

Bolnhurst and Keysoe Parish Council

Policy and Procedure for co-opting a new Councillor

This procedure is based on NALC LTN 8 – Elections and Co-option.

Parish Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met (i.e. the vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and fewer than 10 registered electors have requested an election by a deadline date specified by the Borough Returning Officer).

Although seeking 'expressions of interest' is not a legal requirement, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more potential candidates.

Whenever the need for co-option arises, Bolnhurst and Keysoe Parish Council will consider advertising the vacancy to seek and encourage 'expressions of interest' by a specified date from anyone who is eligible to stand as a Parish Councillor. All potential candidates will be requested to put in their request for consideration by completing an application form (See Appendix A).

At the next Full Council meeting following the deadline to express interest:

- i. Clerk to confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and is not disqualified from being a Councillor under s80 of the 1972 Act (see appendix A).
- ii. The candidates may be invited to address the Council. The Chair shall then seek proposers and seconders for each nomination (whether or not they have spoken) and the vote will follow.
- iii. In order for a candidate to be elected, it will be necessary for them to obtain an absolute majority of votes cast. 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 fewest 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 an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second and casting vote.
- iv. The Clerk to approach and offer co-option to candidate(s) after the meeting. The Clerk to notify Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment, initiate completion of 'acceptance of office' and 'registration of interests'.

Please note it is a condition of becoming a Councillor that a Register of Interests Form must be completed and will be published.

Assuming that the co-option position is filled and all paperwork completed, formally ratify the appointment at the next Full Council meeting.

If no one accepts the vacant post(s), the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified.

CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

All eligible candidates are welcome to apply.

Personal Attributes

- 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.

Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability

- Ability to listen constructively
- A good team player
- Solid interest in local matters
- Ability and willingness to represent the Council and the community.
- Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see others' views and accept majority decisions.
- Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff.
- Ability and willingness to undertake relevant training.

Circumstances

- 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. Parish Council meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month. Meetings commence at 19.30. There are usually no meetings in August or December.

APPENDIX A

**APPLICATION FORM FOR THE ROLE OF PARISH COUNCILLOR
ON BOLNHURST AND KEYSOE PARISH COUNCIL**

Full name	
Home address Inc. Postcode	
Telephone number	
Mobile number	
Email	

**LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR BEING A PARISH COUNCILLOR
QUALIFICATIONS**

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

Are you a British citizen or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen?	Yes / No
Are you 18 or over?	Yes / No

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

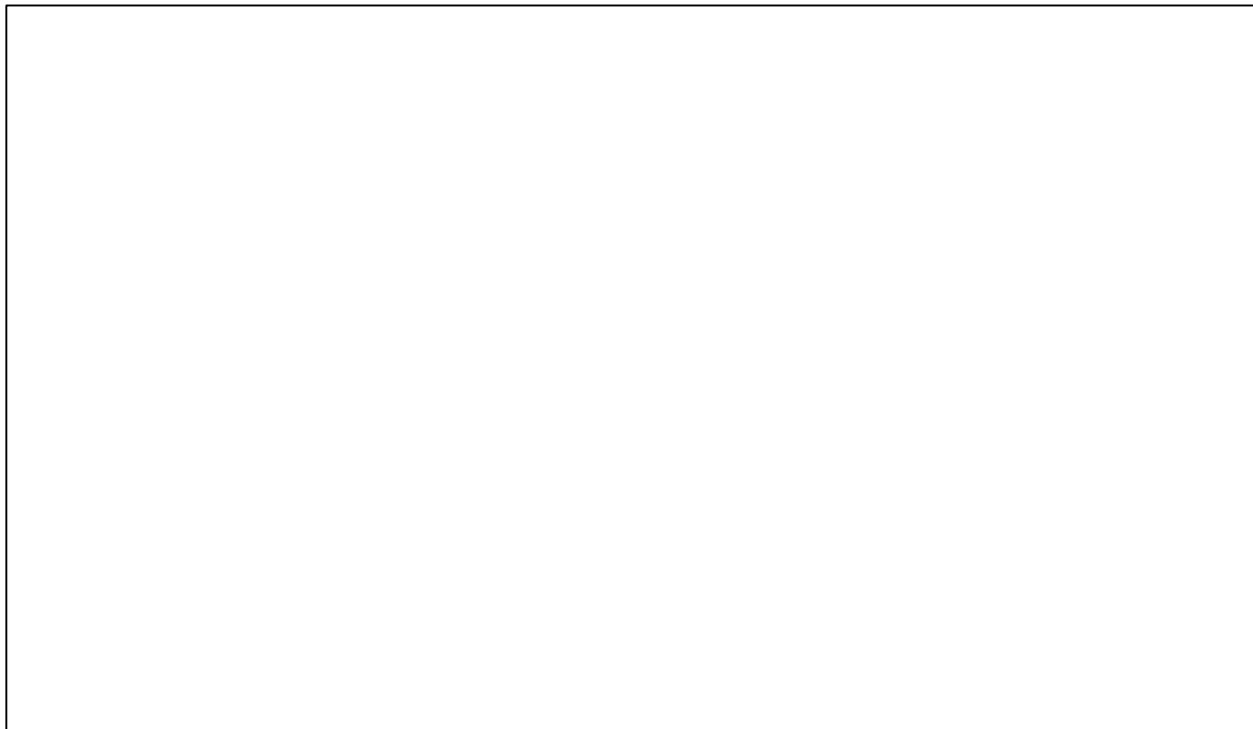
Are you on the electoral register for the parish of Bolnhurst and Keysoe?	Yes / No
Have you lived either in the parish of Bolnhurst and Keysoe or within three miles of the boundary, for at least a year?	Yes / No
Have you been the owner or tenant of land in the parish of Bolnhurst and Keysoe for the preceding 12 months?	Yes / No
Have you had your only or main place of work in the parish of Bolnhurst and Keysoe for the preceding 12 months?	Yes / No

