

East Budleigh with Bicton Parish Council

DRAFT - How to apply to be a councillor

Updated May 2022

East Budleigh with Bicton Parish Council (EBBPC) has a full complement of 10 councillors.

How do councillor vacancies arise?

1. In an election year, which occurs every 4 years in May (e.g. 2019) all 10 vacant places on EBBPC are available to be filled by the standard election process. If more than 10 eligible candidates apply then the election is 'contested' and therefore the next stages of the election process follow. The whole election process is organised by East Devon District Council and initiated by the publication of a Notice of Election, inviting candidates to apply to stand for election. The Notice of Election is published on the parish notice boards and website.
2. If, in an election year process, fewer than 10 eligible candidates apply then effectively all candidates are 'co-opted' onto the Parish Council without further ado.
3. If a vacancy arises between elections due to resignation or other reasons, then an advertisement is placed on the parish notice boards and website. If a petition is received by EDDC with 10 or more elector's signatures, the vacancy must be filled by means of an election. If no petition is received then the vacancy may be filled by the co-option process described below.

Eligibility to become a councillor

Candidates must be over 18, be an eligible citizen and have a 'stake' in the parish. For fuller detailed explanation, please refer to the Electoral Commission document "Criteria for becoming a Councillor" which may be found on this website via the link:

http://www.eastbudleigh.org.uk/uploads/5/1/8/3/51830611/2017-10_can_you_stand_for_election.pdf

An eligibility assurance certificate must have been completed by all candidates before they can be considered.

The co-option process

The Parish Clerk will advertise the vacancy for a co-opted councillor on the parish notice boards and on the website. Eligible candidates should write to the Clerk asking to be considered. By reference to the optimum model person specification in the Appendix, candidates should include in their submission details of how they qualify and are suitable to make a positive and enthusiastic contribution within the Council. As a minimum, candidates should state:

- What experience they have of meetings and committees?
- What experience they have of the working of local government?
- If they are involved in any groups in the village and if so, describe their role and experience.
- How they see their role as a Parish Councillor?
- How they would like to see the village develop?
- How they would react to occasional high-profile issues that can bring certain pressures.

The Council may consider meeting with eligible candidates prior to the next Council meeting. If so, details would be forwarded to candidates.

Dependent on the number of vacancies available and the number of candidate applications, there are two different approaches:

1. There are an equal number or more vacancies than applicants.

Where the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of vacancies, the candidates shall be appointed to the council if they meet the s.79 eligibility criteria and they are not disqualified under s.80 of the Local Government Act 1972. These criteria are detailed in the html link above – Criteria for becoming a Councillor (Sections 3 and 4).

Provided the candidate(s) gives assurances that they meet the S.79 and S.80 of the Act and that this is not contested by Councillors, then the candidate(s) is/are automatically co-opted by announcement at an Ordinary Council meeting.

2. There are less vacancies than applicants.

As an agenda item at the next Ordinary meeting, Councillors will vote by show of hands for one of the eligible candidates (or abstain). If more than two candidates are being voted upon for one vacancy and there is not an absolute majority in favour of one person, the person with the least number of votes will be omitted and the voting process repeated until a majority of votes are given for one person. Should the process result in a tie, then the Chair would have the casting vote. If there is more than one vacancy then the process should be carried out for each sequentially.

In all cases Councillors should be prepared to give their reason for decisions regarding unsuccessful candidates.

Notification

All candidates will be notified of the outcome by the Clerk. The successful candidate will be invited for co-option onto EBBPC and the Clerk will provide full details.

References:

- a. National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Legal Topic Note 8 (LTN8) gives full guidance on electoral matters and Co-option.
- b. Attention is drawn to the Councillor Code of Conduct policy on the Council website. The Standing Orders and Financial Regulation documents on the website give the formal framework in which the Council must operate to conduct its day-to-day business.
- c. There are several 'Good Councillor Guides' on the NALC website, including the basic guide.

Appendix

Model Person Specification		
COMPETENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Relevant knowledge, Education, Qualifications & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A levels/Degree level and or ▪ Vocation or professional qualification (e.g. accountant, teacher, policeman) may be specified.
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Solid interest in local matters. ▪ Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community. ▪ Good interpersonal and constructive listening skills. Able to contribute own and understand other's views. ▪ Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly both orally and in writing. ▪ Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff. Team player. ▪ Good reading and analytic skills. ▪ Ability and willingness to work with the council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other parish councils, principal authority, charities). ▪ Ability and willingness to undertake relevant training. ▪ Ability to work under pressure. ▪ Ability to assimilate and lead a variety of projects ▪ Ability to accept and support majority decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body. ▪ Experience of working with voluntary and or local community/ interest groups. ▪ Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish councils or local authorities. ▪ Good standard of computer literacy. ▪ Experience of delivering presentations. ▪ Experience of working with the media. ▪ Experience in financial control/ budgeting. ▪ HR experience.
Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the council (or the meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) in the evening and events in the evening and at weekends. ▪ Flexible and committed to the Council ▪ Enthusiastic. 	