

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Co-option is the process which is followed if a vacancy occurs on the Council through the resignation, disqualification or death of a councillor during their term of office, where, following statutory notice of the vacancy, the electorate do not request that a poll (by-election) is held.
- 1.2 The co-option procedure can also be used if, following the close of nominations for a full parish council election, there are vacancies (i.e. not enough candidates have put themselves forward for the number of seats available to be filled.)
- 1.3 The process for co-option is not prescribed in law, however there are legal rules which must be followed. This policy sets out the procedure Berryfields Parish Council will follow, based on good practice guidance from NALC and SLCC.
- 1.4 This policy and its procedure will be applied when a vacancy as described above is required to be filled.
- 1.5 The policy will be followed by the Clerk, any other relevant employees, all councillors and prospective candidates.

2. Advertising the Vacancy

- 2.1 Upon notification from Buckinghamshire Council Electoral Services that no elector poll has been requested and that a vacancy is eligible to be filled by co-option, the notification of the vacancy will be advertised. The advertisement must state the rules for eligibility.
- 2.2 Candidates will be invited to submit information about themselves by a specified date by way of completing a short application form which includes a personal statement explaining the reasons for seeking to become a parish councillor. (Appendix 1)
- 2.3 The opportunity to respond to the advertisement will be open until the vacancy is filled.
- 2.4 Copies of the application form and personal statement will be circulated to Council for consideration.

3. Co-Option Meeting

- 3.1 The co-option will be an agenda item at the next suitable Council meeting.
- 3.2 Candidates will be invited to say something about themselves, and Council have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates. Each candidate will be allocated three minutes.
- 3.3 The Chairman will offer opportunity for debate. In most cases, the candidates will be asked to leave the room while this process takes place.
- 3.4 The Chairman will ask the councillors present to nominate any of the candidates. Candidates will require a proposer and seconder to progress to the voting stage.

- 3.5 If there is only one vacancy, a councillor may only nominate or second one candidate.
- 3.6 The Chairman shall then move to a vote, presenting each candidate in surname alphabetical order. The voting process will be that laid down in Standing Order 3s and 8a below. To be co-opted onto the Council, the candidate must receive an absolute majority of the votes of those present and voting (that is more than half of the total votes cast.)
- 3s. Unless standing orders provide otherwise, voting on a question shall be by a show of hands. At the request of a councillor, the voting on any question shall be recorded so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his vote for or against that question. Such a request shall be made before moving on to the next item of business on the agenda.*
8. *Voting on Appointments:*
Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chair of the meeting.
- 3.7 The Council's debate and vote on the co-option must be conducted in the public section of the meeting.
- 3.8 After the vote has been taken, the Chairman will declare the candidate(s) who received the highest number of votes duly elected.
- 3.9 If the person(s) elected are present they may join the meeting and sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Proper Officer. It should be noted that their vote on any matter requiring prior notice will be discounted in case of a tied vote for that meeting only.

4. After the Meeting

- 4.1 Successful candidates will be provided with a councillor induction pack by the Clerk and informed of new councillor training opportunities offered by Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils.
- 4.2 The Clerk will notify Buckinghamshire Council Electoral Services of the new councillor appointment.
- 4.3 If no one accepts the vacant post(s) the whole process will be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified or until the next election.

Document History

Approved and adopted	July 2022	(version 1)
Reviewed and amended by Deputy Clerk/checked by Clerk	February 2026	(version 2)
Approved by Parish Council		.

APPLICATION FOR THE ROLE OF COUNCILLOR ON BERRYFIELDS PARISH COUNCIL

Full Name	
Home Address Incl. Postcode	
Telephone Number	
Mobile Number	
Email	

Legal qualifications for being a parish councillor

To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to **both** of the questions below

Are you British citizen, a Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of a European Union country?	YES / NO
Are you 18 years old or over?	YES / NO

To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to **at least one** of the questions below

Are you on the electoral register for the parish of Berryfields?	YES / NO
Have you lived either in Berryfields or within three miles of its boundary, for at least a year?	YES / NO
Have you been the owner or tenant of land in Berryfields for at least a year?	YES / NO
Have you had your only or main place of work in Berryfields for at least a year?	YES / NO

