Thame Town Council

Voting by Council on Casual Vacancy (Co-option) Procedure

The following procedures should be followed by the Council in the process of appointing a casual vacancy.

1. Notice of the intention to co-opt the vacancy must be included in the agenda for the meeting of the Full Council.

2. When the item is received, the Chairman should call for nominations, which should be duly proposed and seconded.

3. When all the nominations have been received a vote should be taken. The candidates should be put in alphabetical order when the vote is taken.

4. The person co-opted must receive a majority of the votes of those Councillors present and voting at the meeting where the co-option takes place. Where there are more than two candidates for one vacancy, the person appointed must get a majority of votes over all the other candidates. Thus where candidate A gets 4 votes and candidates B and C each receive 2, A is not elected because it is the same number of votes as B and C combined and A does not have a majority over the combined votes. Where there are more than two candidates the candidate with the least number of votes should be eliminated, so the final vote is between two candidates only.

5. After the vote has been taken, the Chairman should declare the candidate who received the highest number of votes duly elected.

6. The person elected must make a declaration of acceptance of office before, or at, the first meeting of the Town Council following their election in the presence of a member of the Town Council or the Proper Officer (Town Clerk). The person elected will also need to undertake to abide by the Town Council's Code of Conduct.

7. The co-optee can join the council meeting making the decision but cannot vote since technically the successful applicant must be served a summons to attend a council meeting and have three clear days notice of the business to be transacted. One way to work around this is to hold a brief extraordinary council meeting to co-opt to fill the vacancy, thereby allowing the successful candidate to take up their position fully at the subsequent ordinary council meeting, subject to their declaration of acceptance of office.

Note
There is nothing preventing Councillors from approaching persons to offer themselves for co-option. Applicants might also be invited to provide a written 'application' or invited to speak to the Council prior to any voting. If such arrangements are to be applied it is imperative that all applicants are treated alike in order that the arrangements are seen as fair. Applicants under such arrangements must not undertake any lobbying.