ALKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

CO-OPTION POLICY & PROCEDURE

The Co-option of a Parish Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no poll (by- election) has been called.

To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken the following procedure will be followed by Alkham Parish Council:

1) On receipt, of written confirmation, from the Electoral Services Office at Dover District Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of Co-option, the Parish Clerk will:

   a) Advertise the vacancy for 4 weeks on the Council notice boards and website.
   b) Advise the council that the Co-option Policy has been instigated, by sending a memorandum to all Councillors.

2) Applicants for co-option will be asked to:

   a) Submit information about themselves, by way of completing a short application form, and submitting their Curriculum Vitae.
   b) Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules.

3) Copies of the applicant's Curriculum Vitae and application form will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk at least seven days prior to the meeting of the Council, when the Co-option will be considered. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and all Councillors as Strictly Private and Confidential.

4) At the next available Council meeting, the press and public will be asked to leave the Council meeting, in order for the applications to be considered Protocol Nine Exclusion of access by the public to meetings *1. There are no rules regarding co-option of members. The Council may choose who they like but the person must be qualified to have been a candidate. After due consideration the chairman will reconvene the meeting and it will be reopened to the public and press and voting takes place.*

5) Voting will be according to the statutory requirements, in that, a successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again; this process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained. Therefore, if there are more candidates than vacancies, the candidate with the lowest number of votes will be excluded. If two candidates poll the same number of votes a separate vote to eliminate one of them will be held. Voting will continue with the lowest polling candidate being excluded until the number of candidates matches the number of vacancies. Councillors shall vote by show of hands, or, if at least two members so request, by signed ballot. If any member so requires, the Clerk shall record the names of members who voted on any question so as to show whether they voted for, against, or abstained. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

6) Only Councillors present at the full council meeting may nominate, second or vote upon a person to fill the vacancy. At this meeting, members will be informed of the names of anyone wishing to be considered as a councillor.

7) If there is more than one vacancy, a councillor may nominate one person per seat. Each councillor will have only one vote per seat i.e. two vacancies will enable two votes.

8) If no single candidate receives a majority on the first vote then the person with the lowest number of votes will be eliminated and voting will take place on the remainder. This process will continue until one person receives an absolute majority.

9) The first candidate to receive an absolute majority of those present and voting will be duly elected.

10) After the vote has been concluded, this business is concluded when the Chairman declares that the successful candidate is duly elected. The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Council and summoned to attend the next council meeting.

11) The Clerk will advise the Monitoring Officer of Dover District Council of the names of anyone co-opted to the Council.

12) Before the successful candidate can participate in Council business s/he must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and deliver it to the Clerk. The individual will be summonsed to attend the next full council meeting where s/he will sign the Declaration.

13) All new councillors must, within 28 days of appointment to office, register their Interests with the Borough Council Monitoring Officer. Usually forms are supplied by the Monitoring Officers to the Clerk.

14) The Council is not obliged to provide feedback on the application process to unsuccessful candidates.

ALKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION APPLICATION FORM

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Email address:	
Are you 18 or over?	YES NO

Please detail any experience you have that may be relevant to Alkham Parish Council (If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet of paper).

Is there any other information you would like to disclose regarding your application? (If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet of paper).

DECLARATION
Signed
Name
Date

Please return this completed form, together with your Curriculum Vitae and the completed Co-option Eligibility Form to:

Alkham Parish Council, Pollyfield Cottage, Scragged Oak Road, Detling. Kent ME14 3HD

Email: clerk@alkhamparishcouncil.org.uk

Data Protection
The information provided on this application form will remain private and confidential.

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ALKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

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CO-OPTION ELIGIBILITY FORM

1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Alkham 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.

   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 in the parish;
      Or
   d) I have during the whole of twelve months resided in the parish or within 3 miles of it.

Please circle which of the above applies to you.

2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 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 the 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 (insert name)

hereby confirm that I am eligible to apply for the vacancy of Alkham Parish Councillor, and the information given on this form is a true and accurate record.

SIGNATURE
NAME
DATE