



CO-OPTION POLICY

Policy for co-opting Councillors

Minute Number: 47/25.1

Date: 21st May 2025

Review date: May 2026

1. Introduction

This policy complies with Isle of Wight Electoral Services and Society of Local Council Clerks guidance.

2. Events leading to a co-option

The co-option of a Parish Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the council and no poll (by-election) has been called. Bembridge Parish Council must notify the Electoral Services Office of the Isle of Wight Council of a casual vacancy and advertise the vacancy giving electors the opportunity to request an election.

The notice must be placed in a conspicuous place in the area and advertised as widely as possible.

If 10 or more electors write to the Electoral Services Office stating that an election is requested, then a by-election is called, this is organised by the Electoral Services Office. The Parish Council would pay the costs of the election.

If there is no request for a ballot within fourteen days (excluding Saturday, Sunday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a bank holiday, or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning) of the vacancy notice being posted, as advised by the Electoral Services Office, Bembridge Parish Council will begin the co-option process (see paragraph 3).

If a vacancy arises following an uncontested ordinary election, then the co-option process begins immediately (see paragraph 3).

3. In the case of co-option, the following procedure should be followed: -

- A notice advertising the Vacancy and requesting persons to put their names forward for co-option should be displayed on the Parish Council website, and public places within the area;
- Councillors are free to also approach persons to offer themselves for co-option.
- Applicants should fill in the attached Application Form and return to the Parish Clerk.
- In line with Standing Order 8.b. A Co-option Panel may be established to interview applicants.
- Notice of the intention to co-opt to the vacancy should be given in the agenda for the meeting of the Parish Council.
- When the item is reached, the Co-Option Panel will make recommendations to the Full Council and the Chair will invite nominations.
- When all the nominations have been received a vote should be taken. It is usual for the candidate's names to be put in alphabetical order.
- The person co-opted must receive a majority of the votes of those councillors present and voting at the meeting where the co-option takes place.

Where there are more than two candidates for one vacancy, this rule means that a person must get a majority of votes over all the other candidates.

Thus, where candidate A receives four votes, and candidates B and C each receive two, A is not elected because he has the same number of votes as B and C put together and does not have a majority over their combined votes.

- Where there are more than two candidates it is desirable to eliminate the candidate with the least number of votes, so that the final vote is between two candidates only.
- After the vote has been taken, the chair should declare the candidate who received the highest number of votes duly elected.
- The person elected must make a declaration of acceptance of office before, or at, the first meeting of the parish council following his election in the presence of a member of the parish council or the proper officer of the parish council. The declaration is then retained in the parish records. The person elected will need also to undertake to abide by the parish council's code of conduct.



Parish Councillor Co-option Application Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Eligibility requirements – please indicate which apply to you

In order to be eligible for co-option as a Parish Councillor you must, on the 'relevant date' (the day on which you are nominated) confirm:

- I am 18 or over
- I am a British Citizen, or a citizen of a Commonwealth or European Union country
- I am registered as a local government elector;

And for the whole of the 12 months prior to this application:

- I have either occupied or owned/rented premises in the Parish OR
- I have resided within 3 miles of the boundary of the Parish OR
- My principal or only place of work is in the Parish or within 3 miles of the parish boundary

Disqualification from standing

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.

In b) above, the 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; or
- 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.

I confirm I am not disqualified from standing for any of the reasons given above

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

Signed _____

Dated _____

Note: All information you provide will be copied to Councillors only and will be treated in strict confidence. The information will not be made available to members of the public. If you are not co-opted the information will be destroyed/deleted at the end of the co-option process; if appointed it will be kept on file while you remain a Parish Councillor.