DISQUALIFICATIONS

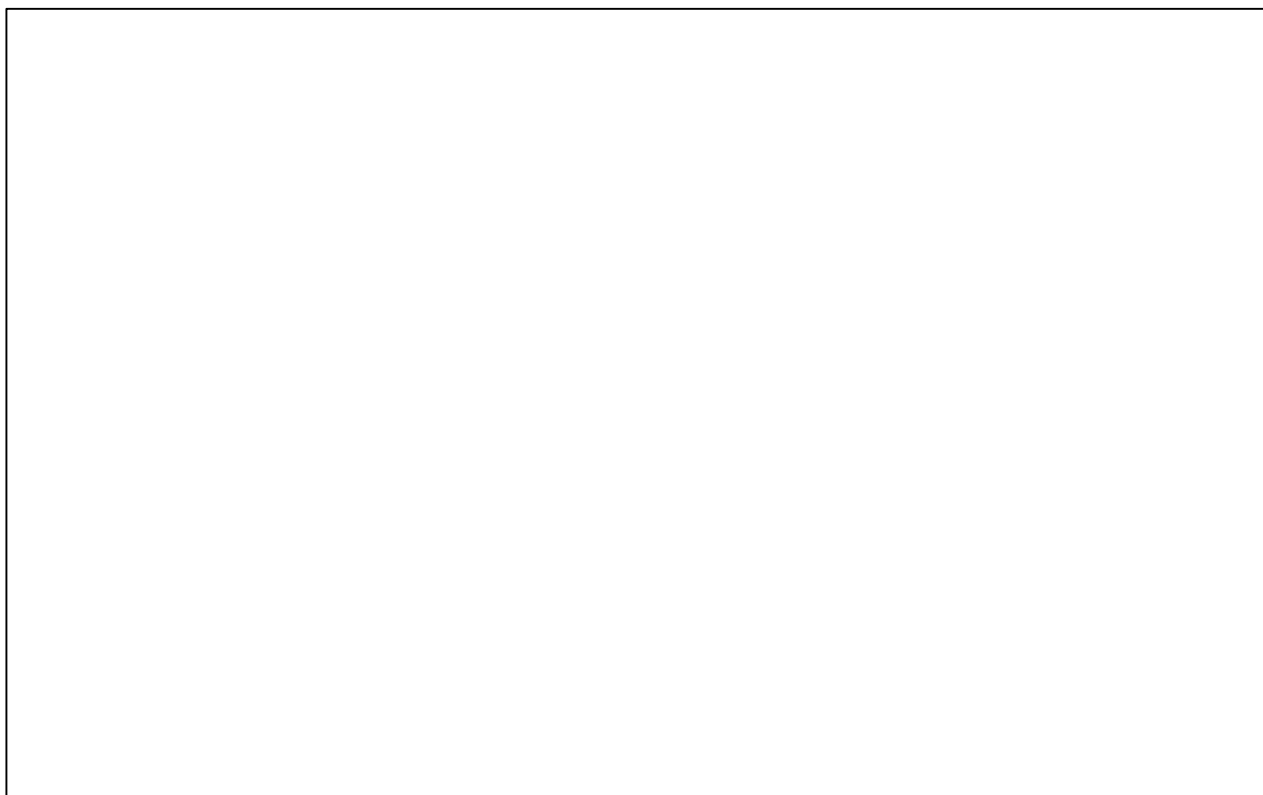
(You must be able to answer No to all of the questions below to be eligible to serve as a councillor)

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
Have you been found guilty of corrupt or illegal practices, or were you responsible for incurring unlawful expenditure and the court ordered your disqualification?	Yes / No
Do you hold any paid office or employment to which you have been appointed by the Council or any committee or sub-committee of the Council or paid officer of the Council or by any joint committee on which the Council is represented?	Yes / No

Please briefly outline why you are interested in being a Parish Councillor.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the applicant to write their reasons for wanting to be 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.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the applicant to describe their life experience and how it will benefit the Council.

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?

Declaration and Consent

I declare that I am eligible to become a Parish Councillor in Bolnhurst and Keysoe and I certify that the contents of this application form are true and correct.

I consent to my details being retained if I am co-opted as a Councillor.

I consent to receiving Parish Council documentation via email.

Signed.....

Date:

Please return the completed form to the Parish Clerk:
Upper Leys, High St, Pavenham, Bedfordshire,
MK43 7PD clerk@bolnhurstkeysoe-pc.gov.uk

Version Control- **23rd January 2026- Updated Clerk
address and frequency of meetings**