

Councillor Application Pack

Alvington Parish Council

Function of the parish council

Alvington Parish Council has existed since 1894. A parish council is the most ancient form of local government and has been in use in England since the eighth century.

The modern parish council is a statutory elected local authority, which acts as a voice for local opinion by keeping in close and regular contact with its electorate and provides a focus for voluntary organisations in the area.

We provide various services to the community including, but not limited to, provision of recreational green space, grass cutting, benches, bus shelters, dog waste bins, a notice board, maintenance of the churchyard, overseeing the allotments, and provision of a defibrillator.

Members of the public are welcome to attend any meeting of the council. Full council meetings are held every month except January and August, on the first Thursday of the month at 7.30 p.m. Residents can address the council during the public forum session. Meetings are held in Alvington Memorial Hall usually, though in the COVID-19 pandemic the council has made use of virtual meetings using Zoom.

Our parish is not divided into wards, as it is a fairly small rural parish. The council comprises 5 councillors, and the Clerk. (The number of councillors is determined by the size of the parish.)

Roles within the organisation

The council is a corporate body. All decisions of the council are taken by the majority vote during a meeting.

The Chairman (the name is the same regardless of the gender of the person in this role) is responsible for ensuring the business of the meeting is transacted in accordance with the council's standing orders and financial regulations in an efficient and timely manner.

The Clerk to the Council is the Proper Officer/Responsible Financial Officer and carries out the statutory obligations of the Council.

What we do

The parish council undertakes a significant number of services on behalf of the Parish. It raises the money to undertake projects via the 'precept' which is collected through local council tax by Forest of Dean District Council. In addition to the services offered we also work in partnership with Forest of Dean District Council and Gloucestershire County Council as well as other local organisations such as Two Rivers Housing and local facilities.

We also:

- Liaise with Highways on road and pavement issues in the parish, including lobbying for improvements and resurfacing.
- Liaise with Forest of Dean District Council and Gloucestershire County Council on a variety of issues which affect parishioners.

- Consider all planning applications relating to Alvington and make comments, as appropriate, to Forest of Dean District Council
- Represent parishioners and refer concerns to the relevant authority to resolve if not within the parish council remit.

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, Commonwealth, Irish or European Union citizen 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.

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 three 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.

At the Co-option Meeting

At the co-option meeting, candidates will be given five 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 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 by recorded voting slip 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.

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 Forest of Dean 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 will lodge with the Monitoring Officer at Forest of Dean 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

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 2023

Councillors co-opted between elections serve to the end of the current four-year term of office

Salary This is an unpaid voluntary position, but mileage and subsistence allowances are payable if the eligibility criteria are met.

History of parish councils

The current system of parish councils was formed in 1894. There are currently around 10,000 parish councils in the country.

Local councils are the first tier of local government, being the closest to individual communities they have the greatest ability to identify, understand and address the needs of the communities they serve.

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

Support and training

Induction orientation is provided by the Clerk or Chairman, or a combination. Ongoing training is provided via the Gloucestershire Association of Local Councils and other bespoke training sessions. These vary between daytime and evening sessions. The Clerk can also provide advice as and when required.

How to find out more

The National Association of Local Councils has a website: www.nalc.gov.uk. Alternatively you could attend a meeting of the Council, talk to existing councillors or to the Clerk.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1. To attend parish council meetings.
2. To prepare for meetings and being properly informed about the issues to be discussed.
3. To participate constructively in the governance of Alvington Parish Council.
4. To participate fully in the formation and scrutiny of the parish council's policies, budgets, strategies and service delivery including any live 'Strategic Plan'.
5. To ensure, with other councillors, that the parish council is properly managed.
6. To keep up to date with significant developments affecting the parish council at local, regional and national levels.
7. To promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Parish taking account of the strategic effects on other communities and the parish council as a whole.
8. To represent effectively the interests of, not only the ward for which the councillor is elected, but the Parish as a whole and to raise at Council meetings residents' enquiries, representations and complaints.
9. To represent the whole electorate; listen, and then represent the views of the whole community when discussing Council business and working with outside bodies.
10. To take an active part in the parish council's arrangements to build community capacity and promote measures that contribute to the Parish Strategic Plan.
11. To comment on planning applications and other planning matters such as the Local Plan.
12. To take part in meetings and form sound judgements based on what is best for the community and then abide by majority decisions.
13. To represent the parish council on outside bodies to which the councillor is appointed.
14. To maintain proper standards of behaviour when representing the parish council.

15. To fulfil the statutory and locally determined requirements of an elected member of a local authority and the parish council, including compliance with all relevant codes of conduct and maintaining high ethical standards, (including not disclosing confidential information and not using Council resources for political purposes or for any other reason).
16. To participate effectively as a member of any committee or working party to which the councillor is appointed.
17. To act as an ambassador for the parish council and to promote the work the Council undertakes, on behalf of the community.
18. To uphold the parish council's Standing Orders, Code of Conduct and the Nolan principles of Public Life (ensuring that the impartiality of Council staff is not compromised).
19. To contribute to the Parish newsletter to enhance members' accountability to the public by providing details of official activities and the contribution made to the effective operation of the parish council, as and when appropriate.
20. To undertake appropriate training courses and as when possible.
21. The parish council operates its own email server – new members will be provided with a unique councillor email address which must be used for all communications.

CO-OPTION ELIGIBILITY FORM

(You can use the [online version of this form](#), which combines this with the application form below.)

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 Alvington 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]

1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Alvington 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 they:

- a. are employed by the parish council or holds paid office (other than Chairman, Vice Chairman) under the parish council (including joint boards or committees);
- b. are employed by an entity controlled by the parish council;
- c. are 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. have 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.

CO-OPTION APPLICATION FORM

(You can use the [online version of this form](#), which combines this with the eligibility form above.)

Name	
Address	
Telephone number	
Email address	
Are you aged 18 or over?	Yes / No
Please detail any experience you may have that is relevant to Alvington Parish Council (if necessary, continue onto a separate sheet)	
Is there any other information you would like to disclose regarding your application? (If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet).	
Continued over	

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:

Meg Humphries, Clerk to the Council
Alvington Parish Council
6 Court Road
Lydney
Gloucestershire
GL15 5SY

Or email to Alvingtonclerk@outlook.com