About yourself

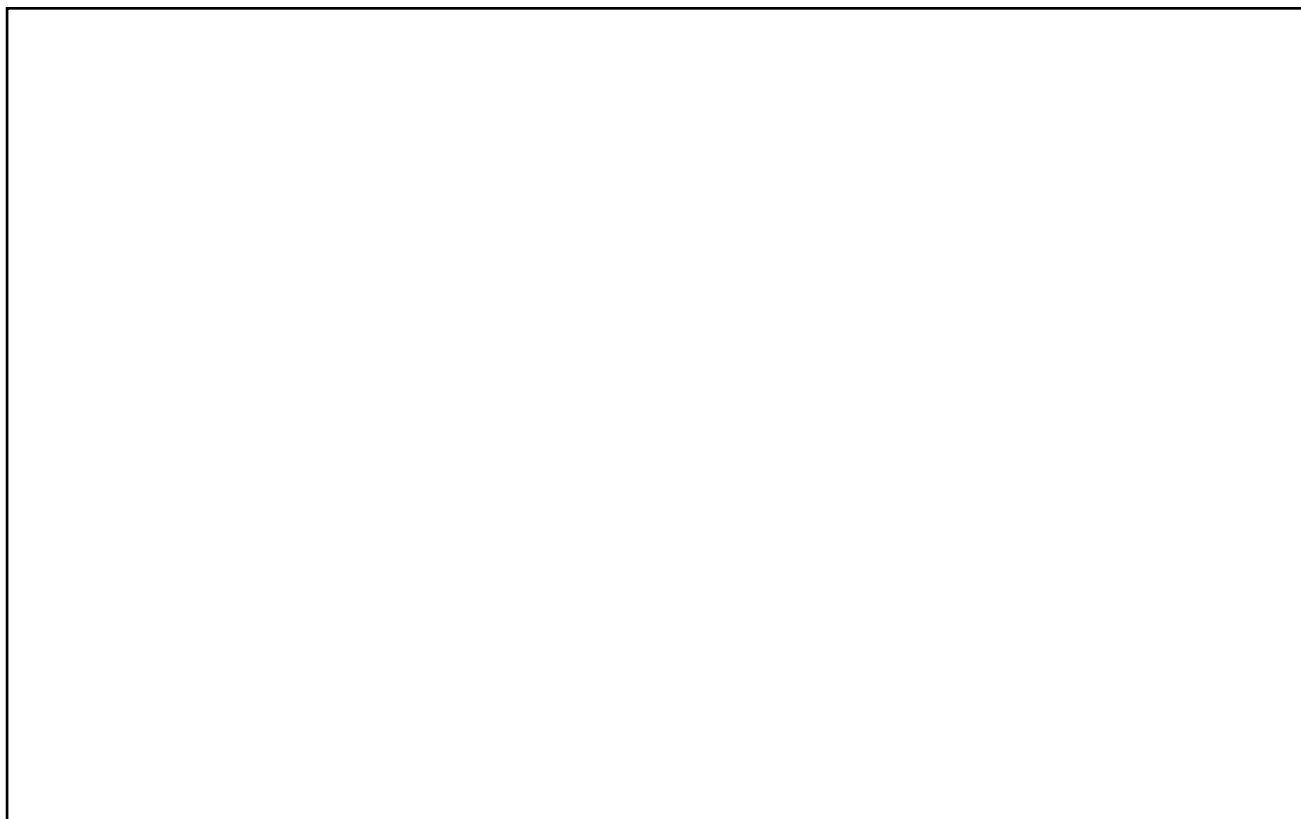
Please introduce yourself and tell us why you consider you would be the best candidate for the vacancy.

Points to cover could include:

- Length of residence in the Parish
- Membership and involvement with any community associations, voluntary work etc within the Parish or elsewhere
- Particular interests or concerns relating to the Parish.
- Any skills or experience you have that may be relevant to Bembridge Parish Council. These may be professional, but don't forget any you may have from other things you are involved with.

Please briefly outline why you are interested in being a Bembridge Parish Councillor

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

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide details about their life experience as requested in the text above. The box is currently blank.

Please tell us something about the skills you feel you will bring to the Parish Council, for example, professional qualifications, financial or project management expertise, listening and organisational skills.

Are there any questions you would like to ask the Parish Council?

Please feel free to add extra pages if you wish.