



# BARSHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## Co-option Policy

### Introduction

Co-option is a recruitment process to fill Parish Councillor vacancies. Parish Councils are able to co-opt new councillors after an election when all vacancies have not been filled, when a councillor resigns, is disqualified or dies. The following procedures outlines the process for the co-option of councillors in both election and non-election years.

### Procedures in a non-election year

1. On receipt of a resignation/notification of death of a councillor, the Clerk will contact North Norfolk District Council to request a formal notice of vacancy. The Clerk will display the notice on the Council's noticeboard, website and in other prominent places in the village. If after the statutory 14-day period a by-election has not been claimed by at least ten electors then the Parish Council is free to co-opt. The Clerk will advertise locally to encourage people to apply.

2. The Clerk will ask prospective candidates to:

- 1 complete an application form providing personal details and information to support their application for consideration by the Councillors
- 2 attend a minimum of 2 Parish Council meetings prior to the meeting at which their application will be considered.
- 3 attend a Parish Council meeting, having first attended 2 prior meetings, at which their application is to be considered.

3. Prospective candidates will be provided with relevant information on the responsibilities of being a Parish Councillor, qualification criteria and the nature of their duties and will also be advised that the Parish Council are not obliged to co-opt any member if it is felt that candidates are not suitable. The importance of regular attendance will be stressed, as well as the need to advise of absence from a meeting.

4. The Clerk will circulate to all Councillors the application form and any additional information provided by the candidates. If necessary, an extra meeting of the Parish Council will be held to specifically consider the co-options.

5. At the co-option meeting, candidates will be given five minutes maximum to introduce themselves to Councillors, give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a member of the Parish Council. The process will be carried out in public session and there will be no private discussions between Councillors prior to a vote being taken. After candidates have finished giving their submissions, Councillors will vote using a voting slip with all candidate names listed and select, as a maximum, the same number of candidates as there are vacancies. A Councillor may choose to vote for only 2 candidates if there are 3 or 4.

6. In order for a candidate to be elected to the Council, it will be necessary for them to obtain an overall majority of votes cast (50% + 1 of the votes available at the meeting). If there is no candidate with an overall majority the remaining vacancy/vacancies will be re-advertised.

7. If insufficient candidates come forward for co-option, the process should continue, whereby the vacancies are advertised again.

### **Procedures in an election year**

8. If following the close of nominations at an ordinary election of the Parish Council there is a quorum of elected members but some outstanding vacancies, the Clerk will advertise for interested candidates (as already detailed) after the date of the election. The Council is able to co-opt any time after the election. The procedures outlined from number 2 will then be followed.

Adopted: November 2019

Next review: November 2023

**Barsham & Houghton Parish Council – Application form for co-option to the Parish Council**

Name:	
Home telephone:	
Mobile telephone:	
Address:	
Email address:	

Please detail below why you consider you would be the best candidate for this vacancy. Points to cover should include the following:

- Length of residence in the Parish if appropriate
- Membership and involvement with any community associations within the Parish or elsewhere
- Particular interests and concerns relating to the Parish
- Do you have any professional or work-related experience which could be utilised for the benefit of the Parish?

If you wish to provide additional written information in support of your application this will be copied to all Councillors and treated in strict confidence.

Please continue overleaf if necessary.

Please also confirm that you are:

- a British citizen or citizen of the commonwealth or the European Union and aged 18 years or older at the time of your application.

For the whole of the 12 months prior to your application you must:

- have been an elector of the Parish and either occupied or owned/rented premises in the Parish or resided within 3 miles of the boundary of the Parish, or
- have your principal or only place of work in that area.

You cannot become a councillor if you:

- are subject to bankruptcy order or interim order
- have, within five years before the day of application, been convicted in the United Kingdom of any offence and have had a prison sentence for a period of over three months
- work for the parish council

I confirm that I meet the required criteria to become a Parish Councillor

I confirm that I agree for Barsham & Houghton Parish Council to retain this form for a period of 6 months from the date of this application. I understand that the Parish Council will only use my details for co-option purposes.

Signed:

Date: