



# Starston Parish Council

## Co-Option Policy

### Overview

Co-option is a process of filling vacancies by the existing members of the Parish Council. Parish Councils are able to co-opt new councillors after an election when all vacancies have not been filled, when a councillor resigns, is disqualified or dies. The following procedures outline the process for the co-option of councillors in both election and non-election years.

Procedures in a non-election year

1. On receipt of a resignation/notification of death of a councillor, the Clerk will contact South Norfolk Council to request a formal notice of vacancy. The Clerk will display the notice on the Council's noticeboard, website and in other prominent places in the village. If after the statutory 14-day period a by-election has not been claimed by at least ten electors then the Council is free to co-opt. The Clerk will advertise for interested candidates for co-option.
2. The Clerk may require prospective candidates to:
  - a) attend at least one Parish Council meeting before completing an application form providing personal details and information to support their application for consideration by the Councillors. If they so wish they may provide additional written information to support their application.
  - b) attend the meeting of the full Council at which their application is to be considered.
3. Prospective candidates will be provided with relevant information on the responsibilities of being a Parish Councillor, qualification criteria and the nature of their duties and will also be advised that the Parish Council are not obliged to co-opt any member, if it is felt that candidates are not suitable. The importance of regular attendance will be stressed, also the need to advise of absence from a meeting.
4. The Clerk will circulate to all Councillors the application form and (if applicable) any additional information provided by the candidates. If necessary, an extra meeting of the Parish Council will be held to specifically consider the co-options.
5. At the co-option meeting or Parish Council meeting, candidates will be given five minutes maximum to introduce themselves to Councillors, give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a member of the Parish 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. After candidates have finished giving their submissions,



# Starston Parish Council

Councillors will vote using a voting slip with all candidate names listed and select the same number of candidates as there are vacancies.

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.
7. If insufficient candidates come forward for co-option, the process should continue, whereby the vacancies are again advertised.

## Procedures in an election year

8. If following the close of nominations at an ordinary election of the Parish Council, there is a quorum of elected members, but some outstanding vacancies, the Clerk will advertise for interested candidates (as already detailed) after the date of the election. The Council is able to co-opt any time after the election. The procedures outlined from number 2 will then be followed.



# Starston Parish Council

## Starston Parish Council Application form for co-option to the Parish Council

Name:

Home telephone:

Mobile telephone:

Address:

Email address:

Please detail below why you consider you would be the best candidate for this vacancy.

Points to cover should include the following:

- Length of residence in the Parish if appropriate
- Membership and involvement with any community associations within the Parish or elsewhere
- Particular interests and concerns relating to the Parish
- Do you have any professional or work-related experience which could be utilised for the benefit of the Parish?

If you wish to provide additional written information in support of your application this will be copied to all Councillors and treated in strict confidence.

Please continue overleaf if necessary.



# Starston Parish Council

Please also confirm that you are:

- a British citizen or citizen of the commonwealth or the European Union and aged 18 years or older at the time of your application.
- For the whole of the 12 months prior to your application you must:
- have been an elector of the Parish and either occupied or owned/rented premises in the Parish or resided within 3 miles of the boundary of the Parish, or
- have your principal or only place of work in that area.

You cannot become a councillor if you:

- are subject to bankruptcy order or interim order
- have, within five years before the day of application, been convicted in the United Kingdom of any offence and have had a prison sentence for a period of over three months
- work for the Parish Council

**This Co-Option Policy was approved at a meeting of Starston Parish Council**

**On 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

**Signed**

**Position on the Council – Chair**

**Date of next review – May 2028**