



Procedure to fill a casual vacancy occurring on the Town Council

Reviewed by the RGS Committee at its meeting on 24 June 26

1. Circumstances in Which a Casual Vacancy Arises

A casual vacancy will arise if a councillor's seat becomes vacant due to:

- Failure to make the Declaration of Acceptance of Office within the required time
- Resignation
- Death

In these cases, the Town Clerk will normally begin the process to fill the vacancy without requiring a meeting of the Town Council or any committee.

2. Other Causes of Vacancy

If a vacancy arises for any other reason—such as disqualification due to six months' non-attendance or any other statutory disqualification—the Town Clerk, on behalf of the authority, will declare the office vacant and begin the process to fill it, again without recourse to a council or committee meeting.

3. Vacancies Arising Within Six Months of Ordinary Retirement

If a vacancy occurs within six months of the date on which the councillor would ordinarily have retired:

- A by-election **cannot** be called.
- The Council may either:
 - Advertise the vacancy for co-option, or
 - Leave the seat vacant until the next ordinary election.

The Council will decide which option to take at its next suitable meeting.

4. Public Notice of Vacancy

Except in the circumstances described in section 3, the Town Council will issue a formal notice of vacancy in consultation with Electoral Services at Epping Forest District Council. Notices will normally be displayed:

- On council noticeboards in the relevant ward
- On the Council's website

5. By-Election Procedure

If a by--election is requested:

- Electoral Services will notify the Town Council and will administer all arrangements for the election.
- Poll cards may be issued by Electoral Services; this is optional and will incur a cost to the Town Council.

6. Co-Option Procedure

If no by--election is called:

- Electoral Services will inform the Town Council.
- The Town Clerk will begin the co-option process without the need for a Full Council or committee meeting.
- Applications for co-option will be considered at the next suitable Full Council meeting.

7. Advertising the Vacancy

Casual vacancies for co-option will be advertised on council noticeboards and through any other communication channels the Council or Town Clerk considers appropriate.

8. Applications for Co-Option

Applicants will be required to:

- Submit information about themselves
- Confirm that they meet the statutory eligibility criteria

Applicants will be invited to make a presentation of up to 3 minutes at the Council meeting where the co-option decision will be made. On completion of the presentation, Councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions.

9. Co-Option Voting Procedure

At the meeting:

- Council to decide whether or not to proceed with the co-option.
- The Council will vote on the applicant(s).
- Standing Order 10.1 (first sentence) will be suspended to allow a **signed ballot**.
- Ballot papers will be issued and voting will take place immediately.
- The Council reserves the right not to make a co-option.

10. Voting Requirements

A candidate must receive a **clear majority** of those present and voting, in accordance with statutory requirements.

11. Acceptance of Office

The successful applicant must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office within the statutory time limit. Once completed, they will receive summonses to Council meetings and may act as a member of the Council.