

Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council

Co-option Policy



Adopted by: Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council – 2nd July 2026

Minute Number – 26/27/077 Next Review: July 2029 / Every 3 years or earlier if required

1. Introduction

Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council is committed to ensuring that vacancies within the Council are filled in a fair, transparent and lawful manner.

This policy sets out the Council's approach to:

- The co-option of parish councillors to fill vacancies
- Ensuring compliance with legislation and best practice

The key objective of this policy is to ensure that the co-option process is open, equitable, and supports effective democratic representation within the parish.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Councillors
- Employees (including the Clerk)
- Volunteers
- Members of the public wishing to apply for co-option

3. Legislative Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Local Government Act 1972
- Representation of the People Act 1985
- Local Elections (Parishes and Communities) (England and Wales) Rules 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Relevant guidance from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

4. Policy Objectives

The Parish Council aims to:

- Ensure vacancies are filled in accordance with legal requirements
- Promote transparency and fairness in the co-option process
- Encourage a broad and diverse range of applicants
- Select candidates based on merit, skills and suitability
- Maintain effective governance and representation for the community

5. Governance and Management (Roles and Responsibilities)

Council

- Overall responsibility for adoption and review of the policy
- Final decision-making on all co-option appointments

Clerk

- Administration of the co-option process
- Ensuring compliance with legal requirements
- Advertising vacancies and coordinating applications
- Verifying candidate eligibility

Councillors

- Acting fairly and impartially in assessing candidates
- Declaring any conflicts of interest
- Participating in the selection and voting process
- Reporting any concerns regarding the process

6. Procedures

6.1 When Co-option Applies

Co-option will take place where all of the following conditions are met:

- A casual vacancy arises (e.g. resignation, death, disqualification, or non-attendance);
- The required public notice of vacancy has been issued and the statutory period has expired; and
- No valid request for a by-election has been received within that period.

6.2 Advertising the Vacancy

The Council will:

- Publicise the vacancy on noticeboards, website and other appropriate platforms
- Specify a closing date for applications (normally at least 14 days)
- Provide details of how to apply

6.3 Eligibility

Applicants must meet the legal criteria to be a parish councillor and must confirm in writing that they:

- Are qualified for office; and
- Are not disqualified under relevant legislation

The Council reserves the right to verify eligibility.

6.4 Application Process

Applicants will be required to:

- Submit a completed application form including written expression of interest
- Provide reasons for applying and relevant experience

6.5 Selection Process

- Eligible candidates will be invited to attend a Council meeting

- Candidates may be asked to:
 - Introduce themselves
 - Explain their interest and suitability
 - Answer questions from councillors

6.6 Decision and Voting

- Co-option decisions must be made by the full Council
- Voting will take place in accordance with Standing Orders
- A successful candidate must receive a majority of votes

The Council is not obliged to co-opt any candidate if none are considered suitable.

6.7 Appointment

- The successful candidate will be notified as soon as possible
- They must sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office before acting as a councillor
- Once appointed, they have full rights and responsibilities as a councillor

7. Confidentiality & Data Protection

The Council will ensure that all personal data is handled in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and relevant legislation.

All applications will be treated in confidence and only used for the purposes of the co-option process.

8. Equality and Diversity

The Council is committed to equality and will not unlawfully discriminate under the Equality Act 2010.

Applications are encouraged from all eligible members of the community.

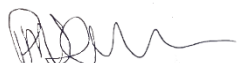
9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will normally be reviewed every three years or earlier if required due to:

- Legislative changes
- Operational Requirements
- Updated national guidance

10. Adoption

This policy was adopted by Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council at a meeting held on:
2nd July 2026

Chair Signature:  _____



Briercliffe with Extwistle Parish Council

APPLICATION FOR CO-OPTION AS PARISH COUNCILLOR

Role Description – Parish Councillor

Parish Councillors are elected or co-opted representatives who serve the local community and contribute to the effective governance of the Parish Council.

Key Responsibilities

As a Parish Councillor, you will be expected to:

- Attend and actively participate in Parish Council meetings
- Represent the interests of residents and the wider community
- Contribute to decision-making on local services, budgets and policies
- Work collaboratively with other councillors and the Clerk
- Uphold the Council's Code of Conduct
- Maintain confidentiality where required
- Engage with local residents and community groups
- Prepare for meetings by reading agendas and supporting documents

Time Commitment

- Attendance at regular Council meetings (typically monthly)
- Participation in any working groups or committees (if applicable)
- Occasional community events or engagement activities (including Remembrance Sunday and delivering Christmas Parcels)

Training and Support

- Induction and ongoing training will be provided
- Guidance is available from the Clerk and relevant county associations

Please complete all sections clearly and return to the Parish Clerk by **[INSERT DEADLINE DATE]**

1. Personal Details

Full Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone Number:

Email Address:

2. Eligibility (Legal Requirement)

To be eligible for co-option, you must meet certain criteria.

Please confirm:

☐ Yes ☐ No **I am aged 18 or over**

☐ Yes ☐ No **I am a British, Commonwealth, Irish or qualifying EU citizen**

☐ Yes ☐ No **I am not disqualified from being a councillor**

I meet at least ONE of the following (tick all that apply):

- ☐ I am registered as a local government elector for the Parish
- ☐ I have lived in the Parish (or within 3 miles) for the last 12 months
- ☐ I have worked in the Parish (or within 3 miles) for the last 12 months
- ☐ I have occupied land or property in the Parish (or within 3 miles) for the last 12 months

3. Disqualifications (If you are unsure, please contact the Clerk before submitting your application.)

Please confirm that you are NOT disqualified by any of the following:

- ☐ I am not employed by the Parish Council
- ☐ I am not subject to a bankruptcy restrictions order
- ☐ I have not, within the last 5 years, been convicted of an offence resulting in imprisonment of 3 months or more

4. Supporting Statement Please explain why you wish to become a Parish Councillor and what skills, experience, or local knowledge you would bring to the role. (Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

5. Relevant Experience (Optional) Please provide details of any relevant experience (e.g. community involvement, voluntary work, professional skills):

6. Skills and Experience Checklist

Please tick any of the following areas where you have skills, experience, or an interest. This will assist the Council in ensuring a balanced range of abilities.

Core Skills

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Communication and listening skills | ☐ Decision-making |
| ☐ Teamwork and collaboration | ☐ Organisation and time management |
| ☐ Problem-solving | |

Knowledge / Experience (Tick any that apply)

- ☐ Community or voluntary work
- ☐ Local knowledge of the parish
- ☐ Working with the public or customer service
- ☐ Finance, budgeting or accounting
- ☐ Business or management experience

- ☐ Legal or governance knowledge
- ☐ Planning or development issues
- ☐ Environmental or sustainability initiatives
- ☐ IT / digital skills (e.g. websites, social media)
- ☐ Project or event management

Interests

- ☐ Local community development
- ☐ Improving services and facilities
- ☐ Supporting residents and community groups

- ☐ Environmental issues
- ☐ Representing local views

Additional Skills or Information Please provide any further relevant information:

7. Declaration

I confirm that:

- The information provided in this application is true and complete
- I meet the eligibility criteria for becoming a Parish Councillor
- I understand that, if selected, I will be required to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Signed: _____

Date: _____

8. Privacy Notice

Your personal data will be used solely for the purpose of the co-option process and will be handled in accordance with Data Protection legislation. Information will be shared only with councillors involved in the selection process.

Please return this form to: clerk@briercliffe-pc.gov.uk or

**Briercliffe Community Centre
Jubilee Street
Briercliffe
Burnley
BB10 2JD**