

# **BASSINGBOURN-CUM-KNEESWORTH PARISH COUNCIL**

## **COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION PROCEDURE**

Where a vacancy occurs during the term of a parish council, it may be filled by either election or co-option. Elections only occur if, following the advertisement of the vacancy for 14 days, 10 electors send a written request to the Returning Officer at South Cambridgeshire District Council. If no request is received, the Parish Council may fill the vacancy by co-option. In a co-option process the Councillors by default become the electors of a new councillor.

In the event of the Council filling a casual vacancy by co-option the following procedure will be implemented:

1. A notice of Co-option will be prepared by the Clerk and posted on notice boards or prominent place giving at least two weeks' notice.
2. Interested persons will be asked to register their interest with the Clerk.
3. Notice of the intention to co-opt to fill the vacancy will be given in the agenda of the HR Committee of the Parish Council meeting.
4. All potential candidates will be asked to:
  - a) submit a letter containing full contact details (telephone, postal address and e-mail) setting out why they are interested in becoming a Councillor;
  - b) sign a declaration that they are eligible to become a Councillor and are not disqualified (as set out in the Local Government Act s79 and s80);
  - c) complete a skills audit (See Appendix A), and confirm that they will take advantage of training opportunities which may occur from time to time.
5. All those who have expressed an interest and who are eligible will be invited to attend a meeting of the H.R. Committee. It is not mandatory that candidates attend the meeting.
6. Candidates may, if they wish, make, or have read out by the Clerk, a short statement (max 1 page of A4) on why they want to be a councillor and what they can bring to benefit the community. Councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates.
7. Once all candidates' statements have been heard the Chairman will ask Councillors present to nominate any of the candidates. Candidates will also need to be seconded to proceed to the voting stage. One candidature needs to receive an absolute majority of votes.
8. The Chairman will then place the names of those nominated into alphabetical order and proceed to a vote. Councillors have one vote per vacancy to be filled.

9. Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders by a show of hands and will continue until one candidate has an absolute majority of the Councillors present.
10. Should no candidate receive a majority on the first vote, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated. Voting then takes place on the remaining candidates and continues until one candidate receives an absolute majority.
11. The successful candidate is then declared elected.
12. The Council is not obliged to consider candidates who have been unsuccessful at previous co-options.
13. If any of the accepted candidates declines the post, the candidate eliminated last will be approached.
14. The Council ratifies the list of co-opted Councillors.
15. The co-opted Councillor(s) is/are invited to sign the Declaration of Office and take their place at the table.
16. The Register of Interests must be completed within 1 month of taking office.

# THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES

There are seven Nolan principles that apply to the conduct of people in public life.

Please give details that demonstrate when you have applied these principles in your work or other relevant examples:

<b>Selflessness</b> : <i>you should act in the public interest</i>
<b>Integrity</b> : <i>you should not put yourself under any obligations to others, allow them improperly to influence you or seek benefit for yourself, family, friends or close associates</i>
<b>Objectivity</b> : <i>you should act impartially, fairly and on merit</i> <b>Accountability</b> : <i>you should be prepared to submit to public scrutiny necessary to ensure accountability</i>
<b>Openness</b> : <i>you should be open and transparent in your actions and decisions unless there are clear and lawful reasons for non-disclosure</i>
<b>Honesty</b> : <i>you should always be truthful</i>
<b>Leadership</b> : <i>as a councillor, you should promote, support and exhibit high standards of conduct and be willing to challenge poor behaviour</i>
<b>Accountability</b> : <i>you should be prepared to submit to public scrutiny to ensure accountability</i>

Please give details of any particular area/s of the Parish Council where you feel you would benefit from additional support or training :

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## SKILLS AUDIT for prospective Parish Councillors

NAME .....

*Level of experience / skill (Please circle - rate on scale of 1 (none) to 5 (extensive))*

### Understanding and/or experience of ...

Parish Council	1	2	3	4	5
Local government	1	2	3	4	5
Civil service	1	2	3	4	5

### Professional skills

Experience of chairing board / committee meetings	1	2	3	4	5
Experience of professional leadership	1	2	3	4	5

Financial planning / management	1	2	3	4	5
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Mediation	1	2	3	4	5
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IT	1	2	3	4	5
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Strategic planning	1	2	3	4	5
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Training Received (please give brief details of specific area of training)

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### Skills that may be useful on Parish Council Committees

Financial planning / management	1	2	3	4	5
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Procurement / tenders	1	2	3	4	5
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Health and Safety	1	2	3	4	5
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Insurance	1	2	3	4	5
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HR	1	2	3	4	5
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Legal [*please give brief details of specific area of expertise*]

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Premises and facilities management 1 2 3 4 5

Please give brief details of particular local interest / knowledge

Planning 1 2 3 4 5

Youth work 1 2 3 4 5

Conservation 1 2 3 4 5

Volunteering 1 2 3 4 5