

**Committee: FULL COUNCIL**

**Date: 20 July 2021**

**Title: Co-option of new councillors**

**Purpose of Report**

Members to consider three applications for the two vacancies on Ilminster Town Council

**Recommendation:**

This can be a single recommendation, or it can be a number that emanate from the report.

**Report:**

1. As a result of two resignations in March 2021 Ilminster Town Council has found itself in a position of needing to co-opt two new members onto the town council.
2. Co-option papers were made available to members of the public who had requested them. As a result of this three members of the public have put their names forward for consideration. These three people are:
  - a) Ben Jenner-Hurford
  - b) Margaret Masters
  - c) Neil Tinson
3. Each of the candidates has been made aware of the “Co-option Procedure” and a copy of this has been attached for members information as **APPENDIX 8-1**. The requisite information regarding each of the candidates will be distributed to members with this report.
4. When the meeting reaches the point in the agenda for this item to be considered, candidates will be asked to wait in the area adjoining the chamber during which time each candidate will be invited to address members.
5. Each candidate will be invited in alphabetical order to present themselves to council and will be given 5 minutes with a 4 minute warning given.

6. It should be noted that there is no legal obligation for members to fill either of the vacancies.<sup>1</sup> 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.
7. 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. They would not however be allowed to vote on any matters as they would not have been summoned to the meeting and served with and served with an agenda for the meeting.
8. Once newly co-opted members have completed 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 SSDC. This must done within 28 days of accepting office.

**Mark Tredwin**  
**Town Clerk**  
**July 2021**

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<sup>1</sup> NALC Legal Topic Note 8

**APPENDIX 8-1**

**Iminster Town Council  
Co-option Procedure**

**General**

The Council can only make a decision when it is meeting as a Council and follows the legal rules and procedures, this includes the requirements to be convened with an agenda and to meet in public.

**Presentation**

1. Each candidate will be asked to give their presentation (Candidates will be in alphabetical order)
2. Each candidate will be timed - at 4 minutes a warning will be given.
3. At 5 minutes the candidate will be stopped.

**Questions**

4. As it is a formal Council meeting the Chair will control the question time, indicating speaking order etc
5. Councillors may ask questions of each Candidate;
  - In order to be fair, if the question is of a general nature and not about something specific relating to a candidate, the same question must be asked of every candidate.

**Voting**

6. Each vacancy must be taken individually
7. A candidate must be nominated and seconded by an existing Councillor.
8. Voting will be by a show of hands (as there is no provision in Standing Orders for any secret ballots).
9. A candidate must have an absolute majority of those Councillors present and voting in order to be co-opted
10. If 2 or more candidates are nominated and seconded for a vacancy, a vote takes place.
  - If no single candidate receives a majority on the first vote then the person with the lowest number of votes will be eliminated and voting will take place on the remainder. This process continues until one person has an absolute majority.

**Co option Declaration**

11. When 1 candidate has an absolute majority the Chair will declare that person to be co-opted.

NOTE steps 7 – 11 must be repeated for each vacancy.

Further Note: the successful candidate is able to attend the remainder of the meeting but is unable to vote as they will not have been “summonsed” to attend the meeting.