

Report No. 1

Report to Malmesbury Town Council 28th July 2015

Process for co-option of councillors

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To invite Malmesbury Town Council to adopt the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee for a process for the co-option of councillors to vacant seats.

2. Background

- 2.1 A vacancy for the office of Town Councillor with Malmesbury Town Council was created on the resignation of Councillor Killane.
- 2.2 The requisite notice was displayed by the Town Council inviting those residents who wished for there to be an election to notify the Returning Officer by the due date. The requirement is for ten electors to make such a request.
- 2.3 In the event that such a request is made then the Returning Officer makes arrangements for the election process to commence.
- 2.4 In the case of the current vacancy a request was not made by ten electors all of whose names appear on the electoral register and the Town Council must now take all reasonable steps to co-op a suitably qualified individual to the vacant seat.
- 2.5 The last time it was necessary to co-opt members to the Town Council was in 2008.
- 2.6 At the meeting on the 21st July the Policy and Resources Committee received a report from the Town Clerk and make recommendations to the Town Council

3. Proposal

- 3.1 Legislation relating to co-option concentrates on the method of voting, not the system for selection.
- 3.2 The system proposed is similar to that adopted in 2008.
- 3.3 The Town Clerk will arrange for a notice to be displayed on the Town Council website, Facebook and the notice boards and a press statement will be issued. Subject to the Town Council agreement this could be posted on the 29th July 2015.
- 3.4 The notice will outline the necessary qualifications required and invite those interested to make a short submission to the Town Clerk outlining why they wished to be a councillor and the skills they could bring to the role. Submissions to be received within 21 days of the notice being published.
- 3.5 The Town Clerk will arrange for all submissions to be circulated to members of the Town Council at the end of the 21 day period.
- 3.6 The Policy and Resources Committee make a strong recommendation that the interviews should be conducted by the Town Council by way of holding an extraordinary meeting rather than as an item on the September agenda. The provisional date recommended is the 25th August 2015.

- 3.7 The Policy and Resources Committee also recommend that the interviews and subsequent voting be conducted without members of the press or public being in attendance.
- 3.8 Standing Orders provide for voting to be by ballot at the request of two or more members and the Policy and Resources Committee recommend that a ballot be used.
4. Financial implications and risks
 - 4.1 Co-option does not carry any major financial implications for the Town Council.
 - 4.2 The Town Council has a duty to ensure the vacancy is filled without undue delay.
5. Recommendations
 - 5.1 Members are requested to agree the method by which co-opted councillors are to be selected and consider the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee.

Jeff Penfold
Town Clerk
22nd July 2015.