



OLD BASING & LYCHPIT PARISH COUNCIL

The Pavilion, The Recreation Ground,
The Street, Old Basing,
Basingstoke, RG24 7DA

COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Reasons for Co-option

The co-option of a Parish Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no by-election has been called. A casual vacancy occurs when:

A Councillor fails to make his Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the proper time

- A councillor resigns
- A Councillor dies
- A Councillor becomes disqualified
- A Councillor fails for six months to attend meetings of a Council committee or sub-committee or to attend as a representative of the Council a meeting of an external organisation.

Eligibility of Candidates

- a. He/she is a registered elector of the Parish, or
- b. For the past 12 months:
 - Has resided in the Parish, or rented land or other premises in the Parish, or
 - Had his/her principal place of work in the Parish, or
 - Has lived within 3 miles (direct) of the Parish.

Disqualification for Election

- Holding a paid office under the Local Authority
- Bankruptcy
- Having been sentenced to a term of imprisonment (whether or not suspended) of not less than 3 months without the option of a fine during the 5 years preceding the election
- Being disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal practices.

Process

- The Council must notify Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council (B&DBC) of a Casual Vacancy and then advertise the vacancy (form attached) for 14 days (excluding weekends & bank holidays) to give electors the opportunity to request an election. This occurs if 10 electors notify B&DBC requesting an election.
- If 10 residents do not request an election within 14 days of the vacancy being advertised, the Council may co-opt a volunteer on receipt of confirmation from the Electoral Services Office that the vacancy can be filled by co-option.

- Even if the Council invites applications for co-option, it is not obliged to select anyone from those candidates applying. However, it is important to ensure there are sufficient Councillors to share the workload equitably to provide a broad cross-section of skills and interests or to achieve quorate meetings.
- Candidates will be asked to:
 - a. Submit information about themselves by completing a short application form (Appendix A)
 - b. Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules (Appendix B)

Documents will be circulated in advance to Councillors and treated as strictly confidential by the Clerk & Councillors.

- Candidates will be sent an Agenda for the meeting at which they are to be considered for co-option together with a copy of the Council's Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations (or directed to these as published on the Council's website) and will be informed that they will be invited to speak about their application at the meeting and answer questions from Councillors.
- If insufficient candidates come forward, or are deemed unsuitable, for co-option the process should continue and the vacancy advertised again.

Procedure at the Meeting

- Each candidate will be given 3 minutes maximum to introduce themselves and explain why they wish to become a member of the Council. They may then be required to answer questions from Councillors.
- If there is more than one candidate and Councillors wish to discuss the merits of each candidate the Chairman will resolve to exclude members of the press and public (including the candidates themselves) during this discussion.
- Voting must take place during a public meeting whilst the candidate(s) are present and all those excluded should be invited to return to the meeting.
- The Council should then vote on the acceptability of each candidate using the Person Specification (Appendix C) and personal statements provided by the candidate(s).
- Each candidate must be proposed and seconded by those Councillors present and voted for by a show of hands. The vote will be recorded by the Clerk.
- The elected candidate must have obtained an absolute majority of votes. In the case of more than one candidate the candidate with the least number of votes will drop out. Further rounds of voting will take place until one candidate has an absolute majority. In the case of an equality of votes the Chairman has the casting vote.

- The successful candidate will then be asked to sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office & Code of Conduct and invited to take a seat at the meeting.
- Councillors elected by co-option are full members of the Council.

After Co-option

- After the meeting the Clerk will notify B&DBC Electoral Services of the new appointment.
- The candidate will be asked to complete a Registration of Members Interests within 28 days of being elected and the form handed to the Clerk for forwarding to the B&DBC Monitoring Officer and publication on the Council's website.
- The new Councillor will be invited to the Parish Office for a brief induction and provided with details of the next available training for new Councillors.

**APPENDIX A
COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION APPLICATION**

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Parish Councillor. Please complete the information below to assist the Parish Council in making its decision.

Full Name & Title	
Home Telephone No.	
Mobile No.	
Email Address: (Note: If co-opted you will be provided with a generic Parish Council email address)	

Personal Information Please provide some background information about yourself, how long you have lived in the Parish, work history, connections to local organisations, etc.

Reasons for applying Please state your reasons for wishing to become a Parish Councillor
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Signature	
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Data Protection Act:
The information provided on this application will remain private and confidential and will only be used for the intended purpose.

APPENDIX B
CO-OPTION ELIGIBILITY FORM

1. To be eligible for co-option as a Councillor you must be a British subject, or citizen of the Commonwealth or European Union and, on the day you are elected, 18 years of age or over. You should also meet one of the following criteria – please tick which applies:

- a. I am registered as a local government elector for the Parish, or []
- b. I have, during the twelve months preceding the date of my co-option, occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the Parish, or []
- c. My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been within the Parish, or []
- d. I have, during the whole twelve months, resided in the Parish or within 3 miles of it. []

2. Under Section 80 of the Local Government Act a person is disqualified from being elected as a Local Councillor or being a member of a Local Council if he/she:

- a. Holds any paid office or employment of the Local Council (other than Chairman) or of a joint committee on which the Council is represented, or
- b. Is a person who has been adjudged bankrupt or has made an arrangement with his/her creditors, or
- c. Has within 5 years prior to election, or since election, been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for not less than 3 months without the option of a fine, or
- d. Is otherwise disqualified under Part III of the representation of the People Act 1983 for corrupt or illegal practices.

Disqualification for bankruptcy ceases in the following circumstances:

- i. If the bankruptcy is annulled on the grounds that the person ought not to have been adjudged bankrupt or that his/her debts have been fully discharged;
- ii. If the person is discharged with a certificate that the bankruptcy was caused by misfortune without misconduct on his/her part;
- iii. If the person is discharged without such a certificate.

In i and ii above the disqualification ceases on the date of the annulment and discharge respectively. In iii it ceases on the expiry of 5 years from the date of discharge.

Declaration

I confirm that I am eligible for the vacancy of Old Basing & Lychpit Parish Councillor and the information on this form is a true and accurate record.

Signed:

Data Protection Act:

The information provided on this application will remain private and confidential and will only be used for the intended purpose.

**APPENDIX C
CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION**

COMPETENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Personal Attributes	Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community. Forward thinking.	Can bring new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council.

<p>Experience, Skills, Knowledge & Ability</p>	<p>Ability to listen constructively.</p> <p>A good team player.</p> <p>Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects.</p> <p>Solid interest in local matters.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to represent the Council and the community.</p> <p>Good interpersonal skills and ability to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others' views and accept majority decisions.</p> <p>Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to work closely with colleagues and maintain good working relationships with staff members.</p> <p>Ability and willingness to work with partner organisations (i.e. voluntary groups, other Parish Councils, principal authority, charities).</p> <p>Ability and willingness to undertake induction and other relevant training.</p>	<p>Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body.</p> <p>Experience of working with voluntary and/or local community/interest groups.</p> <p>Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to Town & Parish Councils or local authorities.</p> <p>Experience of speaking in public and/or delivering presentations.</p>
<p>Circumstances</p>	<p>Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies when necessary) and events in the evening and at weekends.</p>	