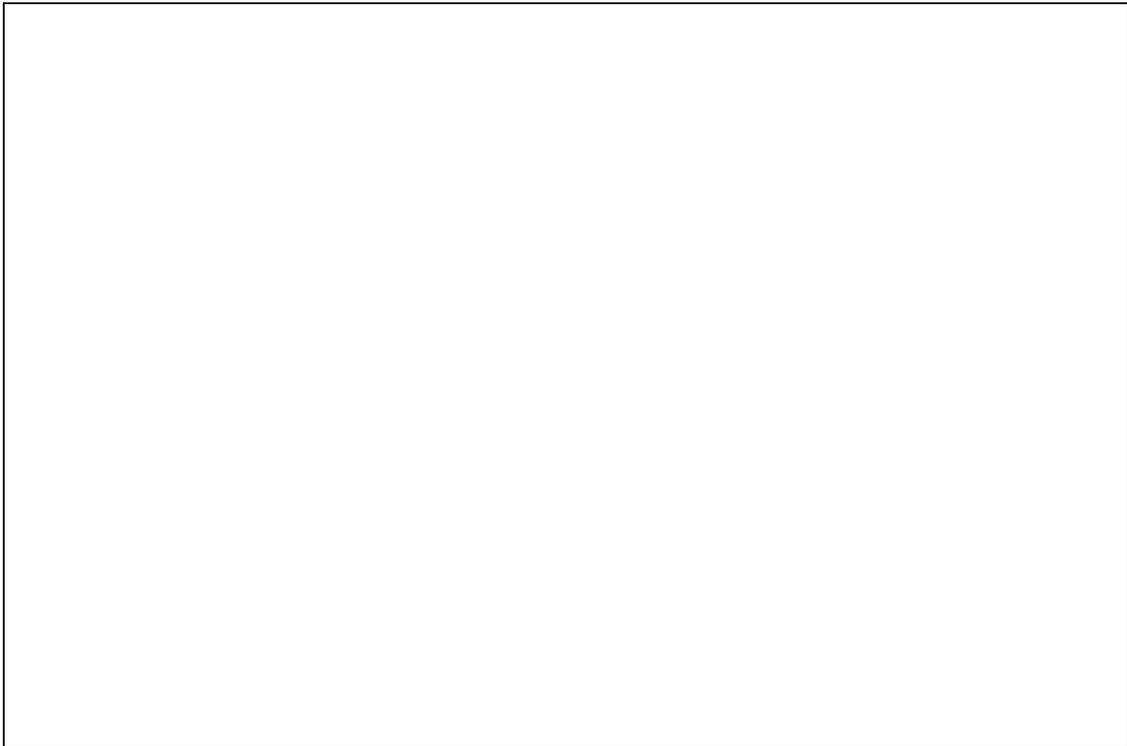
Disqualifications

You must be able to answer 'No to **all** of the questions below to be eligible to serve as councillor

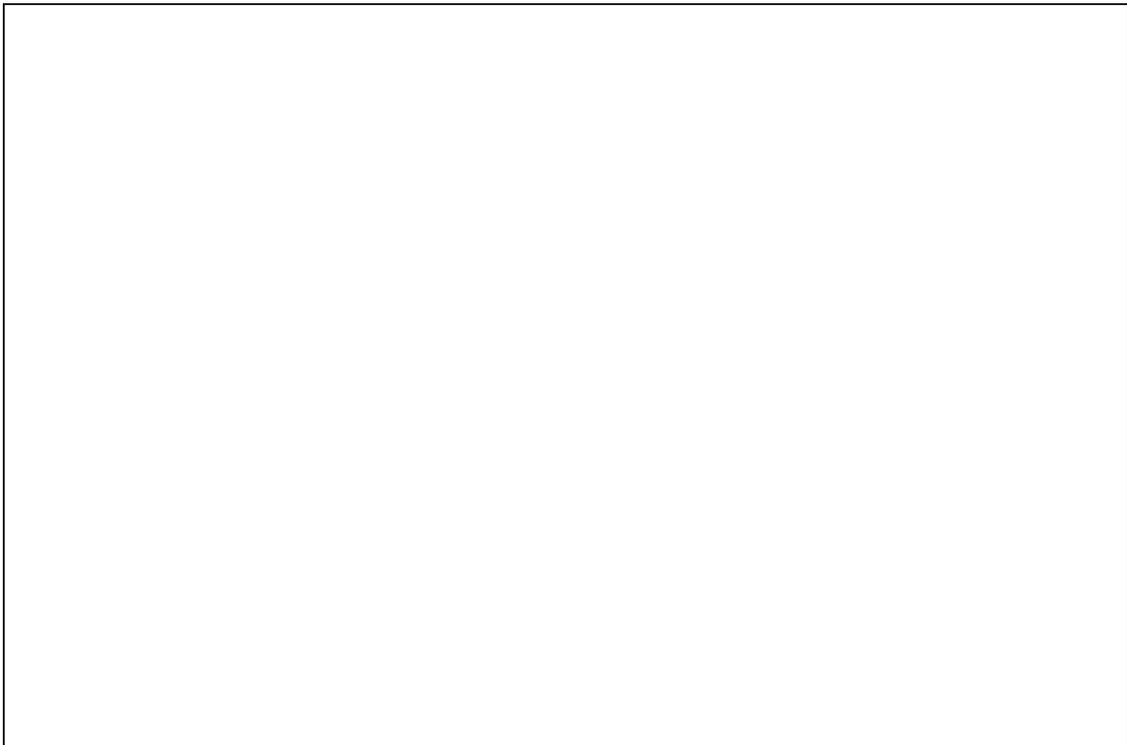
Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order?	YES / NO
Have you within the last five years been convicted of an offence in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man which resulted in a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of three months or more without the option of a fine?	YES / NO
Are you disqualified by order of a court from being a member of a local authority?	YES / NO

Briefly outline why you are interested in being a parish councillor

Please tell us something about the life experience you will bring to the Council, for example, previous local government experience, work in the voluntary or charitable sector, business or trade union experience



Please tell us something about the skills you feel you will bring to the Council, for example, professional qualifications, financial or project management expertise



Are there any questions you would like to ask the Council?

Declarations and Interests

Please note that the successful candidate will be asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and declare pecuniary interests.

Local Government Act 2011 states that councillors must abide by rules that apply to the disclosure of some business or financial interests. These are called “disclosable pecuniary interests” or “DPI’s”. DPI’s include your employment, ownership of land, and business interests in your parish. Other interests are usually non-pecuniary or personal interests.

Councillors with a DPI cannot participate or vote on a council motion on matters relating.

Please type your name below or sign if you are submitting a hard copy and return to clerk@berryfields-pc.gov.uk or Berryfields Parish Council, Sir Henry Lee Crescent, Aylesbury, HP18 0YT. Your application will be considered at the MAY Parish Council meeting, where a vote will be held to decide your co-option to Berryfields Parish Council.