

Procedures for Notifying and Processing a Casual Vacancy

Notifying Electoral Services

- As soon as practicable after the vacancy occurs contact Electoral Services:
 - Email: electoralservices@durham.gov.uk (**preferred**)
 - Post: Electoral Services, County Hall, Room 1/104-115, Durham DH1 5UL
- Must include:
 - Reason for the vacancy (Resignation, Non-Attendance, Death)
 - Parish Ward (if applicable)
 - Name of the Councillor
- In the case of a death
 - Inform Electoral Services as above, however, the Notice of Vacancy will not be issued until after the funeral has taken place
- Multiple vacancies occurring at the same time
 - Each vacancy is a vacancy in it's own right and will have it's own Notice of Vacancy
 - Must be notified as above

Notice of Vacancy

- Electoral Services will produce and send a Notice of Vacancy
- Advise when it should be displayed (throughout the Parish and, if available on the Parish website – we will also publish a copy on the DCC website)

Request (Petition) to Call an Election

- Valid Petition
 - Must be requested by 10 registered electors from the Parish (Ward)
 - Returning Officer will schedule an election date
 - Electoral Services will notify Parish (Clerk) of the date and issue a Notice of Election
 - Where multiple vacancies have occurred a separate request (petition) must be received for each vacancy (as above)
 - Where multiple vacancies are called to election they can be combined (provided they fall within election timetable deadlines)
- Election Scheduled
 - Multiple valid nomination papers received (ie. 1 seat – 2 nominations/ 2 seats – 3 nominations) - the election takes place
 - Minimum valid nominations received (ie. 1 seat – 1 nomination/ 2 seats – 2 nominations) - those candidates will be elected uncontested
 - No nominations received – the Returning Officer must re-schedule and issue a new Notice of Election
 - This process will be repeated until such time as minimum valid nominations are received
 - The Parish Council **cannot** co-opt to fill a vacancy once an election has been called
- No Valid Petition
 - If the Returning Officer does not receive a valid petition to call an election Electoral Services will notify the Parish (Clerk) that the Parish Council **MUST**

move to co-option using their own co-option procedures (and continue to do so until the vacancy is filled via co-option)

Vacancy occurs within 6 months before day the Councillor would normally retire

- Where a vacancy occurs within 6 months before the day on which the councillor would normally have retired the procedures outlined above should be followed for Notifying Electoral Services and Notice of Vacancy
- The Notice of Vacancy does not make provision for 10 electors to request an election
- The Parish Council **may** co-opt to fill the vacancy
- If the vacancy is not filled by co-option it will remain vacant until the next ordinary elections

Further clarification on any of the above points can be obtained by contacting Electoral Services – email: electoralservices@durham.gov.uk or telephone: 03000 261212 (not available during lockdown)