

BRIMPSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL'S CO-OPTION POLICY

1 Policy Statement

This policy sets out the procedure to ensure there is compliance with legislation in the co-option of members to Brimpsfield Parish Council. The co-option procedure is managed by the Parish Council and is intended to ensure that the process is fair and equitable.

2 Co-Option

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

1. When an ordinary vacancy has arisen on the Parish Council after the ordinary elections
2. When a casual vacancy has arisen on the Parish Council and no poll (by-election) has been requested.

Ordinary vacancy

An ordinary vacancy occurs when there are insufficient candidates to fill all the seats on the Parish Council at the ordinary elections held every four years. Any candidates who were nominated are automatically elected to the Parish Council and any remaining vacancies are known as "ordinary vacancies". Provided there are enough parish councillors to constitute a quorum, the Parish Council is usually able to co-opt a volunteer to such a vacancy. In some cases, Cotswold District Council may intervene and make an appointment or order an election to fill a vacancy.

Casual vacancy

A casual vacancy occurs when:

- A councillor fails to make his declaration of acceptance of office at the proper time
- A councillor resigns
- A councillor dies
- A councillor becomes disqualified, or
- A councillor fails for six (6) months to attend meetings of the council or to attend as a representative of the council a meeting of an outside body.

The Parish Council has to notify the Cotswold District Council of a casual vacancy and then advertise the vacancy and give electors for the ward the

opportunity to request an election. This occurs when ten (10) electors write to Cotswold District Council stating that an election is requested.

If a by-election is called, a polling station will be set up by the Parish Council and the people of the ward will be asked to go to the polls to vote for candidates who will have put themselves forward by way of a nomination paper. The Parish Council will pay the costs of the election. The people of the ward have fourteen days (not including weekends, bank holidays and other notable days), to claim the by-election, but the Electoral Services Office of Cotswold District Council will advise the Clerk of the closing date.

If more than one (1) candidate is then nominated a by-election takes place but if only one (1) candidate is put forward they are duly elected without a ballot.

If ten (10) residents do not request a ballot within fourteen (14) days of the vacancy notice being posted, as advised by the Electoral Services Office, the Parish Council is able to co-opt a volunteer.

3 Confirmation of Co-option

On receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Services Office that no by-election has been claimed, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option. The Clerk will:

- Advertise the vacancy for four weeks or such other period as the Parish Council may agree on the Parish Council notice boards, social media and website
- Advise Cotswold District Council that the co-option policy has been instigated

This procedure will also apply in the case of an ordinary vacancy where the Electoral Services Office has confirmed that there were insufficient nominations to fill all the seats but there are sufficient parish councillors elected to constitute a quorum.

4 Eligibility of candidates

To be able to stand as a candidate at a parish council election 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 cannot stand if:

- you work for your local council, or
- you hold a politically restricted post for another authority, or
- you are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order, or
- you have served a prison sentence (including suspended sentences) of three months or more within five years prior to the election, or
- you have been disqualified under any legislation relating to corrupt or illegal practices

You do not need any formal qualifications to become a councillor.

5 Applications

Candidates will be requested to:

- Attend at least one Parish Council meeting as observers;
- Submit information about themselves
- Confirm their eligibility for the position of parish councillor within the statutory rules
- Attend the meeting where co-option is considered.

Following receipt of applications, the next suitable Parish Council meeting will have an agenda item 'To receive written applications for the office of Parish Councillor and to co-opt a candidate to fill the existing vacancy'. Eligible candidates will be invited to attend the meeting.

Copies of the eligible candidates' applications will be circulated to all parish councillors by the Clerk at least 3 clear days prior to the meeting of the full Parish Council, when the co-option will be considered.

All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and all parish councillors as strictly private and confidential.

6 The Co-option meeting

At the co-option meeting, candidates will be given five minutes maximum to introduce themselves to the parish councillors (members), give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a member of the Parish Council. The process will be carried out in the public session and there will be no private discussions between members prior to a vote being taken. However, where the Parish Council is discussing the merits of candidates and inevitably their personal attributes, this could be prejudicial, and the Parish Council should resolve to exclude members of the press and public.

As soon as all candidates have finished giving their submissions, the Parish Council will proceed to a vote with each candidate being proposed and seconded by the councillors in attendance (as defined in the Standing Orders) and a vote by a show of hands (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 13).

For a candidate to be co-opted to the Parish Council, it will be necessary for them to obtain an absolute majority of votes cast. If there are more than two candidates and there is no candidate with an overall majority in the first round of voting the candidate with the least number of votes will drop out of the process.

Further rounds of voting will then take place with the process repeated until a candidate has an absolute majority.

If present, a candidate who is co-opted will sign at the co-option meeting a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, including an undertaking to abide by the Parish Council's Code of Conduct, and may take office thereafter. If not present, a co-opted candidate will sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office either before or at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

The Clerk will notify Cotswold District Council Electoral Services Office of the co-option of the new parish councillor.

The co-opted parish councillor will complete a Register of Members Interest Form which the Clerk will lodge with the Monitoring Officer at Cotswold District Council within 28 days of the co-option.

If insufficient candidates are co-opted, the process should continue, whereby the vacancies are again advertised.

— policy ends here —

Notes

unless an issue arises requiring the policy to be revised in the interim this policy will remain until it is reviewed at the due date (below).

Date of policy: 22nd September 2026

Approving body: Brimpsfield Parish Council

Date of committee meeting: 22nd September 2026

Policy version reference: New

Supersedes: None

Policy effective from: 23rd September 2026

Date for next review: between 2028 & 2030