

MEMBER CO-OPTION POLICY

Updated: 20/05/2026

Reference: 008v



This document includes all the information required to facilitate co-options at Lancing Parish Council

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 Lancing Parish Council.

The co-option procedure is entirely managed by the Council, and this policy will ensure that a fair and equitable process is carried out.

The co-option of a parish councillor occurs in two instances:

1. When an ordinary vacancy has arisen on a Parish Council after the ordinary elections held every four (4) years,
2. When a casual vacancy has arisen on a Parish Council and no poll (by-election) has been called.

The Council is composed of five (5) wards: Churchill, Manor, Mash Barn, Penhill & Wide Water.

Policy in non-election years

In the event for the need of the co-option of a councillor in a non-election year the following procedure will be undertaken:

- The Clerk will advertise for interested candidates by placing adverts on noticeboards, the website and on Facebook (Appendix A).
- The closing date for applications will be clearly advertised.
- The Clerk will require each candidate to complete an application form including a declaration that they are qualified and not disqualified from being a councillor (Appendix B)
- Prospective candidates will be provided with relevant information on the responsibilities of being a councillor and the nature of their duties.
- Candidates will be advised that the council is not obliged to co-opt any candidate if it is felt the candidates are not suitable.
- Co-options will normally be considered at a full council meeting, but an extra meeting may be called if required.
- At the co-option meeting candidates will be given the opportunity to introduce themselves to councillors, give information on their background and experience and explain why they would like to become a Member of the Council. Councillors will be able to ask questions.
- Once all the candidates have spoken, Councillors will discuss the candidates and make a decision regarding co-option. This will be done in public session. Voting will be by a show of hands.

- For a candidate to be co-opted they must receive 50% + 1 of the votes from members present.
- If insufficient or unsuitable candidates come forward, then the process will be repeated.
- The Clerk will update Adur Electoral Services, the website and other relevant documentation including committee membership, working groups, and representatives to outside bodies as soon as practicable

Policy In Election Years

In the event of the need for co-option in an election year, the following process will be undertaken:

- If following the close of nominations at an Ordinary Election, there is a quorum of Elected Councillors, but some outstanding vacancies, the Clerk will advertise for interested candidates by placing on noticeboards, the website and on Facebook.
- The Clerk will require each candidate to complete an application form including a declaration that there are qualified and not disqualified from being a councillor (Appendix A)
- Prospective candidates will be provided with relevant information on the responsibilities of being a councillor and the nature of their duties.
- Candidates will be advised that the council is not obliged to co-opt any candidate if it is felt the candidates are not suitable.
- The closing date for nominations will be noon on the Monday after the election takes place and co-options will be considered at the first meeting of the Full Council following the election, (usually the Annual Statutory Meeting), and will be the first business to be considered after the Election of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council
- Candidates will be given the opportunity to introduce themselves to councillors, give information on their background and experience and explain why they would like to become a Member of the Council. Councillors will be able to ask questions.
- Once all the candidates have spoken, Councillors will discuss the candidates and make a decision regarding co-option. This will be done in public session. Voting will be by a show of hands.
- For a candidate to be co-opted they must receive 50% + 1 of the votes from members present.
- If insufficient or unsuitable candidates come forward, then the process will be repeated.

- The Clerk will update Adur Electoral Services, the website and other relevant documentation including committee membership, working groups, and representatives to outside bodies as soon as practicable.

Lancing Parish Council

Lancing Parish Hall, 96-98 South Street, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 8AJ

NOTICE OF CASUAL VACANCY

Notice is hereby given that due to the resignation of Councillor XXXXX a vacancy has occurred among the Members of the Parish Council. Any person willing to fill this vacancy should apply to the Clerk in writing on or before the XXXXX using the application form available from the Parish Council Office, or from the website.

The applicant's name must appear on the current register of the Voters List or the applicant should during the whole of the twelve months preceding the relevant date have resided in or within three miles of the parish or the applicant's only place of work during the whole of the twelve months preceding the relevant date is in the parish.

The applicant must not be debarred from standing as a Councillor.

PUBLIC elections cannot be held until the year XXXXX but for the interim period the present sitting Councillors may co-opt to fill the vacancy.

Steven Trice PSLCC
CEO and Clerk to Lancing Parish Council
Date xxx

Appendix B

Application to become a Parish Councillor

Name (inc title):			
Email Address:			
Telephone No:		Mobile No:	
Address:			
Postcode:			
To comply with the Principles set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 we will ensure all personal information supplied to us is held securely. We will ensure that any information given will be held only as long as necessary. The information provided will be used for the purposes of administering your application and will only be shared as the law permits or with your express consent.			
Please provide a short statement explaining the reasons why you wish to become a Parish Councillor and let us know what skills or experience you would be able to bring to the Parish Council. The statement will be circulated to all councillors before the next Council meeting. some brief background details as to why you wish to become a Parish Councillor.			
Signed:			Date:

MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

In order to be eligible for co-option as a Lancing Parish Councillor, you must be a British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union; and be 18 years of age or over; and additionally, able to meet one of the qualifications as set out below. (Please tick which applies to you)

a) I am registered as a local government elector for the parish	
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	
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 resided in the parish or within three miles of it	

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 or of a joint committee on which the council is represented; or
- b) Is a person who had 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 annulment and discharge respectively. In iii, it ceases on the expiry of five years from the date of discharge.