



Co-option Policy

Introduction

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

Co-option Process

To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken, the procedure below will be followed Ash Parish Council:

On receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Services Officer of Dover District Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option, this information will be made public on the Parish Council's website, Facebook and noticeboards. Parish Councillors will be informed.

Applicants will be directed to contact the Clerk.

The Clerk will provide a copy of this policy to the applicants and direct them to the Councillor documents on the Parish Council website

Applicants for co-option will be asked to:

- Attend at least one Parish Council Ordinary Meeting before making their application
- Provide information about themselves by way of completing a short application form (A copy of which is attached).
- Confirm their eligibility for the position of Parish Councillor within the statutory rules (A copy of which is attached).

New Councillors will be considered for co-option under an agenda item at the next Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council.

Copies of the application forms will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk, with the agenda and meeting pack prior to the meeting of the Full Council where the co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and Councillors as strictly private and confidential.

Voting Procedure

Voting will be according to the statutory requirements, in that, a successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting.

It should be noted that the council does not have to appoint a candidate if they are considered unsuitable. Therefore, Councillors may decline to vote for a candidate if they wish.

Each candidate must be Proposed and Seconded.

Voting will then take place by a show of hands.

In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

	One candidate	Multiple candidates
One position	Candidate must receive the absolute majority vote of those present and voting	If no one, at the first count, receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again; this process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.
Multiple positions	Candidate must receive the absolute majority vote of those present and voting	If the number of candidates equals the number of positions Each candidate must receive the absolute majority vote of those present and voting. Councillors will have the same number of votes as positions but are not required to use all of their votes if they wish. If the number of candidates is greater than the number of positions If no one, at the first count, receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidates with the least number of votes in order to obtain an equal number of candidates to positions. Then the above procedure will be followed. If the number of candidates is less than the number of positions Each candidate must receive the absolute majority vote of those present and voting

After the vote has been concluded, the Chairman will declare the successful candidate duly elected.

The new Councillor will sign and read aloud the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Clerk will provide the new Councillor with an Induction pack.

It should be noted that a Disclosable Pecuniary Interests form MUST be completed and returned to Democratic Services at Dover District Council within 28 days of your co-option for the Co-option to the Parish Council to be legal.



Co-Option Application Form

1) PERSONAL DETAILS

Full Name	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone	
Email	

2) ELIGIBILITY TO SERVE AS A PARISH COUNCILLOR

To be eligible for co-option, you must:

- Be at least 18 years old.
- Be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland, a qualifying EU citizen or an EU citizen with retained rights.
- Meet at least one of the following four qualifications:
 - You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the parish in which you wish to stand from the day of your nomination onwards.

- You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the parish area during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.
- Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your nomination and the day of election has been in the parish area.
- You have lived in the parish area or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your nomination and the day of election.

You can find more information and resources on the Electoral Commission [website](#).

Please confirm you are not disqualified from holding office:

☐ I confirm I am not disqualified under the Local Government Act 1972 or other relevant legislation.

3) ABOUT YOU

Why would you like to become a parish councillor?

(Please outline your motivation and what you hope to contribute.)

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What skills, experience, or interests would you bring to the council?

(Community involvement, professional background, local knowledge, etc.)

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Is there any other information you would like to disclose regarding your application?

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4) DECLARATIONS

Are you willing to attend council meetings regularly and undertake training as required?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Are you willing for your name to be published as an applicant?

☐ Yes

☐ No

5) SIGNATURE

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

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return the completed form to clerk@ashparishcouncil.gov.uk