

Co-option procedure for new Parish Councillors

Adopted by the Parish Council at the meeting of 18th December 2025

A vacancy for a Parish Councillor can occur through resignation (by written/email notification to the Chairman), death or failure to attend meetings without an acceptable reason.

Once a vacancy is established the Clerk should notify the Elections Team at Broadland District Council, by email elections@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk. They will issue a Notice of a Casual Vacancy, which the Clerk should display on the Parish noticeboards for 14 day excluding Bank/Public Holidays. It may be desirable to also post the notice onto the website.

Upon expiry of the 14 days in which the Notice of Casual Vacancy has been displayed, the Elections Team will contact the Clerk and advise the Clerk that the Council may co-opt to fill the casual vacancy. There may be contact by interested persons whilst the notice of vacancy is displayed. These electors may not wish to call an election but maybe interested in standing via co-option. However, that person must be qualified to serve as a councillor.

Following advertising, if deemed necessary, any interested applicants may be invited to the next Parish Council meeting to introduce themselves to the Council.

Applicants should request and complete an application form (appendix B) and return via email or post, to be circulated to the Parish Council prior to co-option. If an alternative format is needed for completion, please contact the Clerk and request this.

The Council may appoint an interview panel of 2/3 Councillors who will carry out interviews and information sessions with each candidate to allow the candidate to ask any questions and inform them of what the role involves. Feedback would then be given to the Council with a recommendation of the most suitable candidate. The Council will make their selection by a vote and inform the successful candidate so that they may join the Council ASAP.

Anyone joining the Parish Council should be aware of the amount of time and commitment needed for the role. Ideally all applicants should have email access and be willing to attend additional meetings to the monthly Council meeting.

The person co-opted must receive an absolute majority of the councillors present and voting. For example, where there is a council of eleven members and there are nine councillors present and voting, the absolute majority is five. Where there are more than two candidates for the vacancy, it may be necessary to run a series of votes, each time removing the candidate who has the least number of votes until one candidate secures an absolute majority.

The usual rules on voting apply. Provided that the meeting has a quorum, the decision must be made by majority of members who are present and voting. Members must vote by show of hands unless the council's standing orders provide otherwise.

The Council's debate and vote on the co-option must be conducted in the public section of its meeting. It follows that the candidates, as members of the public, will be entitled to be present during the proceedings.

Feedback as to why the applicant was chosen and why another was not should always be given. Any applicant who is not successful should be informed about the right to apply again if another position becomes available. Even if there are spaces, if the applicants are not deemed suitable for the role, they would not routinely be appointed. This is most likely be due to the legislative requirements of applying to become a Councillor (See appendix A for legislative qualifications and disqualifications).

Co-option should be within a period of 60 days beginning with the day of which the Notice of Casual Vacancy was dated.

The signed Members' and Co-Opted Members' Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests should be sent to the Monitoring Officer: monitoringofficer@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk

Appendix A

A person qualifies to take office as Councillor if:

- Must be a qualifying British or Commonwealth citizen. You may also be eligible as a citizen of the European Union, however the criteria has changed now that the UK has left the European Union. Please check on the [gov.uk website for advice about EU citizens' voting and candidacy rights](#).
- Must be at least 18 years of age.
- On the day of taking office and thereafter, continues to be a local government elector for the area of the authority.
- Has during the whole 12 month period preceding the relevant day*, occupied, as owner or tenant, any land or other premises in that area and/or;
- Has a principal or only place of work during the preceding 12 months of the relevant date*, in the area and/or:
- Has during the whole 12 months of the relevant date*, resided at an address in the area or:
- Has during the whole 12 months preceding the relevant date* resided within three miles of the parish or community. (Local Government Act 1972 s.79(1))

A person is disqualified from taking office as a Councillor if:

- Undertakes 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.
- Any person who is subject to a bankruptcy restriction or order or an interim bankruptcy restriction or a debt relief restriction order or interim debt relief restriction order under Schedule 4ZB of the Insolvency Act 1986
- 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 been sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for not less than three months without the option of a fine
- Is otherwise disqualified under Part III of the Representations of the People Act 1983 for corrupt or illegal practices (Local Government Act 1972 s. 80)
- A person who is disqualified from being elected or holding office as a member of a local council is also disqualified for being a member of a committee of sub-committee of that council or for being a representative of the council on a joint committee involving that council (s104).
- A person how has been convicted of offences involving corrupt or illegal practices.

* Relevant date means the day on which the person is nominated as a candidate and if there is poll, the date of election.

Application for Co-option of a Parish Councillor**Appendix B**

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Parish Councillor. Please complete this application form to assist the Council in making their decision as to whether to co-opt a candidate.

Full Name and Title	
Home Address	
Contact Telephone	
Email address	

Personal Statement:

Please provide the Council with some background information about yourself and any skills and experience you feel might be relevant.

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Reasons for Applying:

Please provide the Council with reasons for wanting to become a Parish Councillor

Signature	
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Your application also requires signatures of two registered electors (known as proposer and seconder) from the parish area:

	Proposer	Seconder
Name		
Address		
Signature		

Please return your completed application to the Clerk of the Parish Council:

clerk@cantleylimpenhoesouthwood-pc.gov.uk. Your application will be considered at the next Parish Council meeting, where a vote will be held to decide your co-option to Cantley Limpenhoe and Southwood Parish Council.

Data Protection Act (2018): The information provided on the application form will remain private and confidential.

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 and 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 other views and accept majority decisions • Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly • Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and 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, principle 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.	