

# PARISH COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION POLICY

Adopted: 6<sup>th</sup> August 2025



This document includes all the information required to facilitate co-options at Storrington & Sullington 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 Storrington & Sullington Parish Council.

The co-option procedure is entirely managed by the Parish Council, and this policy will ensure that a fair, transparent, respectful 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.

## Eligibility criteria

- Candidates must be registered as local government electors for the parish or meet other statutory eligibility criteria (eg. residency, or property ownership).
- Candidates should not be disqualified under the Local Government Act (1972) (eg. disqualified due to certain criminal convictions or undischarged bankruptcy).
- Whenever the need for co-option arises, the Parish Council can seek and encourage applications from anyone who is eligible to stand as a Parish Councillor. Councillors, or parishioners, can properly approach individuals to suggest that they might wish to consider putting their names forward for co-option.

## Policy in non-election years

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

- The Clerk will advertise for interested candidates by placing adverts on noticeboards and the website.
- 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), and a Skills and Availability Form (Appendix B).
- Prospective candidates will be provided with relevant information on the responsibilities of being a Councillor and the nature of their duties – a copy of the NALC Good Councillors Guide.
- Candidates will be advised that the Parish 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. Councillors should consider the merits of candidates individually, based upon the skills they present, and should not discuss their suitability or otherwise with fellow Councillors, nor base their support with regard to the candidates' views. 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 HDC 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 and the website.
- 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 Parish 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 be considered at the first meeting of the Full Council following the election, (usually the Annual Statutory Parish Council Meeting), and will be the first business to be considered after the Election of the Chair and Vice-Chair 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 HDC Electoral Services, the website and other relevant documentation including committee membership, working groups, and representatives to outside bodies as soon as practicable.

## Appendix A – Application Form

### STORRINGTON & SULLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Hall, Thakeham Road, Storrington,  
West Sussex, RH20 3PP  
01903 746547

[www.storrington-pc.gov.uk](http://www.storrington-pc.gov.uk)

Clerk: Rebecca Luckin (CILCA)

[Clerk@storrington-pc.gov.uk](mailto:Clerk@storrington-pc.gov.uk)



## Application for Co-option as a Parish Councillor for Storrington & Sullington Parish Council

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

<b>Full name and title</b>	
<b>Home address</b>	
<b>Home Telephone</b>	
<b>Mobile Telephone</b>	
<b>Email Address</b>	

#### About You

Please provide the council with some background information about yourself:

#### Reasons for Applying

Please provide the council with your reasons for wanting to become a Parish Councillor:

**Signature**

Your application also requires signatures of **two** registered electors (known as a proposer and seconder) from the parish area:

	Proposer	Secunder
Name		
Address		
Signature		

Please return your completed application to the Clerk to the council. Your application will be considered at the next available Council meeting where a vote will be held to decide whether the Council agrees to co-opt you onto Storrington & Sullington Parish Council.

**Data Protection Act: The information provided on this application will remain private and confidential and will only be used for the purpose intended.**

**Co-option eligibility:**

1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Storrington & Sullington Parish Councillor you must be a British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union; 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 the 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 within the  
parish; or ☐
- d) I have during the whole twelve months resided in the parish or within 3 miles of it ☐

2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 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.

This disqualification for bankruptcy ceases in the following circumstances:

- i. If the bankruptcy is annulled on the grounds that either 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 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 Storrington & Sullington Councillor, and the information given on this form is true and accurate record.

Signature:..... Date:

**Storrington & Sullington Parish Council is duty bound to treat this information as strictly confidential.**

**Co-opted councillor - person specification:**

COMPETENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<b>Personal Attributes</b>	Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community  Forward thinking	Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council
<b>Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability</b>	Ability to listen constructively  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 the Council and their community  Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others views and accept majority decisions  Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly  Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff  Ability and willingness to work with Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other parish Councils, principal authority, charities)	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 town and parish Councils or local authorities  Experience of delivering presentations

	Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training	
<b>Circumstances</b>	Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time and events in the evening and at weekends	

Please return your completed form to the Parish Clerk – [Clerk@storrington-pc.gov.uk](mailto:Clerk@storrington-pc.gov.uk)

## Appendix B – Skills Audit and Availability Form:

### Parish Councillor Skills and Availability Record

Please return the completed form to the Parish Clerk – [clerk@storrington-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@storrington-pc.gov.uk)

**Councillor Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information:** (Optional - for internal council use only)

- Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
- Email: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section 1: Skills and Expertise

*Please rate your proficiency in the following areas (1-5, where 1=Beginner, 5=Expert) and list any other relevant skills or experience.*

Area of Expertise	Rating (1-5)	Notes/Experience
Finance/Budgeting		
Legal/Governance		
Planning/Development		
Community Engagement		
Project Management		
Communication/PR		
Environmental Issues		
IT/Technical Skills		
Other (Please specify)		



## Section 2: Availability

*Please indicate your general availability for council meetings, events, and other activities.*

- **Evenings:**  
☐ Available Most Evenings ☐ Available Some Evenings ☐ Rarely Available
- **Weekends:**  
☐ Available Most Weekends ☐ Available Some Weekends ☐ Rarely Available
- **Daytime:**  
☐ Available Most Weekdays ☐ Available Some Weekdays ☐ Rarely Available
- **Estimated Weekly Time Commitment (excluding regular council meetings):**  
\_\_\_\_\_ hours
- **Notes on Availability (e.g., specific days/times, work schedule):**

---

---

## Section 3: Council Commitments

*Please list any specific roles or responsibilities you currently hold within the Parish Council (e.g., committee chair, lead on a specific project).*

---

---

## Section 4: Other Community Commitments

*Please list any other community commitments you have that may impact your availability for council duties (e.g. volunteering with other organizations, involvement in local groups). We recognise these can also provide beneficial community engagement on behalf of the Parish Council.*

---

---

## **Section 5: Interests and Preferred Areas of Involvement**

*Are there any particular areas of council work you are most interested in or would like to be more involved in?*

---

---

## **Section 6: Training Needs**

*Sussex Association of Local Councils (SALC) organises a range of training courses for councillors some of which are provided free as part of our council's annual membership. These can be done via Zoom or face to face when there are sufficient local participants. Courses include such topics as: Councillor/Chair Training; Finance for Councillors; Introduction to Planning.*

**Thank you for completing this form. This information will help the council to better utilize the skills and resources of its members.**

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_