



Metherringham, Sots Hole and Tanvats Parish Council

Elections & Co-option Policy

Approved and Adopted 25th November 2025

Metheringham Parish Council

Councillor Co-option Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the procedure to ensure there is compliance with legislation and continuity of procedures in the co-option of members to Metheringham Parish Council. The Co-option procedure is entirely managed by Metheringham Parish Council and this policy will ensure that a fair and equitable process is carried out.

2. Co-option

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. A casual vacancy occurs when:

- * A councillor fails to make his declaration of acceptance of office at the proper time;
- * A councillor resigns;
- * A councillor dies;
- * A councillor fails for six (6) months to attend any meetings of Council, a committee, a sub-committee, a working group or to attend as a representative of the Council a meeting of an outside body and without valid apologies being accepted (under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972) and resolved.

The Clerk/Proper Officer of Metheringham Parish Council must then notify Electoral Services at North Kesteven District Council of a Casual Vacancy and then advertise the Notice of a Vacancy supplied by Electoral Services to give electors the opportunity to request an election. This occurs when ten electors write to the District Council stating that an election is requested.

If a by-election is called, a polling station will be set up by the District Council and the people of the parish will be asked to go to the polls to vote for candidates who will have put themselves forward by way of a nomination paper gained from North Kesteven District Council.

Metheringham Parish Council will pay the costs of the election. The people of the parish have fourteen days dies non (not including weekends, bank holidays and other notable days), to claim the by-election, but the electoral officer will advise the Clerk of the closing date on the prescribed notice.

If more than one candidate is then nominated a by-election takes place but if only one candidate is put forward, they are duly elected without a ballot.

If ten residents do not request a ballot within fourteen days of the vacancy notice being posted, as advised by the District Council, Metheringham Parish Council is able to co-opt a potential Member.

3. Confirmation of Co-option

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

- Advertise the vacancy for four weeks on the Council notice boards and its Website;
- Advise North Kesteven District Council that the Co-option Policy has been instigated.

4. Eligibility of Candidates

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

- * they are an elector for the parish; or
- * has resided in the parish for the past twelve months or rented/tenanted land or other premises in the parish; or
- * their principal place of work in the parish; or
- * has lived within three miles (direct) of the parish.

There are certain disqualifications for election, of which the main is (see 5. 80 of the Local Government Act 1972):

- * holding a paid office under the local authority,
- * bankruptcy,
- * 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 five years preceding the election,
- * being disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal practices,
- * being subject to the notification requirements of the Sexual Offences act 2003 or Sexual Risk Orders.

Candidates found to be offering inducements of any kind will be disqualified.

It should be noted that criteria for disqualification are currently under review by central Government and updates will be applied when legislation changes.

5. Applications

Members may point out the vacancies and the process to any qualifying candidate(s).

Although there is no Statutory Requirement to do so, candidates will be requested to:

- * Submit information about themselves, by way of completing a short application form (Appendix A)

- * Confirm their eligibility for the position of Councillor within the statutory rules (Appendix B).

Following receipt of applications, the next suitable council meeting will have an agenda item 'To receive written applications for the office of Parish Councillor and to Co-opt a candidate to fill the existing vacancy. Copies of the candidates' applications will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk at least 3 clear days prior to the meeting of the Full 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.

Prior to the Co-option Meeting, you may be invited to attend an informal interview where existing councillors will be able to talk with you and decide if they wish to vote for you to become a co-opted councillor at the next available parish council meeting. No decisions will be made at this informal interview meeting.

Candidates will be sent a full agenda of the meeting at which they are to be considered for appointment, together with a copy of the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations of Metherringham Parish Council. Candidates will also be informed that they will be invited to speak about their application at the meeting.

6. At the Co-option Meeting

At the co-option meeting, candidates will be given five minutes maximum to introduce themselves to Members, give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a Member of Metherringham Parish Council. The process will be carried out by moving the meeting out of formal session to allow the candidate to speak. As soon as all candidates have finished giving their submissions Whereupon the Council wishes to discuss

the merits of candidates and inevitably their personal attributes, this could be prejudicial, and the Council will resolve to move the meeting into closed session (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Section 1, Section 12a Local Government Act 1972 and as amended 2014 by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014). To exclude members of the press and public and ask the candidates to move to a room removed from the Council Chamber.

The Council Members will proceed to a vote on the acceptability of each candidate and the value of any personal statements provided by candidates, then, with each candidate being proposed and seconded by the councillors in attendance and a vote taken by a show of hands. The vote will be recorded to show whether each Councillor present and voting gave his/her vote for or against that question.

For a candidate to be elected to Metherringham 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 (*LGA 1972 Sch 12. Para 39*)). If there are more than two candidates for say one seat on the Council 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. (no proxy voting allowed). 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 Chair of the Council presiding over the meeting has a second or casting vote. If the applicants/applicant for co-option do not reach a majority vote of 50% + 1 in favour of them becoming a Member of the Parish Council. Metherringham Parish Council is not obliged to select anyone from the candidates/candidate who applies.

If insufficient or unsuitable (not achieving 50% +1 votes) candidates come forward for co-option, the process should then re-continue, whereby the vacancies are once again advertised.

However, it is not desirable that electors be left partially or fully underrepresented for a significant length of time. Neither does it contribute to effective and efficient working of the Council if there are insufficient councillors to share the workload; equitably; to provide a broad cross-section of skills and interests; or the achieve meeting quorums without difficulty. Councillors elected by co-option are full members of.

After the votes has been concluded, the Chair of the Council will resume the meeting in open formal session and invite the candidates to rejoin the meeting therefore declaring the successful candidate/ candidates duly elected and after signing their declaration of acceptance from the Clerk.

The successful candidates will be supplied with electronic copies of the following:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Code of Conduct

Within 28 days complete a Declaration of Interests form and return it to the Clerk who will re-submit it to the Monitoring Officer of North Kesteven District Council

The Clerk will inform Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment.

7.0 Applications to be submitted to the Parish Clerk on the prescribed application form attached.

Please mark the envelope Private and Confidential

Parish Clerk

21a High Street

Metheringham

Lincoln

LN4 3DZ

Please send email applications to parishclerk@metheringham-pc.gov.uk

Date of policy: 25th November 2025.

Approving committee: Finance and Staffing...

Policy version reference: Draft Policy not adopted

Supersedes: Draft Policy not adopted

Policy effective from: Full Council meeting 25th November 2025.

Date for next review: May 2026.

John F Money Parish Clerk/Proper Officer

Metheringham Parish Council November 2025

Metheringham, Sots Hole and Tanvats Parish Council
Co-option of Parish Councillor Application Form



Co-option Vacancy Questions

Full Name:	
Address:	
E-mail	
Telephone:	
Please confirm you meet the eligibility criteria to become a parish councillor: Copy of criteria attached to the bottom of this form.	
Why do you wish to be a Parish Councillor?	
What do you know about the Parish Council?	
Commitment to the Parish Council, are you willing to attend monthly Full Council meetings and undertake certain training etc?	
Are you hands on and willing to get involved – committees & working groups. Do you have any specific interests?	
Do you normally get on well with people – it is important to be able to interact with the public to get their views?	
How long have you lived in the Parish of Metheringham?	

Have you been a County, District or Parish Councillor previously?	
Do you belong to any village groups/voluntary organizations?	
Any other details you feel may support your application, or be of interest to the Parish Council?	
Signed by:	Date:

QUALIFICATIONS TO BE A PARISH COUNCILLOR AND TERM OF OFFICE

Qualifications

A person is qualified to be elected/co-opted if they meet the requirements under the Representation of the People Regulations on the day of their nomination/co-option, namely being:

- at least 18 years of age
- a British citizen, a qualifying Commonwealth citizen, or national of an EU member state

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;
- 2) during the whole of the 12 months before that day they have occupied as owner or tenant land or other premises in the parish;
- 3) during the whole of the 12 months before that day and the day of the election their main or only place of work has been in the parish;
- 4) during the whole of the 12 months before that day and the day of the election they have resided in the parish or within 3 miles/4.8 kilometres of the boundary.

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

Disqualifications

There are several disqualifications which apply that can prevent someone standing for election/co-option. It is the responsibility of the candidate putting themselves forward to check whether they are disqualified or seek their own separate legal advice. Please see the Electoral Commission guidance for further information.

Term of Office

Councillors hold office for a period of four years (or if elected part way through the cycle, for the remainder of that period only (there is one and a half years left in the cycle until the next election) and retire on the fourth day after the ordinary day of election. The Chair of a town/parish council continues in office until their successor becomes entitled to act in that capacity

