GRINDON & THORPE THEWLES PARISH COUNCIL
PROCEDURE FOR CO-OPTING A NEW COUNCILLOR

Introduction:

Parish Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more potential candidates.

Whenever the need for co-option arises, Grindon & Thorpe Thewles Parish Council will consider advertising the vacancy to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone in the parish of Grindon & Thorpe Thewles who is eligible to stand as a Parish Councillor.

The Personnel Committee undertakes the procedure for selection of the candidate(s) for co-option and makes recommendation(s) to the full Parish Council.

Procedure

1. As soon as a vacancy occurs, the Clerk will inform the Borough Council Democratic Services Officer and follow the required procedure for the publication of Notice of a Casual Vacancy.

2. If no election is required, the Democratic Services Officer will inform the Clerk that the Parish Council may proceed to co-option.

3. The Parish Council will endeavour to advertise the vacancy as widely as possible, using the Notice Board, social media and quarterly Newsletter (as appropriate).

4. Interested parties will be requested to complete the application form and send it to the Clerk before the closing date advertised.

5. The Clerk will confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and s80;

6. All qualified candidates are interviewed by members of the Personnel Committee, with the same questions being used for each candidate and based on the person specification below.

7. Members will then vote on the acceptability of each candidate for co-option, utilising the 'person specification' criteria set out below and any personal statements requested from and provided by candidates. (The applicant with the least number of votes will be deleted and the vote taken again. This process will be repeated until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies).

8. Personnel Committee will list candidates in order of priority determined by the number of votes each gained and makes recommendation on co-option(s) to Full Parish Council, giving reasons for their decisions.

9. An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39)

10. The Clerk will then offer co-option to candidate(s) after the meeting, in the order agreed by Full Council. If the first choice does not accept the post then the second is to be approached and so on until the ranking list is exhausted.

11. Assuming that the co-option position is filled, and all paperwork completed, formally ratify the appointment at this or the next Full Council meeting.

12. The Clerk will notify Democratic Services of the new Councillor appointment, initiate 'acceptance of office' paperwork and 'registration of interests' on the Council website.

13. If no one accepts the vacant post(s), the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified.

COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability

- Ability to listen constructively
- A good team player
- Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects
- Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their Parish
- Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others' views and accept majority decisions.
- Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly.
- Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and the Clerk.
- Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other Parish Councils, principal authority, charities).
- Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.
- Forward thinking.
- Solid interest in local matters
- Experience of working with voluntary and or local interest groups
- Ability and willingness to regularly attend meetings of the Council. (Please note that the majority of Council meetings are held at 6.30pm and, under present legislation, the Parish Council is not permitted to contribute to the cost of Councillors' childcare or care of dependants.)

Adopted: 14 February 2023

Last Updated: February 2026

GRINDON & THORPE THEWLES PARISH COUNCIL

APPLICATION TO BECOME A PARISH COUNCILLOR

Full Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone Number	
Mobile Number	
Email address	

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR BEING A PARISH COUNCILLOR

(You must be able to reply yes to both questions, to be eligible to stand)

Are you a British, Commonwealth, Irish or European Union citizen?	Yes / No
Are you 18 or over?	Yes / No

(You must be able to reply yes to at least one of the questions below, to be eligible to stand)

Are you on the electoral register for G&TTPC?	Yes / No
Have you lived either in the parish of G&TTPC, or within three miles of its boundary, for at least a year?	Yes / No
Have you been the owner or tenant of land in the parish of G&TTPC for at least a year?	Yes / No
Have you had your only or main place of work in parish of G&TTPC for at least a year?	Yes / No

DISQUALIFICATIONS

(You must be able to answer No to all of the questions below to be eligible to serve as a Parish Councillor)

Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order?	Yes / No
Have you within the last five years been convicted of an offence in the UK, the 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

Please briefly outline of why you are interested in being a Parish councillor.

Please tell us something about the life experience you will bring to the Council, for example, previous local government experience, work in the voluntary or charitable sector, business or trade union experience.

Please tell us something about the skills you feel you will bring to the Council, for example, professional qualifications, financial or project management expertise, listening and organisational skills.

Are there any questions you would like to ask the council?

Signed: …… **Date:** ……..