

Looe Town Council

Councillor Co-option Policy



1. Town Councils are permitted to co-opt a person to the Council to fill a casual post once the requirement to advertise such a vacancy has been met. This may be because an insufficient number of candidates stand for election or, when a Councillor leaves, that an election has not been requested by at least 10 voters in the time specified by the Returning Officer.
2. Elections to Councillorship of the Town Council are held every four years. In the event of fewer candidates standing for election than there are seats available, then those candidates validly nominated will be elected unopposed and the remaining seats will be filled by co-option at the earliest opportunity.
3. Although seeking 'expressions of interest' is not a legal requirement, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommend that Councils always give public notice of co-option vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent.
4. The Town Council will advertise the vacancy for a minimum of 14 calendar days to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone in the town who is eligible to stand as a Town Councillor.
5. Posters advertising the vacancy/vacancies will be displayed on Council notice boards and on the Council website, and a notice of co-option will be put onto Looe Town social media channels.
6. Councillors and Officers may point out the vacancies and the process to any qualifying candidate(s).
7. Candidates found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.
8. All candidates will be expected to put their request for consideration in writing, using the standard Expression of Interest form (appendix A), obtained from the Town Clerk, or Deputising person, or from the website. It will be a condition of Councillorship that a means of contact by telephone and/or e-mail will be public information. Looe Town Council is a 'paper-lite' Council so candidates should have the ability to access papers and correspondence electronically.
9. The Town Clerk will receive 'expressions of interest', acknowledge these and confirm that candidates meet the qualification criteria to become a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 S79 and S80.

10. Potential Co-Option will then be added to the agenda for the next meeting of Full Council and the Town Clerk will make Expressions of Interest available to all Councillors in advance of that meeting.
11. The co-option procedure takes place at a Full Council meeting in open Council.
12. At the Full Council meeting, the Chairman will give all candidates the opportunity to speak for 3 minutes if they are in attendance and to allow Council members to ask questions of candidates. In considering candidates suitability reference will be made to the Councillor Person Specification at appendix A.
13. Only Councillors present at the meeting may nominate, second or vote upon a person to fill a vacancy. A Councillor may only nominate or second one candidate.
14. The Chairman will offer opportunity for debate on the order of priority to offer co-option to the candidates. In most cases, the candidates will be asked to leave the room while this process takes place.
15. A vote will then be taken, by show of hands, to agree co-option of the candidate(s). An absolute majority from all those present and entitled to vote is required to carry the resolution.
16. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority, the candidate with the least number of votes will be eliminated and the remainder must be put to the vote again until an absolute majority is obtained (LGA 1972 SCh.12. Para 39) One person will be chosen for each vacancy.
17. Successful candidates are then declared as co-opted to the Council and summoned to attend the next Council meeting. Newly co-opted Councillors can attend the remainder of the meeting. However, they cannot take an active role in discussions or voting at this stage.
18. After the meeting, newly co-opted Councillors will be invited to meet the Town Clerk to sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office after which they can then act as a Councillor. Their entry to the Councillors' Register of Interests may be completed at this meeting or must be filled in within 28 days and a copy provided to Cornwall Council's Monitoring Officer.
19. The Town Clerk will work with the Mayor to arrange a suitable induction for new Councillors including an introduction to:
 - i. Looe Town Council Standing Orders
 - ii. Financial Regulations
 - iii. Councillors Code of Conduct
 - iv. Freedom of Information Policy
 - v. IT and social media policies

20. New members of Looe Town Council are required to attend Code of Conduct training as soon as possible. Further opportunities for Councillor training will be made available throughout the subsequent term of office.

Adopted: 8th August 2023

Minute Reference: 24

Expression of Interest in becoming a Councillor for Looe Town Council

<p>Full Name:</p>	<p>Address:</p>
<p>Contact details:</p> <p>Email:</p> <p>Telephone:</p> <p>Mobile:</p>	
<p>Qualifying Criteria</p> <p>The Town Council may co-opt as a member any person who is legally qualified to hold such office, and who is willing to serve, provided he or she satisfies at least one of the following qualification categories:</p> <p>Candidates must be qualified to stand for election. The Local Government Act 1972, Section 79, sets out the qualifications for standing as a candidate and the grounds for disqualification of a candidate. For more information relating to these qualifications, please see the Electoral Commission’s Guidance.</p> <p>Please confirm (tick box to agree) that you meet the criteria listed below at points 1 to 3 on the day of nomination. YOU MUST:</p>	
<p>1. Be at least 18 years old</p>	
<p>2. Be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union</p>	
<p>3. Meet at least one of the following four qualifications:</p> <p>a) Your name must appear on the register of local government electors for the parish/community at the time of your nomination and throughout your term of office should you be elected.</p>	

b) You have occupied any land or other premises as owner or tenant in the parish/community during 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

c) Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the parish/community area. You do not have to have paid employment to qualify, as long as your main or only place of work is in the parish/community area. For example, Councillors who's main or only job is being a councillor would be able to use this qualification, if their council office is within the parish/community.

d) You have lived in the parish/community area or within three miles of it during 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

4. You may be disqualified as a candidate if:

- You are employed by the parish/community council or hold a paid office under the parish/community council (including joint boards or committees).**
- You have been declared bankrupt in the last five years and not repaid your debts.**
- You have been convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to at least three months imprisonment (including any suspended sentence) within the previous five years.**
- You are disqualified due to corrupt practices under the Representation of the People Act 1983 or the Audit Commission Act.**

**PLEASE TICK TO CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE
APPLY TO YOU**

Why would you like to become a Councillor for Looe Town Council?

What skills and experience could you bring to the Town Council?

What opportunities do you see for Looe?

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes / No

If you have answered yes please tell us if there are any 'reasonable adjustments' we can make to assist you in your application, in the role of Councillor or, for example, with access to meetings:

DECLARATION

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information I have provided on this form is correct and I accept that providing false information could invalidate any appointment to the Town Council.

I consent to my details being retained if I am co-opted as a Councillor.

I consent to the having a Town Council email address and to receiving Town Council documentation via electronic means (email).

I consent to my name and telephone number being published together with my Town Council email address

Signature Date

Full Name

GDPR Permission

Your privacy is very important to us and we take measures to ensure your personal information is properly protected and secured. We will never send any unsolicited message asking you to provide any password, financial detail or other sensitive information by mail, email or through a link. We take appropriate measures to safeguard the information we hold from unauthorised access, improper use or unlawful loss or disclosure. Correspondence and Documents are kept in a secure environment. Electronic databases are stored in secure, password protected locations accessible only by authorised users. Office Use Personal Computers, Laptops and Tablets are encrypted and are protected by security software.

Please return the completed form to:

Town Clerk
Looe Town Council
Looe Library and Community Hub
Looe, Cornwall
PL13 2AF
town.clerk@looetowncouncil.gov.uk

Councillor Person Specification

COMPETENCY ESSENTIAL	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Personal Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community. • Forward thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council.
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to listen constructively • A good team player • Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects • Solid interest in local matters • Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community • Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others views and accept majority decisions. • Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly. • Ability and willingness to work closely with other Councillors and to maintain good working relationships with all Councillors and staff. • Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other parish Councils, town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body • Experience of working with voluntary and or local community/interest groups • Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish Councils or local authorities • Experience of delivering presentations

	<p>organisations, principal authority, charities).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training. 	
Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time and events in the evening and at weekends. 	