

**Committee: FULL COUNCIL**

**Date: 23 January 2024**

**Title: Co-option**

**Purpose of Report**

Members to consider an application for the casual vacancy on Ilminster Town Council.

**Recommendation:**

Members resolve to appoint the candidate as a co-opted Member of Ilminster Town Council and to allow him, upon signing the Declaration of the Acceptance of Office to assume his role on the Town Council.

**Report:**

1. As a result of a resignation on 18 October 2023, Ilminster Town Council has found itself in a position of needing to co-opt a new Member onto the Town Council.
2. The vacancy was notified to Somerset Council in accordance with legislation that a Casual Vacancy had arisen. This was done and, on the 26 October 2023, a Public Notice of Vacancy was posted on the Town Council's official noticeboard as directed by Democratic Services at Somerset Council.
3. On the 17 November 2023, officers were informed that there had been no request for an election to take place and as a result the Town Council should now look to fill the vacancy through co-option. The vacancy was posted on noticeboards and on the council's social media feeds for a 4 week period.
4. At the Full Council meeting on the 21 February 2023 Members resolved to adopt the proposed Co-option Policy as a result of which officers have advertised the vacancy for the required.
5. Co-option papers were made available to members of the public who had requested them. As a result of this, two members of the public initially put their names forward for consideration. However one of these people has subsequently withdrawn his application for his name to be considered. The remaining person applying is Jonathan Morris.
6. Mr Morris has been made aware of the "Co-option Policy and a copy of this has been attached for Members information as **APPENDIX 11A**. Details have also been circulated to Members in a confidential email prior to receiving this report. He has returned all of the paperwork and the Town Clerk is able to confirm that he meets the eligibility criteria to be considered as a councillor.
7. When the meeting reaches the point in the agenda for this item to be considered, he will be invited to address Members. The candidate will be given 5 minutes with a 4 minute warning given.
8. Following the presentation an opportunity will be given for Members to

ask questions of the candidate. It would be preferable that any questions be limited in number through the Chair of the meeting.

9. It should be noted that there is no legal obligation for Members to fill the vacancy. If a candidate does not achieve the required number of votes, i.e. an absolute majority of 50% plus one vote, then they will not be appointed to the council. The vacancy would then be advertised and the process would start again.

10. Members may wish to agree that any co-opted Members be appointed at the meeting should be allowed to stay for the whole of the meeting and participate in discussions. They would not however be allowed to vote on any matters as they would not have been summoned to the meeting and served with an agenda for the meeting.

11. Once a newly co-opted Member completes a "Declaration of Office" form they will be entitled to attend council meetings as Members. They will also be required to submit a "Register of interest" form and this will be sent through to Somerset Council. This must be completed within 28 days of accepting office.

12. If Members are agreed on the appointment, then they will be required to resolve to appoint the individual formally.

**Mark Tredwin  
Town Clerk  
January 2024**