

## TOWN COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION POLICY

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 Bishop's Castle Town Council:

1. On receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Services Office at Shropshire Council, the vacancy can be filled by means of co-option, the Town Clerk will:
  - i. Advertise the vacancy for 4 weeks on the Council notice boards and website, social media sites and, if in an appropriate timescale, the Town Council Newsletter.
  - ii. Advise the Council that the Co-option Policy has been instigated, by sending an email to all Councillors.
2. Applicants for co-option will be asked to:
  - i. Attend the next meeting of the Council as a member of public to observe proceedings,
  - ii. Submit information about themselves, by way of completing a short application form,
  - iii. Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules, by completing an Eligibility Form.
3. Copies of the applicant's application form will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk in confidence, and a written letter to the applicant sent asking them to attend a meeting of the Staffing Committee.
4. Applicants will be required to attend the meeting of the Staffing Committee, when the Co-option will be considered. Councillors not presiding on the Staffing Committee will also be invited to the meeting.
5. The Staffing Committee will be given a set list of questions by the Clerk to ensure that all candidates are uniformly treated and each member of the committee will ask at least one question.
6. In the event of interviewing more than one candidate, each candidate will be invited separately into the meeting.
7. After all set questions have been asked and the candidate given any opportunity to speak fully the candidate will leave the room whilst the Staffing Committee discuss each application.
8. The Staffing Committee will recommend to full Council at the next available meeting that any successful candidates be approved for Co-Option.

**BISHOP'S CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
CO-OPTION APPLICATION FORM**

**Name** .....

**Address for Correspondence**.....

.....**Postcode**.....

**Tel.** ..... **Mobile** .....

**Email** .....

**Are you 18 or over? YES/NO**

**Please detail any experience you have that may be relevant to Bishop's Castle Town Council** (if necessary, please use a separate sheet of paper).

**Is there any other information you would like to disclose regarding your application?** (Such as involvement with other local organisations, personal aims/objectives, personal or business interests in land or premises within the parish that may be subject to planning considerations. If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet of paper).

**Signed**..... **Dated**.....

Please return your completed form, together with the Co-option Eligibility Form to: Mrs Mary Seldon, Town Clerk, Bishop's Castle Town Council, Town Hall, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire, SY9 5BG no later than XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

**BISHOP'S CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL  
CO-OPTION ELIGIBILITY FORM**

1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Bishop's Castle 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 there is a poll the day of the election) be 18 years of age or over; and additionally able to meet one of the following qualifications set out below:

I am registered as a local government elector for the town; or

I have, during the whole of the twelve month preceding the date of my co-option, occupied as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the town; or

My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in the town;

I have during the whole twelve months resided in the town or within 3 miles of it.

**Please tick the statement above which applies to you.**

2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 a person is disqualified from being a Local Councillor or being a member of the Local Council if he/she:
- a) Holds any paid office or employment of the local council (other than the office of Chairman) or of a joint committee on which the Council is represented; or
  - b) Is a person who has been adjudged bankrupt or has made a composition or arrangement with his/her creditors (but see below); or
  - c) Has within five days before the day of the election, or since his/her election, been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man of any offence and has been sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for not less than three months without the option of a fine; or
  - d) Is otherwise disqualified under Part III of the representation of the People Act 1983 for corrupt or illegal practices.

This disqualification for bankruptcy ceases in the following circumstances:-

- i. If the bankruptcy is annulled on the grounds that either the person ought not to have been adjudged bankrupt or that his/her debts have been fully discharged;
- ii. If the person is discharged with a certificate that the bankruptcy was caused by misfortune without misconduct on his/her part;
- iii. If the person is discharged without such a certificate.

In (i) and (ii) above, the disqualification ceases on the date of the annulment and discharge respectively. In (iii), it ceases on the expiry of five years from the date of discharge.

I (*insert name*)..... hereby confirm, that I am eligible to apply for the vacancy of Bishop's Castle Town Council, and the information given on this form is a true and accurate record.

Signed..... Dated.....