



# WARNHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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## Warnham Parish Council Co-Option Policy and Person Specification

### ELIGIBILITY OF CANDIDATES

The Parish Council is able to consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that:

- he/she is 18 or over; and
- he/she is a British citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union;

and at least one of the following apply:

- he/she is an elector for the Parish and continues to be an elector; or
- has resided in the Parish for the past twelve months or rented/tenanted land in the Parish; or
- has had his/her principal or only place of work in the Parish for the past twelve months; or
- has lived within three miles of the Parish for the past twelve months.

There are certain disqualifications for being a parish councillor (see Sch. 80 of the Local

- Government Act 1972) of which the main are:
- holding a paid office or employment under the Parish Council;
- 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 preceding five years; or
- being disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal electoral practices.

### APPLICATIONS

Candidates are required to:

- Submit information about themselves, by way of completing a short application form (available on the Parish Council website).
- Confirm their eligibility for the position of parish councillor within the statutory rules (page 4).

Following receipt of application form(s) and confirmation(s) of eligibility, 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/ies'. Eligible candidates will be invited to attend the meeting.

Copies of the eligible candidates' application form(s) will be circulated to all parish councillors by the Clerk (or Chairman in the absence of the Clerk) at least 3 clear days prior to the meeting of the full Parish Council at which the co-option will be considered.

All such documents will be treated by the Clerk/Chairman and all Parish Councillors as strictly private and confidential. A copy of the person specification (page 3), is attached.

## **AT 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. There will be no private discussions between council members prior to a vote being taken.

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 and a vote by a show of hands (Local Government Act 1972 Sch. 12. Para 13).

In order 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 (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.

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

The Clerk will notify Horsham District Council Electoral Services Office of the co-option of the new parish councillor. A co-opted Parish Councillor will also complete a Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests form which the Clerk/Chairman will lodge with the Monitoring Officer at Horsham District Council within 28 days of the co-option.

## Person Specification:

<b>Personal Attributes</b>	
<b>ESSENTIAL</b>	<b>DESIRABLE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community.</li> <li>• Solid interest in local matters</li> <li>• Forward thinking</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to represent the Parish Council and its community</li> <li>• Enthusiastic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council.</li> </ul> <p>Areas required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Environmental expertise or interest</li> <li>- Property/surveyor</li> <li>- Health and wellbeing</li> <li>- Finance</li> <li>- Transport</li> <li>- Law</li> </ul>
<b>Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to listen constructively</li> <li>• A good team player</li> <li>• Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects</li> <li>• Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others views and accept majority decisions.</li> <li>• Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly.</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff.</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. sub-groups, voluntary groups, other parish Councils, principal authority, charities).</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body</li> <li>• Experience of working with voluntary and or local community / interest groups</li> <li>• Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish Councils or local authorities</li> <li>• Experience of delivering presentations</li> </ul>
<b>Circumstances</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residing in the outer hamlets of the parish, i.e. Kingsfold, Winterfold, Rowhook, Strood Green</li> <li>• Have young children or children of school age</li> </ul>