

# COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION POLICY

## 1 Introduction

This policy sets out the procedure for filling a casual vacancy on Broad Hinton & Winterbourne Bassett Parish Council when the period for requesting an election has passed without a petition for a poll being received by the Wiltshire Council.

## 2 Advertisement of Vacancy

Upon confirmation from the Electoral Services that a co-option may proceed, the Clerk will:

- Post a notice on the Parish Council **noticeboard** and **website**.
- Specify a **closing date** for applications (usually 21–28 days from the date of the notice).
- Provide an application form and a copy of the Eligibility Criteria.

## 3 Eligibility and Applications

To be eligible for co-option, a candidate must meet the statutory requirements under Section 79 of the Local Government Act 1972.

- **Requirements:** Candidates must be over 18, a British/Commonwealth/EU citizen, and meet local residency or work requirements.
- **Disqualifications:** Candidates must not be disqualified under Section 80 of the 1972 Act (e.g., bankruptcy, recent criminal convictions, or employment by the council).
- **Application:** Applicants must submit a brief **Personal Statement** outlining why they wish to join and what skills they bring.

## 4 Selection Process

The co-option will take place at a formal meeting of the Full Council.

Stage	Action
<b>Verification</b>	The Clerk confirms all candidates meet the legal eligibility criteria.
<b>Circulation</b>	Application forms are circulated to Councillors in the meeting pack (confidential).
<b>Presentation</b>	Candidates are invited to give a short (3–5 minute) presentation to the Council.
<b>Q&amp;A</b>	Councillors may ask candidates specific questions regarding their application.

## 5 Voting Procedure

The Council will vote in accordance with Standing Orders.

- **Method:** Voting will be by a show of hands (or signed ballot if requested and permitted by Standing Orders).
- **Majority:** A candidate must receive an **absolute majority** of the votes cast (50% +1 of those present and voting).
- **Elimination:** If there are more than two candidates and no one receives an absolute majority, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and a new vote is taken. This continues until a majority is reached.
- **Chairman's Vote:** In the event of a tie, the Chairman has a casting vote.

## 6 Post-Election Requirements

Successful candidates must:

1. **Sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office** before or at the start of the next meeting.
2. **Complete the Register of Interests** within 28 days of co-option.
3. **Abide by the Code of Conduct** adopted by the Council.

**Note:** The Council is not obliged to fill the vacancy if they do not consider the candidates suitable, in which case the vacancy will be re-advertised.

## 7 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years to ensure it remains compliant with the latest legislation and the needs of the Parish Council.

## 8 Contact details

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact our Clerk:

Parish Clerk: Peter Barry

Address: The Old Coffee House, Broad Hinton, SN4 9PQ

Email: [clerk@bhwbparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@bhwbparishcouncil.org.uk)

Phone: 07860 407585

**Adopted by the Council:** 6 January 2025

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_