BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
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Policy: **Procedure for Co-Option** **Date of adoption: 2 November 2026**

1. The Council is not obliged to consider the applications of candidates who were unsuccessful at a previous election.
2. The following applies even if there is only one candidate for one vacancy, as there is a requirement for the candidate to secure an absolute majority of votes from Councillors present and voting.
3. Applications received are circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting at which the co-option is to take place.
4. To protect the privacy of candidates, at the conclusion of all other business on the Agenda, those in attendance at the meeting will be asked to leave.
5. Candidates will be invited individually into the meeting room to make a statement additional to their application and Councillors will have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates.
6. After completing the interview, the candidates will leave the meeting.
7. The Chairman will request the Councillors present to nominate any of the candidates. Candidates will require a proposer and seconder to progress to the voting stage. If there is only one vacancy, a Councillor may only nominate or second one candidate. One candidate must receive an absolute majority of votes from Councillors present and voting.
8. The Chairman will then place the names of those nominated into alphabetical order and proceed to vote. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled.
9. Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders, by a show of hands, and will continue until one candidate has received an absolute majority of those Councillors present and voting. At this stage, the successful candidate will be declared co-opted.
10. Should no single candidate receive a majority on the first vote, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated. Voting will then take place for the remaining candidates until one person receives an absolute majority of those present and voting.
11. If no majority is achieved the Council will not be obliged to co-opt a new member and the vacancy shall remain unfilled. The Council will re-advertise the vacancy no later than three months after this eventuality.
12. The candidates will be advised of the outcome of the procedure on the next business day following the meeting.
13. The successful candidate is a Councillor in their own right and is no different to any other member; co-option is a legitimate form of election as part of the election process recognized in law.
14. The Declaration of Acceptance of Office shall be signed at the earliest opportunity but no later than the beginning of the following full meeting of the Council.