



Penrith Town Council

CO-OPTION POLICY & PROCEDURE

The Co-option of a Town Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no poll (by-election) has been called.

To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken the following procedure will be followed by Penrith Town Council.

- I. On receipt, of written confirmation, from the Electoral Services Office at Eden District Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of Co-option, the Town Clerk will:
 - a) Advertise the vacancy for 4 weeks on the Council notice boards and website.
 - b) Inform the Council that the Co-option Policy has been instigated.
- II. Applicants for co-option will be asked to:
 - a) Submit information about themselves, by way of completing a short application form, and submitting their Curriculum Vitae (a copy of the application form is attached as Appendix A);
 - b) Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules, (a copy of the Eligibility Form is attached as Appendix B).
- III. Copies of the applicant's Curriculum Vitae and application form will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk at least seven days prior to the meeting of the Full Council, when the Co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and all Councillors as Strictly Private and Confidential.

- IV. If the number of applicants for a single vacancy exceeds 3, the applications will be heard informally at a specialty convened informal meeting to allow candidates and members sufficient time to review the application and to facilitate time for questions and answers.
- V. No resolution, voting or decisions will be made at this meeting. This is a special informal meeting to allow for an appropriate period of information sharing between members and applicants.
- VI. At the next available Full Council meeting, the press and public will be asked to leave the Council meeting, for the applications to be considered. There are no rules regarding co-option of members.
- VII. The Council may choose who they like but the person must be qualified to have been a candidate.
- VIII. After due consideration, the chairman will reconvene the meeting and it will be reopened to the public and press and voting takes place. Voting will be according to the statutory requirements, in that, a successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting.
- IX. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again; this process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained. Therefore, if there are more candidates than vacancies, the candidate with the lowest number of votes will be excluded.
- X. If two candidates poll the same number of votes a separate vote to eliminate one of them will be held. Voting will continue with the lowest polling candidate being excluded until the number of candidates matches the number of vacancies.
- XI. Councillors shall vote by show of hands, or, if at least two members so request, by signed ballot. If any member so requires, the Clerk shall record the names of members who voted on any question to show whether they voted for, against, or abstained.
- XII. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.
- XIII. Only Councillors present at the full council meeting may nominate, second or vote upon a person to fill the vacancy. At this meeting, members will be informed of the names of anyone wishing to be considered as a councillor.

XIV.If there is more than one vacancy, a councillor may nominate one person per seat. Each councillor will have only one vote per seat i.e. two vacancies will enable two votes.

XV. 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 will continue until one person receives an absolute majority.

XVI. The first candidate to receive an absolute majority of those present and voting will be duly elected.

XVII. After the vote, has been concluded, this business is concluded when the Chairman declares that the successful candidate is duly elected. The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Council.

XVIII.The Clerk will advise the Monitoring Officer of Eden District Council of the names of anyone co-opted to the Council.

XIX.The Town Clerk is responsible for providing each new councillor with an induction, a new councillors pack and should ensure that all new councillors have read and understood the Code of Conduct and the Constitution adopted by the Council.

XX.Before the successful candidate can participate in Council business s/he must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and deliver it to the Clerk.

XXI.The individual will be summonsed to attend the next full council meeting where s/he will sign the Declaration.

XXII.All new councillors must, within 28 days of appointment to office, register their Interests with the District Council Monitoring Officer. Usually forms are supplied by the Monitoring Officers to the Clerk.

XXIII.The Council is not obliged to provide feedback on the application process to unsuccessful candidates.

Approved: May 2015
Reviewed: May 2018
Review: 2025

Penrith Town Council

COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION APPLICATION FORM

PERSONAL DETAILS		
Name:		
Address:		
Telephone Number:		
Email address:		
Are you 18 or over?	YES	NO

Please detail any experience you have that may be relevant to Penrith Town Council (If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet of paper).

Is there any other information you would like to disclose regarding your application? (If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet of paper).

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DECLARATION

Signed

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Name

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Date

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Please return this completed form, together with your Curriculum Vitae and the completed Co-option Eligibility Form to:

Unit 1, Church House, 19-24 Friargate, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 7XR
Tel: 01768 899 773 Email: deputytownclerk@penrithtowncouncil.co.uk

Data Protection 1998/ GDPR 2018

The information provided on this application form will remain private and confidential. And will not be disclosed to third parties.

PENRITH TOWN COUNCIL

CO-OPTION ELIGIBILITY FORM

1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Penrith Town Councillor you must be a British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union; and on the 'relevant date' (i.e. the day on which you are nominated or if there is a poll the day of the election) 18 years of age or over; and additionally, able to meet one of the following qualifications set out below.
 - a) I am registered as a local government elector for the parish; or
 - b) I have, during the whole of the twelve months preceding the date of my co-option, occupied as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the parish; or
 - c) My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in the parish;
Or
 - d) I have during the whole of twelve months resided in the parish or within 3 miles of it.

Please circle which of the above applies to you.

2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 a person is disqualified from being elected as a Local Councillor or being a member of a Local Council if:
 - a) you work for the Town Council;
 - b) you hold a politically restricted post for another local authority;
 - c) you are subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order;
 - d) you have within 5 years prior to the election been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man, of any offence and have had passed on to you a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months without the option of a fine; or
 - e) you have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 for corrupt or illegal practices.

DECLARATION

I (insert name)

hereby confirm that I am eligible to apply for the vacancy of Penrith Town Councillor, and the information given on this form is a true and accurate record.

SIGNATURE

NAME

DATE