

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
Verification	The Clerk confirms all candidates meet the legal eligibility criteria.
Circulation	Application forms are circulated to Councillors in the meeting pack (confidential).
Presentation	Candidates are invited to give a short (3–5 minute) presentation to the Council.
Q&A	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@bhwbparsihcouncil.org.uk

Phone: 07860 407585

Adopted by the Council: 6 January 2025

Chairman: _____ Date: _____