



ALDWICK PARISH COUNCIL CO-OPTION POLICY & APPLICATION FORM

Version	Date	Description of Change
V1	09/04/2018	New Policy
V2	17/02/2026	Updated

1. Introduction

1.1 There are two circumstances under which the Parish Council may, if it so wishes, proceed to fill a casual vacancy by co-option:

- When a ward seat has been left vacant because no eligible candidate stood for election at the full elections for a new council (currently every four years).
- During the life of the Parish Council, a ward seat falls vacant but the required 10 electors of the ward have not called for a poll (by-election) within the legally specified period following publication of the notice of vacancy.

1.2 The Parish Council is not obliged to co-opt to fill any vacancy. Even if the Parish Council invites applications for co-option, it is not obliged to select anyone from the candidates who apply.

1.3 However, it is not desirable that electors in a particular ward be left partially or fully unrepresented for a significant length of time. Neither does it contribute to effective and efficient working of the Parish Council if there are insufficient Members to share the workload equitably; to provide a broad cross-section of skills and interests; or to achieve meeting quorums without difficulty, given that some absences are unavoidable at times.

1.4 To ensure a fair and transparent process is undertaken, this policy outlines the procedure to be followed by the Parish Council when co-option is considered.

2. Application Process

2.1 On receipt of written notice from the Democratic Services Manager at Arun District Council that a casual vacancy may be filled by means of co-option:

- The Clerk will advertise the vacancy or vacancies to be filled by co-option within 21 days of receipt of the written notification
- The co-option advertisement will include the closing date for acceptance of requests for consideration (between 14 and 30 days after the date of the advertisement) and the number of vacancies, and will be displayed on the Parish Council website, social media platforms and noticeboards

2.2 Members may point out the vacancies and the process to any qualifying candidate(s). Candidates found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.

2.3 Applicants for a vacancy will be asked to:

- Submit information about themselves by completing a short application form (Appendix A), including a description of their interest in becoming a councillor and specifying any skills or qualifications which may benefit the council.
- Confirm their eligibility for the position of councillor within the statutory rules (Appendix B).

2.4 Copies of the applicant's application form will be circulated to all Members by the Clerk at least three clear working days prior to the Parish Council meeting where the co-option will be considered. The application form and any supporting documents will be treated by the Clerk and Members as strictly private and confidential.

2.5 Candidates will be sent a full agenda of the meeting at which they are to be considered for appointment, and will be informed they may, if they wish to, speak for up to 5 minutes, about their application during the co-option item on the agenda at the meeting. The Chair may allow councillors to ask questions of each candidate.

2.6 Once all the candidates have finished giving their submissions, the Parish Council will proceed to a vote on the acceptability of each candidate utilising the 'person specification' criteria set out in Appendix C and any personal statements provided by the candidates.

3. Voting procedure

3.1 Voting will be according to the agreed procedure in standing orders, (S.O 8a.) namely:

'Where more than 2 persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. Any tie may be settled by the Chairman's casting vote.'

3.2 Voting will be conducted as per the agreed procedure in standing orders, (S.O.3r) namely:

'Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on any question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a Councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each Councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.'

3.3 After the vote has been concluded, the Chairman will declare the successful candidate(s) duly elected. A Member elected by co-option is a full member of the Parish Council but is not eligible for the basic parish allowance.

4. Acceptance of office

4.1 The successful candidate(s) must sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office before they can act as a councillor. The Register of Members Interests form must be completed within 28 days and the Clerk will forward a copy to the District Monitoring Officer.

5. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All applications will be treated in confidence by members of the staff, in line with the Parish Council's Data Protection Policy and GDPR regulations.

6. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years or when relevant legislation or Council procedures change.

APPENDIX A
Application for Co-option

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Parish Councillor. Please provide the below information to assist the council in making their decision.

Full Name & Title	
Home Address	
Home Telephone	
Mobile Telephone	
Email Address	
About You Please provide the Council with some background information about yourself.	
Signature	
Reasons for Applying Please provide the council with your reasons for wanting to become a Parish Councillor.	

Signature	

Please return your completed application to the Clerk to the council. Your application will be considered at the next available Parish Council meeting, The information provided on this application will remain private and Confidential.

APPENDIX B
Co-option Eligibility Form

1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Parish Councillor you must be a British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union; and additionally able to meet one of the following qualifications set out below. Please tick which applies to you:

- a) I am registered as a local government elector for the parish; or
- b) I have, during the whole of the twelve months preceding the date of my co option, occupied as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the parish; or
- c) My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in the parish; or
- d) I have during the whole of twelve months resided in the parish or within 3 miles of it 2.

2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 a person is disqualified from being elected as a Local Councillor or being a member of a Local Council if they:

- a) Holds any paid office or employment of the local council (other than the office of Chairman) or of a joint committee on which the Council is represented; or
- b) Is a person who has been adjudged bankrupt or has made a composition or arrangement with their creditors (but see below); or
- c) Has within five years before the day of election, or since his/her election, been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man of any offence and has been sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for not less than three months without the option of a fine; or
- d) Is otherwise disqualified under Part III of the representation of the People Act 1983 for corrupt or illegal practices.
- e) Is on the register for sexual offenders.

This disqualification for bankruptcy ceases in the following circumstances:

- i. If the bankruptcy is annulled on the grounds that either the person ought not to have been adjudged bankrupt or that their debts have been fully discharged;
- ii. If the person is discharged with a certificate that the bankruptcy was caused by misfortune without misconduct on their part;
- iii. If the person is discharged without such a certificate. In i and ii above, the disqualification ceases on the date of the annulment and discharge respectively. In iii, it ceases on the expiry of five years from the date of discharge.

DECLARATION

I..... hereby confirm that I am eligible for the vacancy of Parish Councillor, and the information given on this form is true and accurate record.

Signature

Date

The Parish Council will treat this information as strictly confidential.

APPENDIX C
CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

COMPETENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Personal Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community. • Forward Thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council.
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to listen constructively • A good team player • Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects Solid Interest in local matters group. • Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community • 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 staff. • Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other parish Councils, principal authority, charities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body. • Experience of working with voluntary and or local community / interest groups • Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish Councils or local authorities • Experience of delivering presentations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training. 	
Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time and events in the evening and at weekends. 	

Co-Option Policy

First Adopted: 9th April 2018

Reviewed: February 2026

Next Review: February 2030