**Briercliffe Parish Council.**

**Co-options Policy: Report to the Council, September, 2019.**

1. **Co-option.**

Co-option is the name of the method by which members of a Parish Council can fill vacant places on their Parish Council. Existing members of the Council have the powers to co-opt, by the casting of votes, a suitable member (or members) of the public to fill such vacancies.

Should the Council find itself in a position where it can legally co-opt onto the Council under the Local Government Act 1974, the following process will be followed.

1. **Co-option procedures.**
2. The display of its own publicity for a vacancy by the Parish Council is a good way of eliciting local interest in the vacancy. This can be done by a poster, adverts in a newspaper, information on the Parish Council’s website or via other social media. It is regarded as good practice to undertake this work. This would be an informal notice of a vacancy and should not be confused with the official Notice of Vacancy.
3. Contact details are to be given of someone who can advise on the responsibilities of and time commitments to being a member of a Parish Council. In normal circumstances the individual should be the Clerk to the Council.
4. Membership of a Parish Council is open to British Citizens, Commonwealth Citizens and (at present) citizens of other European Union member states who satisfy the statutory qualifications. (See, 3b, below).
5. There is no upper age limit, but Councillors must be over 18 years of age when elected or co-opted. There are some disqualifications – being an employee of the Council or an undischarged bankrupt – for example. Further information on disqualifications is held by the Returning Officer.
6. All applicants should provide the Council with an application form (Appendix A) with a closing date of 14 working days from the vacancy being advertised. If no application forms are received within this period, the vacancy is to be advertised again. If the number of applications received is the same or less than the number of vacancies available, all application forms are to be circulated to all Councillors and a decision taken at the next quorate Full Council meeting. If there are more applications than vacancies all applications are to be invited individually to an interview with a Co-options Committee consisting of 3 Councillors.
7. At the interviews the questions and scoring matrix in Appendix B are to be used for all candidates. Questions are to be allocated to individual members of the Council. Questions are to be asked in the same order for each candidate.
8. When all candidates have been seen the Co-option Committee make a recommendation to the next quorate Full Council meeting, the full council is to decide whom they wish to appoint. All applicants should be informed as soon as is possible after the decision(s) have been made.
9. The person co-opted must receive an absolute majority vote of the councillor’s present. For example, if seven members are present, the absolute majority is four. If a candidate receives an absolute majority vote they are deemed co-opted onto the Council. Where there are more that two candidates for a single vacancy, it may be necessary to hold a series of votes, each time removing the candidate who has least votes until one candidate secures an absolute majority.
10. The decision to co-opt is to be by a majority who are present and voting. The person presiding over the meeting can vote and, if necessary, may exercise a casting vote. Voting can be either by a show of hands or by the use of voting cards bearing the names of the candidates in alphabetical order.
11. It is good practice that members of Co-option Committee keep notes about each candidate’s responses to the questions that they are asked and that these notes are collected and kept by the Council’s Clerk for 5 years.
12. The Parish Council’s debate and vote on the co-option must be conducted in public. It follows that candidates, as members of the public, are entitled to be present during proceedings.
13. A person elected or co-opted to fill a casual vacancy holds office until the person in whose place they are elected or appointed would regularly have retired.
14. **Exceptions to the procedures above.**
15. If a casual vacancy is caused by the death of a Councillor, the process can be postponed until such time as the Returning Officer, the Clerk to the Council and its Members feel is reasonable.
16. If a casual vacancy results in the Parish Council becoming inquorate, or if a vacancy occurs within six months of a scheduled election different rules apply. Advice for these situations can be had from the Returning Officer and/or the County Association.

Appendix A

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Briercliffe With Extwistle Parish Council

***842 Padiham Road, Burnley, BB12 6NN. Tel: (07721) 078634***

***E-mail:*** ***Briercliffeparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk***[***www.Briercliffeparishcouncil.co.uk***](http://www.haptonparishcouncil.co.uk)

**Co-Option Application.**

Please complete the form in full.

