Potterhanworth Parish Council
Councillor Co-option Policy and Application Form

Adopted 18-May-2026, minute ref: 6.e. page 1-2026.

To be reviewed annually, prior to the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May, to be re-adopted.

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the procedure to ensure there is compliance with legislation and continuity of procedures in the co-option of members to the Parish Council. The Co-option procedure is entirely managed by the Potterhanworth Parish Council and this policy will ensure that a fair and equitable process is carried out.

2. Co-option

The Co-option of a Parish Councillor after an ordinary election and there are vacant seats to fill and also occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no poll (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; or
- A Councillor fails for six (6) months to attend meetings of a council committee or subcommittee or to attend as a representative of the Council a meeting of an outside body.

Following a casual vacancy the Parish Council Clerk will notify North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) and then using the notices provided by NKDC they will advertise the vacancy and give electors the opportunity to request an election. An election occurs when ten electors write to NKDCl stating that an election is requested. If an election is called and if more than one candidate is validly nominated a by-election takes place but if only one candidate is put forward they are duly elected without a ballot. If the election for a vacancy is contested then a ballot is called, a polling station will be set up by NKDC and the electorate of the parish will be able to vote for validly nominated candidates.

If the casual vacancy is advertised and an election is not called by electors, NKDC will inform the Parish Council in writing to co-opt someone who is eligible and not disqualified to fill the vacant seat.

The advertising and election process for a casual vacancy is covered in S.89 Local Government Act 1972

(6)A casual vacancy among parish or community councillors shall be filled by election or by the parish or community council in accordance with rules made under section 36 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 in the case of a parish council.

3. Confirmation of Co-option

Once notified that co-option is possible to fill vacant seats the Parish Clerk will:

- Advertise the vacancy for four weeks on the Council notice boards and website
- Advise the parish council that these procedures have been implemented.

Councillors elected by co-option are full members of the parish council throughout the remainder of their term of office until ordinary elections are due.

4. Eligibility of Candidates

Candidates must satisfy the current eligibility criteria set out in S.79 Local Government Act 1972

- They are an elector for the parish; or
- has resided in the parish for the past twelve months or rented/tenanted land or other premises in the parish; or
- had their principal place of work in the parish; or
- has lived within three miles of the parish boundary.

Candidates must also ensure that they are not disqualified from standing as a Councillor listed under Ss.80-81 Local Government Act 1972:

- holding a paid office under the local authority;
- bankruptcy;
- having been sentenced to a term of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) of not less than three months, without the option of a fine during the five years preceding the election;
- being disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal practices; or
- not registered as a sex offender

Candidates found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.

5. Applications

Councillors may encourage applications from those eligible to be co-opted but it is the responsibility of the person seeking co-option to demonstrate that they satisfy the eligibility requirements and are not disqualified.

- Candidates will be requested to complete an Application Form (Appendix A):
- Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules (Appendix B).

Following receipt of applications, the next suitable council meeting will have an agenda item 'To receive written applications for the office of Parish Councillor and to Co-opt a candidate to fill the existing vacancy'. Copies of the candidate's application form will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk at least 3 clear days prior to the meeting of the full Council, when the Co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and all Councillors as Strictly Private and Confidential.

Candidates will be sent a full agenda of the meeting at which they are to be considered for appointment. Candidates will also be informed that they will be invited to speak about their application at the meeting. Candidates for co-option will be advised where to view and obtain the Councillors Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations which apply to them if successful.

6. At the meeting where co-option candidate's applications are considered

At the meeting, candidates will be given five minutes maximum to introduce themselves to Members, give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a Councillor. The Chair may invite each candidate to speak in accordance with Standing Orders. The Chair may allow Councillors to ask questions of each candidate.

Where the Council wishes to discuss the merits of candidates and their personal attributes, this could be prejudicial and the Council will resolve to exclude the members of the press and public including the candidates being considered for co-option while that discussion takes place. Once that discussion comes to an end the members of the press, public and the candidates may return to observe the voting process which must be completed in public.

Once all candidates have finished giving their submissions and if the Council does not wish to discuss the merits of candidates privately (as outlined in the previous paragraph, the Council will proceed to a vote on the acceptability of each candidate utilising the 'person specification' criteria set out in Appendix C and any personal statements provided by candidates.

Each vacant seat will be considered in turn and all candidates may receive votes if they are successfully proposed and seconded with the co-opted candidate being successful with a majority vote by show of hands. In the event of an equality of votes the Chair may have the casting vote if they wish to cast it. If a candidate is not successfully proposed and seconded, they may not receive votes for that vacant seat. If only one candidate is standing for a vacant seat they must still be proposed and seconded and a majority vote by show of hands must still take place.

In order for a candidate to be co-opted, it will be necessary for them to obtain an absolute majority of votes cast (50% + 1 of the votes available at the meeting). If there are more than two candidates and there is no candidate with an overall majority in the first round of voting the candidate with the least number of votes will drop out of the process. Further rounds of voting will then take place with the process repeated until a candidate has an absolute majority for that vacant seat. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting may exercise a second or casting vote.

After the votes has been concluded, the Chair will declare the successful candidate duly elected and may take their place immediately after signing their Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Clerk will notify NKDC of the new Councillor appointment. The successful candidate(s) must complete the following;

- Declaration of Acceptance of Office
- Register of Interests form within 28 days of being elected.
  The form should be handed to the Clerk for forwarding to the Monitoring Officer.
- Code of Conduct (signed as having read and understood)

If insufficient candidates come forward for co-option, the process should continue, whereby the vacancies are again advertised**.**

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Appendix A

Application for Co-option

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Parish Councillor. Please provide the below information to assist the council in making their decision.

Full Name & Title	
Home Address	
Home Telephone	
Mobile Telephone	
Email Address	

About You Please provide the council with some background information about yourself.

Reasons for applying Please provide the council with your reasons for wanting to become a Parish Councillor.

Signature	

Please return your completed Appendix A and Appendix B to the Clerk to the Council. Your application will be considered at the next available Parish Council meeting, where a vote will be held to decide whether the council agrees to co-opt you on to Potterhanworth Parish Council.

Data Protection Act: The information provided on this application will remain private and Confidential.

Appendix B

Co-option Eligibility Form

1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Potterhanworth Parish Councillor you must be a British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union; and on the 'relevant date' (i.e. the day on which you are nominated or if there is a poll the day of the election) 18 years of age or over; and additionally able to meet one of the following qualifications set out below. Please tick which applies to you:

a) I am registered as a local government elector for the parish; or ☐

b) I have, during the whole of 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 in the parish; or ☐

d) I have during the whole of twelve months resided in the parish or within 3 miles of it ☐

2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 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 the office of 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 a composition or arrangement with his/her creditors (but see below); or

c) Has within five years before the day of election, or since his/her election, been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man of any offence and has been sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for not less than three 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.

This disqualification for bankruptcy ceases in the following circumstances:

i. If the bankruptcy is annulled on the grounds that either 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 five years from the date of discharge.

DECLARATION

I, ... hereby confirm that I am eligible for the vacancy of Potterhanworth Parish Councillor, and the information given on this form is true and accurate record.

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Potterhanworth Parish Council is duty bound to treat this information as strictly confidential.

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 a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council.
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	• Ability to listen constructively • A good team player • Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects. • A solid Interest in local matters • Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community • Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others views and accept majority decisions. • Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly. • Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff. • Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other parish Councils, principal authority, charities). • Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.	• Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body • Experience of working with voluntary and or local community / interest groups • Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish Councils or local authorities • Experience of delivering presentations
Circumstances	• Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time and events in the evening and at weekends.	