**Chard Town Council**

**Procedure for the filling of Casual Vacancies by Co-option**

1. Where the elections officer has notified the Town Council that a vacancy may be filled by co-option the Clerk will advertise the vacancy or vacancies) together with the date of a meeting designated for the Town Council to fill them.
2. The objective of the co-options process is to provide candidates with a transparent process which is even handed and considers each candidate on their merits.
3. In filling a vacancy by co-option, the Parish Council is not however obliged to consider the claims of candidates who were unsuccessful at a previous election, although they may choose to do so.
4. Candidates for the vacancy should submit a letter detailing their reasons for seeking co-option to the Town Council and give some background on their experience.
5. The Town Clerk will confirm that all candidates meet the eligibility criteria for being a member of Chard Town Council.
6. Candidates will attend the meeting and will be called by the Chairman in turn to introduce themselves, for not more than 3 minutes, following which Councillors may ask them questions. The overall time limit for each candidate will be 10 minutes.
7. Councillors will vote in a closed vote indicating their preferred candidate(s) in writing. The voting process will be managed by the Town Clerk.
8. The Council is not obliged to fill a vacancy if a majority of Councillors present and voting do not support any candidate.
9. When filling the vacancy by co-option, a successful candidate must receive a majority of votes of those present. If there is more than one candidate for a vacancy, and no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, the candidate with the least number of votes should be taken off the list of candidates and the vote taken again. This procedure should be repeated until a majority is obtained

for a particular candidate.

1. If there is more than 1 vacancy and the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of vacancies, all the vacancies may be filled by a single resolution of the Council.
2. Successful candidates must give declarations of acceptance of office before taking their seats.
3. Co-opted candidates will take their seats at the first full Council meeting following their co-option.