



Bridlington Town Council

Councillor Co - option Policy and Application Form

Adopted
for the Bridlington Town Council Term 2023-2027

Minute reference: 99.26/27



BRIDLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
Councillor Co – option Policy and Application Form

1. General Statement

This policy sets out the procedure to ensure there is compliance with legislation and continuity of procedures in the co-option of members of Bridlington Town Council (BTC). The co-option procedure is entirely managed by BTC and this policy will ensure that a fair and equitable process is carried out.

2. Co-option

The Co-option of a Town councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no by-election has been called. A casual vacancy occurs when:

- A councillor fails to make their 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 months to attend meetings of the council, a council committee or subcommittee or to attend as a representative of the Council a meeting of an outside body.

BTC must notify the East Riding of Yorkshire Councils (ERYC), Electoral Services department of a casual vacancy and then advertise the vacancy and give electors the opportunity to request an election. This occurs when ten electors write to the ERYC stating that an election is requested.

If a by-election is called, a polling station will be set up by ERYC, and the people of the parish will be asked to go to the polls to vote for candidates who will have put themselves forward by way of nomination paper. BTC will pay the costs of the election. The people of the parish have fourteen days (not including weekends, bank holidays and other notable days), to claim the by-election, but the electoral officer will advise the clerk of the closing date.

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

If ten residents do not request a ballot within fourteen days of the vacancy notice being posted, as advised by ERYC, BTC is able to co-opt a volunteer.

3. Confirmation of Co-option

On receipt, of written confirmation, from the Electoral Services Office of ERYC, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option, the Town Clerk (or in the absence of the Clerk the Deputy Town Clerk) will:

- Advertise the vacancy for four weeks on the Council notice boards, website, local media and social media.
- Advise BTC that the Co-option Policy has been instigated.

BTC is not obliged to fill any vacancy. Even if the Council invite applications for co-option, it is not legally obliged to select anyone from the candidates which apply.

However, it is not desirable that electors in a particular ward be left partially or fully underrepresented for a significant length of time. Neither does it contribute to effective and efficient working of the Council if there are insufficient councillors to share the workload; to provide a broad cross section of skills and interested; or to achieve meeting quorums without difficulty.

Councillors elected by co-option are full members of BTC.

4. Eligibility of Candidates

BTC can consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that:

- they are a British, Commonwealth or eligible EU citizen aged 18 or older AND:
- they are a registered elector for the parish; or
- has resided in the parish for the last twelve months or rented/tenanted land or other premises in the parish; or
- has their principal place of work in the parish; or
- has lived within three miles (direct) of the parish for the last twelve months.

There are certain disqualifications for election, of which the main are (see 5.80 of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA)):

- holding a paid office under the local authority
- bankruptcy
- having been sentenced to a term of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) of not less than three months, without the option of a fine during the five years preceding the election; and
- being disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal practices.

Candidates found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.

5. Applications

Members may inform any qualifying candidate of the vacancies and the process. Although there is no Statutory Requirement to do so, candidates will be requested to:

- Submit information about themselves, by way of completing a short application form based on the eligibility and competence criteria and the Personal Specifications and a handwritten letter of application (an independent scribe may be provided on request by the applicant) (Appendix A)
- Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules (Appendix B)

Following receipt of application, all Councillors will receive copies of the application and will assess and score each candidate based on the Personal Specifications. Candidates will then be considered at the next Full council meeting, under an agenda item “To receive written applications and Councillors scoring assessments for the office of Town Councillor”

At the Co-option meeting

Votes are made by Councillors on a ballot paper in secret. Each Councillor present has one vote per round of voting. Votes are counted by the Clerk or Deputy Clerk in the presence of independent auditors.

For a candidate to be elected to BTC, it will be necessary for them to obtain an absolute majority of votes (50%+1 of the votes available at the meeting). 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. In the case of equal votes, the Chair of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

After the vote has been concluded, the Chair will declare (if a successful candidate has been elected) the successful candidate duly elected and after signing their declaration of acceptance of office, may take their place immediately.

The Clerk will notify Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment. The successful candidate(s) must complete the registration of interest within 28 days of being elected. The form should be handed to the Clerk for forwarding to the Monitoring Officer.

If insufficient candidates come forward for co-option, the process should continue, whereby the vacancies are advertised again.

Application for Co-option

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Town Councillor. Please provide the information below to assist the Council in making their decision.

Full name/title	
Home address	
Home phone number	
Mobile phone number	
Email address	

About you

Please provide the Council with some background information about yourself

Signature:

Personal Specification

Please provide the council with evidence of meeting the Personal Specification criteria:

Personal Attributes:

Experience, skills, knowledge and ability

Circumstances

Reasons for applying

Please provide the Council with your reasons for wishing to become a Town Councillor.

Signature:

Please return your completed application to the Clerk. Your application will be considered at the next available Full Council meeting, where a vote will be held to decide whether the Council agrees to co-opt you onto Bridlington Town Council.

General Data Protection Regulations: The information provided on this application form will remain private and confidential in accordance with the Councils Privacy Notice.

Co-option Eligibility Form

1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Bridlington Town councillor you must be a British Subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth: and on the “relevant date” (i.e. the day on which you are nominated or if there is a poll the day of the election) 18 years of age or over; and additionally able to meet one of the following qualifications set out below.

Please tick which applies to you:

a. I am registered as a local government elector for parish; or

☐

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; or

☐

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 months resided in the parish or within 3 miles of it.

☐

2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Governments Act 1972 a person disqualified from being elected as a local Councillor or being a member of a Local Council if they:

a. Holds any paid office or employment of the local council (other than the office of Chair) 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 their creditors (but see below); or

☐

c. Has within five years before the date of election, or since their 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 their debts have been fully discharged.
- II. If the person is discharged with a certificate that the bankruptcy was caused by misfortune without misconduct on their part.
- III. If the person is discharged without such 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.

Declaration

I hereby confirm that I am eligible for the vacancy of Bridlington Town Councillor, and the information given on this form is true and accurate.

Signature:

Date:.....

Bridlington Town Council is duly bound to treat this information strictly confidential.

Co-opted Councillor Person Specification

COMPENTENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIREABLE
Personal Attributes	• Sound knowledge and understanding of the local affairs and the local community • Forward thinking	• Can bring a new skill, expertise, or key local knowledge
Experience, skills, knowledge and ability	• Ability to listen • A good team player • Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects • Solid interest in local matters • Ability and willingness to represent Council and their community • Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others' views and accept the majority decisions • Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly • Ability and willingness to work closely with other members, officers and residents to maintain good, professional working relationships • Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners • Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and all 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 the town Council and or local authorities •
Circumstances	• Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council at any time and events in the evening and at weekends	