TENBY TOWN COUNCIL

CYNGOR TREF DINBYCH-Y-PYSGOD

CO-OPTION POLICY & PROCEDURE 2026-2027

Version: 1
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PURPOSE

Tenby Town Council ("The Council") is the closest tier of government to Tenby. It is governed by 13 Councillors representing both of the town's wards who are elected every five years. Periodically, it can be the case that either an ordinary- or casual vacancy among the Council's members occur. This policy outlines the manner by which the Council will seek to fill ordinary- and casual vacancies should they arise.

WHAT ARE ORDINARY- AND CASUAL VACANCIES?

Ordinary vacancies occur when an ordinary election is held (a local election scheduled to take place every five years) and fewer candidates stand for election than there are seats to be occupied. Provided Council is quorate, it shall seek to fill these seats by co-option.

Casual vacancies occur when a duly elected Councillor ceases to be a Councillor. This may be a result of the following:

- Failure to make a declaration of acceptance of office in accordance with legislation
- Disqualification from the office of Councillor or otherwise ceasing to be qualified
- Resignation from the office of Councillor
- The death of a Councillor
- Failure to attend meetings or have absences authorised in accordance with legislation

Provided Council is quorate, it shall seek to fill these seats by co-option.

WHAT IS CO-OPTION?

Co-option is the process by which a Council fills a vacancy by appointing an eligible person to the office of Councillor, in the event that either of the above vacancies arise and no poll (election) has been duly requested.

WHEN A VACANCY ARISES

At the occurrence of an ordinary- or casual vacancy, the Council shall notify Pembrokeshire County Council in accordance with legislation and observe any periods during which a poll may be duly requested.

If no poll should be requested and once the Council has received written confirmation of this from the Pembrokeshire County Council, the Council shall advertise to fill any vacancies by co-option as set out in this policy and procedure and make the required materials available to the public.

The Council shall:

- Advertise in conspicuous places in the ward and community that it seeks to co-opt members for the number of available seats

- In doing so, invite eligible members of the public to approach the Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer for an informal conversation about the role of Councillor and the Town Council, should they wish to do so
- Advertise the statutory criteria for applying for co-option and holding the office of Councillor
- Invite applications for the office of Councillor, and clearly identify where application forms for co-option may be obtained, where they must be returned to, and by which date and time applications must have been made.
- The Council shall advertise for co-options for a period of two full calendar weeks (14 full calendar days), from the first available working day.

APPLICATIONS FOR CO-OPTION

Following the close of the application date, received applications shall be checked to confirm their eligibility in accordance with legislation by the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

All applicants shall receive confirmation of receipt of their application by the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer as soon as practicable.

Any incomplete applications received ahead of the closing date shall have its applicant notified of any required, supplementary information to facilitate complete applications where possible.

APPOINTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS TO COUNCIL

Following the close of the application date, once checked to confirm their eligibility in accordance with legislation, applicants shall be invited to the next available meeting of Full Council for their co-option to be considered. The Mayor, or Councillors, may choose to call for an extraordinary meeting of Full Council in line with Council's Standing Orders should this be deemed expedient.

Either the next available, ordinary- or extraordinary meeting shall have an agenda item to consider the co-option of a member (or members) to the Council.

All eligible co-option candidates' applications shall be shared with Council for consideration ahead of its next available meeting to consider the co-option. Applications will be treated as **strictly confidential**.

At the meeting:

- Candidates will have five minutes to introduce themselves to members, present information about their background, experience and explain why they wish to become a member of Tenby Town Council or anything else they deem connecting with their motivation for co-option.
- After presentations have been made, members will have the opportunity to ask candidates a few questions before proceeding to vote. **Note**: If a candidate is unable to attend the meeting, the application can still be considered, and voting will be based on the application only.
- The process will be carried out in a public session and there must be no discussion between members prior to a vote being taken. **Note**: where the council is discussing the merits of a candidate and personal attributes, this could be prejudicial, and the council should resolve to exclude members of the press and public.
- Following candidate representations and any subsequent questions, the Council will proceed to by secret ballot in accordance with its Standing Orders.
- For a candidate to be elected to the Council, they must obtain an absolute majority of votes cast (50% plus 1 of the votes available at the meeting) by resolution.
- If there are more than two candidates and no candidate holds an overall majority in the first round of voting, the candidate with the least number of votes shall be eliminated. Further rounds of voting shall then take place with the process repeated until a candidate holds an absolute majority.

FOLLOWING THE APPOINTMENT OF A CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR

Following the appointment of a co-opted Councillor, they shall be required to sign a declaration of acceptance of office in line with legislation.

Should the appointment member be present during the meeting, and sign their declaration of acceptance of office, they may join the remainder of the meeting as a Councillor.

REVIEW

This policy belongs to Tenby Town Council and is overseen by Full Council.

This policy was adopted on 10 November 2026 and shall be annually at the Annual Town Council Meeting.

This policy may be reviewed more frequently in the event of relevant legislative change, or in line with Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

CHANGES

No changes have been made to this strategy since its adoption.

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CO-OPTION APPLICATION FORM

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PERSON SPECIFICATION – WHAT MAKES A GOOD COUNCILLOR?

COMPETENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Personal Attributes	**-Eligible to stand as a Councillor** (*See the eligibility form below or Electoral Commission Guidance*) **-Willingness to follow Council's code of conduct and the Nolan Principles** **-Desire to support, contribute to- and advocate for Tenby** (*This might be the things you really care about and what made you want to be a Councillor*)	- **Ability to listen constructively** (*This might be times you've been part of discussions or meetings at work, at a committee or group or anywhere else where you have a different opinion, but have been able to hear the other person out, or when someone's discussing a challenge with you*) **-Ability to work as a team and in collaboration with Councillors, officers and other stakeholders** (*This might be times you've worked with Committee- / trustee- / board members, times you've worked with staff members and employees and times you've engaged with members of the public or people who work in different organisations*) **-An interest in local matters** (*This might be things in Tenby, or that affect it, that you're particularly interested in*) **-Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.** (*Sometimes there is training which the Council might identify as useful for Councillors)*
Experience, Skills, Knowledge, and Ability	**-Able to openly engage with considerations, discussions and debate at Council and attend its meetings** (*This might be times you've contributed to discussions where the topic is complex, important or*	**-Ability to engage in a variety of projects.** (*This might be examples of different types of projects you've helped with either at work or in a voluntary capacity. They don't have to have happened at the same time.*)

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	divisive in an open-minded and respectful way) **-Ability to accept democratically made majority decisions** (*This might be a time where you've accepted the outcome of a vote, even if the result wasn't what you wanted, or agreeing to disagree respectfully*)	**-A strong knowledge and understanding of local matters** (*These might be things you feel you have a unique and valuable knowledge and understanding of, or connections to something important to Tenby*) **-Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community.** (*This might be times you've represented another organisation or group at events, or being a representative of an organisation people might approach day-to-day*) **-Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others' views and accept majority decisions.** (*This might be examples of good teamwork, getting your point across clearly, and times you've continued to work as a team when you've disagreed*) **-Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly.** (*This might be examples of good communication at work, in a voluntary capacity or anywhere else*) **Experience of working with voluntary and or local community / interest groups.** (*This might be any type of experience, from being on a committee, being a member of a group or club or volunteering*) **-Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and community Councils or local authorities** (*This might be your understanding of the purpose of the Council, what it does in relation to Pembrokeshire County*

		Council, or the rules the town council needs to follow)

Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Tenby Town Council
De Valence Pavilion
Upper Frog Street
Tenby
SA70 7JD

Councillor Co-option Eligibility Form (Delete as appropriate)

On the 'relevant date' (i.e. the day on which you may be co-opted as a Councillor) are you 18 of age or more?	Yes / No
Are you a British Citizen, or holder of another citizenship with eligibility to hold the office of a community- or town Councillor?	Yes / No
Are you a registered local government elector for the Tenby community area?	Yes / No
During the last 12 months preceding the date of your co-option, will you have occupied as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the Tenby community area?	Yes / No
During the whole twelve months preceding your co-option, has your principal or only place of work been in the Tenby community area?	Yes / No
During the whole of the twelve months preceding your co-option, have you lived in the Tenby community area?	Yes / No
Under the Local Government Act 1972, section 80, a person is disqualified from being elected as a local councillor or being a member of a local council if specific criteria are met:	
Hold any paid office or employment (other than the allowances or reimbursements allowed to its elected members by legislation) at Tenby Town Council or any committee, sub-committee or joint-board thereof?	Yes / No
Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order?	Yes / No
Within the last five years, have you been convicted of an offence in the UK, Channel Islands or the Isle of Man which resulted in a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of three months or more, without the option of a fine?	Yes / No
Are you disqualified by order of a court from being a member of a local authority?	Yes / No

Application for Co-Option (Casual Vacancy – Councillor)

First Name:	
Surname (Family Name):	
Address:	
Mobile (Recommended):	
Landline (Recommended):	
Email (Highly Recommended):	

Please share why you would like to become a member of Tenby Town Council.

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Please share any skills, expertise or qualifications you feel would contribute to Tenby Town Council in capacity as a Councillor.

DECLARATION

I declare that the information I have provided in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate and true.

Signature:
(*applications submitted by email will be considered signed*)

Print Name:

Date:

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PRIVACY NOTICE

Tenby Town Council is committed to protecting and respecting the privacy of everyone and ensuring it is fully compliant under the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018

DISABILITY DECLARATION

Tenby Town Council welcomes all applications and recognises that some applicants with disabilities may need, or benefit from, additional support to offer an equitable opportunity to apply.

By disability, the Town Council follows the definition of a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities as described in the Equality Act 2010.

The Town Council strongly encourages applicants with disabilities who may require reasonable adjustments to discuss this with the Town Clerk, who will assist with reasonable adjustments, as early as possible or when submitting their application. (Tenbytownclerk@btconnect.com / 01834 842 730).

Any and all information regarding an applicant's disabilities is treated **strictly confidentially**. It will only be used, or shared, insofar as required to facilitate reasonable adjustments discussed with the applicant.

Disability disclosures are not shared during the shortlisting or presentation process, unless an applicant explicitly requests for this to be shared.

Please send the completed eligibility and applications forms to:

Tenbytownclerk@btconnect.com

Or

Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Tenby Town Council
De Valence Pavilion
Upper Frog Street
Tenby
SA70 7JD

Applicants are welcome and encouraged to contact the Town Clerk regarding any questions or queries they may have before applying, either in relation to the application, appointment process or position.

This co-option form is available in the medium of Welsh on request