

Glynde & Beddingham Parish Council

Co-option Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Parish Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person onto the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met (i.e. the vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered electors have requested an election by a date specified by Lewes District Council's Returning Officer).

This document outlines the policy and procedures that Glynde & Beddingham Parish Council will adopt in the event of a casual vacancy to ensure that a fair and transparent process is followed throughout.

Procedure

- 1) Upon receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Services Office at Lewes District Council that the casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option, the Clerk will advertise the vacancy on the Parish Council noticeboards, website, local social media accounts and newsletters.
- 2) Applicants who express an interest in being co-opted onto the council will be asked to:
 - a) Review the Parish Councillor Person Specification (appendix a);
 - b) Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules (contained within the application form at appendix a);
 - c) Complete and submit a short application form (appendix a).
- 3) Copies of completed application forms will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk prior to the meeting of the full Council during which the co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and all Councillors as Strictly Private and Confidential.
- 4) Eligible applicants will be invited to the next full Parish Council meeting where Co-option is to be discussed and will be invited to speak to give an overview of why they would like to join Glynde & Beddingham Parish Council. Members will be allowed to ask questions of the applicants.
- 5) The press, public and applicants will be asked to leave the Council meeting in order for the applications to be considered and for Members to vote. After voting has taken place the press, public and applicants will be asked to re-join the meeting and the result declared.
- 6) Voting will be in accordance with statutory requirements in that a successful applicant must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. If there are more candidates than vacancies, the candidate with the lowest number of votes will be excluded. Voting will continue with the lowest polling applicant being excluded until the number of applicants matches the number of vacancies. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote. Voting will be by a show of hands unless two or more members present request a ballot, in which case the vote will be taken by written ballot of those members present and eligible to vote. The outcome of the ballot will be reported by the Clerk.
- 7) Only Councillors present at the full council meeting may propose, second or vote upon a person to fill the vacancy.
- 8) If there is more than one vacancy, a councillor may nominate one person per seat. Each councillor will have only one vote per seat i.e. two vacancies will enable two votes.
- 9) The first candidate to receive an absolute majority of those present and voting will be duly co-opted.
- 10) After the vote has been concluded, the Chairman will declare that the successful candidate has been co-opted to the Council.

- 11) Before the successful candidate can participate in Council business they must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk.
- 12) Following the meeting, the Clerk will advise Democratic Services at Lewes District Council of the name and address of anyone co-opted to the council.
- 13) The Clerk will provide each new councillor with an induction and a new councillor information pack.
- 14) All new councillors must sign to confirm they have received an electronic or hard copy of the Council's Code of Conduct and Standing Orders.
- 15) All new councillors must, within 28 days of appointment to office, register their interest with the Monitoring Officer. Forms will be supplied by the Clerk and new Councillors must return the completed forms back to the Clerk within this time scale.
- 16) The Council is not obliged to provide feedback on the application process to unsuccessful candidates.

Glynde & Beddingham Parish Council

Application for the role of Parish Councillor

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Parish Councillor at Glynde & Beddingham Parish Council.

Serving on the Parish Council gives you the opportunity to represent your local community and to get involved in suggesting, and helping to run, some wonderful and varied community projects. Glynde & Beddingham Parish Council welcomes interest from all eligible members of the Parish, in fact this is vital to ensure that we remain an inclusive Council that represents the whole community.

Joining the Council

Parish Councillors are elected to represent their local community for a 4-year term but sometimes vacancies occur within the term, known as a casual vacancy. When a vacancy occurs, 10 or more registered electors in the Parish have a legal period to request a by-election be held. If no by-election is held, the Returning Officer at Lewes District Council will confirm the casual vacancy and the Parish Council can proceed to advertise the casual vacancy and co-opt a new Councillor onto the council. Casual vacancies will be advertised on the Parish Council's website, noticeboards, on social media and in local newsletters.

As somebody who is interested in joining the Parish Council, we ask you to:

- Review the person specification below to give you an idea of the attributes, skills, knowledge and experience we're looking for. You can also find out more information about what it's like to be a Councillor by visiting <https://beacouncillor.co.uk>.
- Check you meet the legal eligibility requirements on page 2 to become a Parish Councillor.
- Complete the application form on pages 2-3 and return it to the Clerk (contact details are at the end of the application form).

Parish Councillor Person Specification

Personal Attributes

- Enthusiastic about the Parish and local matters.
- Forward thinking.
- Flexible.
- A good team player in terms of considering the views of others, accepting majority decisions and ability to work closely and maintain good working relationships with all members and staff.
- Willing and able to bring relevant skills, expertise or local knowledge to the Council.

Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability

- Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community.
- Able to listen constructively, contribute opinions and present reports/proposals succinctly and clearly at meetings.
- Able and willing to represent the Council and the community including working with the Council's partners (voluntary groups, other parish councils, district/county council, local organisations).
- Good reading and analytical skills.
- Able to suggest and run a variety of projects to benefit the local community and progress the aims of the Council.
- Able and willing to undertake relevant training.
- Able and willing to attend meetings of the Council (or partner organisations) and events during the day, evenings or weekends.

Parish Councillor Casual Vacancy Application Form

Full name:	
Home address:	
Home telephone number:	
Mobile telephone number:	
Email address:	

Legal requirements for becoming a Parish Councillor

QUALIFICATIONS

(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to both of the questions below)

Are you a British citizen, a Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of a European Union country?	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 the parish of Glynde & Beddingham?	Yes / No
Have you lived either in the parish of Glynde & Beddingham, or within three miles of its boundary, for at least the whole of the 12 months prior to your application?	Yes / No
Have you been the owner or tenant of land in the parish of Glynde & Beddingham for at least the whole of the 12 months prior to your application?	Yes / No
Have you had your only or main place of work in the parish of Glynde & Beddingham for at least the whole of the 12 months prior to your application?	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

Use of Personal Information

The Parish Council will use the information that you provide on this application form for the sole purpose of considering your co-option request and to assess your suitability to be a parish councillor. Your information will be provided to existing serving Councillors but will not be made public. Your name will appear on the agenda in which your application will be considered and may appear within the minutes recording the outcome of the co-option decision.

Briefly outline why you are interested in joining Glynde & Beddingham Parish Council.

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

Tell us what improvements or projects you would like the Parish Council to focus on in the coming year.

Declaration and Consent

I hereby confirm that I am eligible for the vacancy of Parish Councillor on Glynde & Beddingham Parish Council and that the information provided on this application form is true and correct. I have read the section entitled 'Use of Personal Information' and, by signing this form, I consent to the disclosure of my name in the agenda and minutes as detailed.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

Please email the completed form to: clerk@glyndebeddingham-pc.gov.uk

Or send by post to: Mrs Stephanie Mills, Parish Clerk, Glynde & Beddingham Parish Council,
10 Bromley Road, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 3ES