

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Procedure in the event of a casual vacancy on the Town Council

The Town Clerk should inform The Returning Officer, (Elections Office County Hall Morpeth NE61 2EF) immediately a casual vacancy occurs. This can be in the form of a telephone call, e mail or letter. The Elections Office will need to know the name of the person who has resigned or died.

All vacancies must be advertised for 14 working days and there is a prescribed Notice for this. Copies of the Notice of Vacancy will be provided by the Election Office to the Town Clerk for display. The Town Clerk must publish this notice in a conspicuous place within the ward, and must inform the Elections Office of the date it has been published, as well as provide a copy of the published notice to the Elections Office.

The Notice of Vacancy gives electors in the area the chance to request that an election be held to fill the vacancy. In order to trigger an election such a request has to be received from 10 people who are registered to vote in the area where the vacancy has occurred.

These requests must be made to the Elections Office, NOT the Town Clerk.

Any requests must be in writing in the form of a letter and contain the name, signature and address of the persons making the request, together with their electoral registration number.

There is nothing to prevent 10 or more electors signing one letter as long as all of the required information is provided, ie they ALL sign and complete their address and electoral number on it.

The Town Clerk should check with the elections office at the end of the 14 day period, if less than the required 10 requests have been received then, and ONLY THEN, will the Elections Office give the Town Clerk permission to go ahead with the co-option procedure.

If an election is required, the Elections Office will administer an election, giving due notice and advertising the fact. All enquiries regarding the election and candidature should be made to the Elections Office.

The Town Council will be kept informed at all stages and they will need to decide if they wish for poll cards to be sent out to the electors within the ward. If the vacancy is contested (ie there are more candidates than vacant seats) instructions will need to be given to the approved printer so that poll cards can be printed and mailed out without delay.

All candidates are required to submit Declaration and Return of Election Expenses forms within 28 days of the declaration of result, even if a nil return this is still required by law.

All costs relating to by elections will be re-charged to the Town Council. This includes preparation of Nomination Packs, general administration, hire of polling station premises, staffing on election day and for the Count, printing and postage costs, issue and opening of postal votes etc.

There will be no re-charge for a vacancy filled by co-option.

All matters relating to Elections and vacancies should be addressed to:

Elections Office
County Hall
Morpeth
NE61 2EF

Tel: 01670 624811
E Mail: elections@northumberland.gov.uk

Whether the vacancy is filled by co-option or by an election, the new Councillor must complete forthwith an Acceptance of Office form, to be retained by the Town Council, and also a Declaration of Interest form, to be returned to the Elections Office within 28 days of taking up office.

Town Clerk: Sue Finch
Telephone: 01289 302391
Email: s.finch@berwick-tc.gov.uk
Address: 5 The Chandlery, Quayside, TD15 1HE
Opening hours: 10.30 – 12.30, Monday-Friday inclusive.