

## CO-OPTION POLICY

**ADOPTED 7<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024**  
**NEXT REVIEW DUE: MAY 2027**

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## CO-OPTION PROCESS

Parish Councils are permitted the power to co-opt a person on to council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met (the vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered voters have requested an election by the deadline specified by the returning officer).

To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken, the procedure below will be followed by Wickham Bishops Parish Council:

The Parish Council will advertise the vacancy to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone in the parish who is eligible to stand as a parish councillor. The attached form will be used as the basis of ascertaining a candidate's suitability to put his or herself forward for co-option.

Copies of the application forms will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk with the agenda prior to the meeting of the Full Council where the co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and Councillors as strictly private and confidential.

At the next Full Council meeting:

- Clerk to confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 S79 and S80.
- Chairman to invite candidates an opportunity to speak if they are in attendance and to allow members the chance to ask questions of the candidates.
- Only councillors present at the meeting may nominate, second or vote upon a person to fill the vacancy. A councillor may only nominate or second one candidate.
- Voting for the new Councillor will be by a show of hands or secret ballot, if requested. The Chairman will initiate a vote in alphabetical order. Councillors have one vote each.
- The chairman will offer opportunity for debate on the order of priority to offer co-option to the candidates. In most cases, the candidates will be asked to leave the room while this process takes place.

- An absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority, the candidate with the least number of votes will be eliminated and the remainder must be put to the vote again until an absolute majority is obtained (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39). One person will be chosen for each vacancy.
- In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.
- The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Council and summoned to attend the next Council meeting.
- The voting and declaration of co-option normally take place in open Council.

The Clerk will notify Electoral Services of the new councillor appointment and organise Declaration of Acceptance of Office paperwork. All new councillors, must, within 28 days of appointment, register their interests with MDC – Committee services will email this to the new councillor.

Approved and Adopted by Wickham Bishops Parish Council.

Signed:

Date:

## Wickham Bishops Parish Council

Application Form for role of Parish Councillor on Wickham Bishops Parish Council

Full name	
Home address inc. Postcode	
Telephone number	
Mobile number	
Email	

It is a condition of being a Parish Councillor that your email address (official email address will be supplied) be made public via notice boards and website.

### LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR BEING A PARISH COUNCILLOR

*To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to both of the questions below:*

Are you a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a qualifying EU citizen or EU citizen with retained rights?	Yes / No
Are you 18 or over?	Yes / No

*To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to at least one of the questions below:*

Are you on the electoral register for Wickham Bishops?	Yes / No
Have you lived either in Wickham Bishops or within 3 miles of its boundary, for at least a year?	Yes / No
Have you been the owner or tenant of land in Wickham Bishops for at least a year?	Yes / No
Have you had your only or main place of work in Wickham Bishops for at least a year?	Yes / No

**DISQUALIFICATIONS**

*You must be able to answer No to all of the questions below to be eligible to serve as a councillor.*

Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order?	Yes / No
Have you within the last five years been convicted of an offence in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man which resulted in a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of three months or more without the option of a fine?	Yes / No
Are you disqualified by order of a court from being a member of a local authority?	Yes / No

Please briefly outline of why you are interested in being a parish councillor.

Please tell us something about the life experience you will bring to the Council, for example, previous local government experience, work in the voluntary or charitable sector, business or trade union experience.

Please tell us something about the skills you feel you will bring to the Council, for example, professional qualifications, financial or project management expertise.

Are there any questions you would like to ask the council?

Signed:

Date:

Please return via email to: [info@wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org](mailto:info@wickhambishopsparishcouncil.org)

Or by post to: Wickham Bishops Parish Council, c/o The Village Hall, Church Road, Wickham Bishops CM8 3JZ