**I** *(full name)............................................................................................................*

**Of** *(full house address)........................................*..................................................

Wish to be considered for co-option by the Parish Council**.**

I declare that I am qualified to be elected by virtue of being on that day:

1. A Commonwealth citizen, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland or a citizen of another Member State of the European Community.
2. I have attained the age of 18 years.
3. I am registered as a local government elector for the parish and have either;
	1. during the whole of the twelve months preceding that day occupied as owner or tenant the following land or other premises in the parish at:
	2. my principle place of work during those twelve months has been in this parish at:
	3. during the whole of those twelve months resided in the parish or within 4.8k (3 miles) of it.

***Please note: a person cannot be co-opted to the position of parish councillor if he or she is an employee of that council or if they are an undischarged bankrupt.***

*Signed: ..........................................................................*

*Dated: ........................................................*

***Please provide short supporting statements (max 75 words each) outlining your own responses to the following questions. These may be used if the Parish Council needs to shortlist prior to interview. No questions are compulsory.***

1. ***What do you believe is the role of a Parish Councillor and what would you bring to fulfil this role?***
2. ***What do you believe are the positive aspects of having a Parish Council?***
3. ***Do you feel there are any negative aspects of having a Parish Council and if so what are these?***
4. ***What motivated you to apply to be a Parish Councillor?***
5. ***Do you have any prior community involvement such as voluntary work that you feel may be relevant?***
6. ***Have you been a member of a Council previously and if so what was your experience, if you haven’t what do you expect to be your experience of being a Parish Councillor?***
7. ***Please outline why you feel that democracy is important and how would you feel if the majority of Councillor did not agree with your opinion?***
8. ***The Parish Council meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm, do you have any other commitments on these days?***
9. ***Is there anything else you would like to be considered as part of your application?***

I

Return this form to the Parish Clerk, Steve Watson. Briercliffeparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk

Or post to 842 Padiham Road, Burnley BB12 6NN

Appendix B

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Briercliffe With Extwistle Parish Council

***842 Padiham Road, Burnley, BB12 6NN. Tel: (07721) 078634***

***E-mail:*** ***Briercliffeparishcouncil@yahoo.co.uk***[***www.Briercliffeparishcouncil.co.uk***](http://www.haptonparishcouncil.co.uk)

**Scoring Matrix**

Name of Candidate ………………………………………………………………….

Councillor completing form …………………………………………………………

Date completed ………………………………………………………………………

Questions

1. ***What do you believe is the role of a Parish Councillor and what would you bring to fulfil this role?***

Score 1 2 3 4 5

1. ***What do you believe are the positive aspects of having a Parish Council?***

Score 1 2 3 4 5

1. ***Do you feel there are any negative aspects of having a Parish Council and if so what are these?***

Score 1 2 3 4 5

1. ***What motivated you to apply to be a Parish Councillor?***

Score 1 2 3 4 5

1. ***Do you have any prior community involvement such as voluntary work that you feel may be relevant?***

Score 1 2 3 4 5

1. ***Have you been a member of a Council previously and if so what was your experience, if you haven’t what do you expect to be your experience of being a Parish Councillor?***

Score 1 2 3 4 5

1. ***Please outline why you feel that democracy is important and how would you feel if the majority of Councillor did not agree with your opinion?***

Score 1 2 3 4 5

1. ***The Parish Council meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 6:30pm, do you have any other commitments on these days?***

Score 1 2 3 4 5

1. ***Is there anything else you would like to be considered as part of your application?***

Score 1 2 3 4 5

**Matrix**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Score | Multiplier | Total |
| 1 |  | X 3 |  |
| 2 |  | X 2 |  |
| 3 |  | X 1 |  |
| 4 |  | X 1 |  |
| 5 |  | X 3 |  |
| 6 |  | X 1 |  |
| 7 |  | X 2 |  |
| 8 |  | X 3 |  |
| 9 |  | X 2 |  |
|  |  | Grand Total |  |