary for them to obtain an overall majority of votes cast (50% + 1 of the votes available at the meeting). If there are more than two candidates and there is no candidate with an overall majority in the first round of voting the candidate with the least number of votes will drop out of the process. Further rounds of voting will then take place with the process repeated until a candidate has an overall majority. The Council is not obliged to co-opt anyone if it is felt that candidates are not suitable.

7. If insufficient candidates come forward for co-option, the vacancy will be re-advertised.

December 2016