



Sedlescombe Parish Council

New Councillor Application Pack

Co-option of Parish Councillors (Casual Vacancy)

Eligibility of candidates

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

A person is qualified to be elected and to be a councillor, if they are a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or any member state of the European Union and on the relevant day (that is, the day of nomination or election), they are 18 or over. In addition, the person must meet at least one of the following criteria: -

1. On the relevant day and thereafter they continue to be on the electoral register for the Parish,
or
2. During the whole of the twelve months before that day they have owned or tenanted land or premises in the Parish, or
3. During the whole of the twelve months before that day their principal or only place of work has been in the Parish, or
4. During the whole of the twelve months before that day they have resided in the Parish or within three miles of it.

Except for qualification (1), these qualifications then continue for the full term of office, until the next ordinary elections.

There are certain disqualifications for being a parish councillor (see s80 of the Local Government Act 1972) of which the main are:

- holding a paid office or employment under the Parish Council;
- holds any employment in a company which, in accordance with Part V of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 other than section 73, is under the control of the local authority
- the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order
- 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.



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Applications

Candidates are required to:

- Submit information about themselves, by way of completing a short application form
- Confirm their eligibility for the position of parish councillor within the statutory rules

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 consider the suitability of the candidate/s to fill the existing vacancy'. 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.

- Eligibility Form
- Application Form

At the Co-option Meeting

At the co-option meeting, candidates will be given two 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 co-option will be the first item on the agenda. The process will be carried out in the public session. A resolution will then be passed to exclude members of the public and press from the meeting to enable the Parish Council to have a private discussion regarding the suitability of the candidate/s for the vacancy. The candidate/s and public will then be invited back to the meeting following which a vote will be taken. The vote will be as per the Council's Standing Orders.

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. An only candidate will normally, but not necessarily, be co-opted. LGA 1972, Sch. 12 s39 states the co-option must be by an absolute majority vote of those present and voting in the meeting.



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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, a copy of which is enclosed with this pack, 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. A failure to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of office will result in automatic disqualification from office.

Holding a Position of Public Office

The Clerk will notify Rother 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 Rother District Council within 28 days of the co-option. Failure to comply, without reasonable excuse, with the arrangements for the registration and disclosure of disclosable pecuniary interests is a criminal offence, with a penalty on conviction of a fine of up to £5,000 and disqualification from office for up to five years.

It is also a criminal offence to knowingly provide false or misleading information when making the notification or to be reckless as to whether the information is true and not misleading.

Councillors hold a position of public office with which comes responsibilities to attend all the meetings of the council and to abide by the seven principles (or Nolan principles) of public life being:

1. Selflessness
2. Integrity
3. Objectivity
4. Accountability
5. Openness
6. Honesty
7. Leadership

Councillors are required to promote and maintain high standards of conduct when they are representing the council and are required to:

- Treat others with respect
- Not to bully or behave in an intimidatory manner
- Not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on others
- To use the resources of the Council in accordance with its requirement; and
- Not to disclose confidential information



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Role Description

Role:	Parish Councillor
Responsible to:	The 'Corporate Body' (i.e. the Parish Council) and all residents within the parish
Responsible for:	Effective leadership, governance, liaison and budget setting
Purpose:	Representing the views of residents
Regular liaison with	Other councillors, staff, local authorities, residents' associations, community groups, charitable groups and residents
Period of service	Elections are held every four years – Next elections due May 2027 Councillors co-opted between elections serve to the end of the current four-year term of office
Salary	This is an unpaid voluntary position – No expenses are paid

Sedlescombe Parish Council is apolitical i.e. politically neutral. Councillors are required to represent only the interests of its residents, not a political party.

Eligibility Criteria

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

- They meet the criteria explained above
- They have the ability to attend evening meetings.



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CO-OPTION ELIGIBILITY FORM

1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Sedlescombe Parish Councillor you must satisfy certain criteria. You must satisfy a. and b. below and at least one of the options c. to f.

Please tick which apply to you:

- a. I am 18 years of age or over; and
- b. I am a British citizen or a citizen of the Commonwealth or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union; and
- c. I am registered as a local government elector for the Parish; or
- d. 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
- e. My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in the Parish; or
- f. I have during the whole of those twelve months resided in the Parish or within 3 miles of it.

2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 a person is disqualified from being a parish councillor if he/she:

- a. Is employed by the Parish Council or holds paid office (other than Chairman, Vice-Chairman) under the Parish Council (including joint boards or committees);
- b. Is employed by an entity controlled by the Parish Council;
- c. Is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order or a debt relief restrictions order or an interim debt relief restrictions order; or
- d. Has within five years before the day of co-option, or since his/her co-option, 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 e. Is otherwise disqualified under Part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (relating to corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations) or the Audit Commission Act 1998.

Use of Personal Information the Parish Council will use the information provided on this form to assess your eligibility to be a parish councillor.

Declaration and Consent

I hereby confirm that I am eligible for the vacancy of Sedlescombe Parish Councillor and I am not disqualified under s80 of the Local Government Act 1972 from being a parish councillor and that the information given on this form is true and correct.

I have read the section entitled 'Use of Personal Information' and by signing this form I consent to the use and disclosure of my information included in this form.

Signature

Full Name.....

Date

[Please return this eligibility form with application form]



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CO-OPTION APPLICATION FORM

Name:
Address:
Telephone Number: Landline: Mobile:
Email Address:
Are you aged 18 or over? Yes / No

Please detail any experience you may have that is relevant to Sedlescombe Parish Council (if necessary, continue onto a separate sheet)



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Continued...

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

Use of Personal Information

The Parish Council will use your information, including that which you provide on this application form, to assess your suitability to be a parish councillor.

Declaration & Consent

I have read the section entitled 'Use of Personal Information' and by signing this form I consent to the use and disclosure of my information included in this application form in accordance with the GDPR.

I declare the information given on this form to be true and correct.

Signature.....

Full name

Date.....

Please return this completed form, together with the completed Co-option Eligibility form, to:

Mrs Jackie Scarff Clerk to the Council

Sedlescombe Parish Council

The Red House, Lower Street

Ninfield

TN33 9ED

Or email to clerk@sedlescombe.org.uk