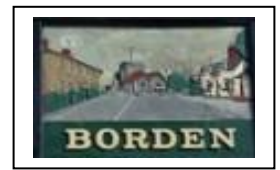


# BORDEN PARISH COUNCIL



## Information for Prospective Parish Councillors (Co-Option Vacancies)

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**Thank you for your interest in serving Borden Parish.**

Parish Councils play a vital role in representing the interests of residents and improving the community. When a vacancy arises on Borden Parish Council and is not filled by election, it may be filled through **co-option**. If you are enthusiastic about making a positive contribution to your local area, we welcome your application.

**Please note:** Co-opted councillors are not elected but are formally appointed by a vote of the existing Council.

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### What is Co-Option?

**Co-option** is the process of appointing a parish councillor without a public election. This typically occurs:

- When there are insufficient candidates in a parish election
- When a sitting councillor resigns, passes away, or is otherwise disqualified (creating a **casual vacancy**)

The co-option process ensures that the council continues to operate effectively with a full membership.

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### What Does Borden Parish Council Do?

Borden Parish Council is the first tier of local government and works to support the wellbeing of the parish and its residents. The council acts as a voice for the community and takes action on a range of local matters. Key responsibilities include:

- **Maintaining and managing parish assets**, such as:
  - Selected street lighting
  - Local play areas
  - Open green spaces and recreational land

# BORDEN PARISH COUNCIL



- **Reviewing planning applications** as a statutory **consultee**  
(The Council does not make final decisions but submits formal comments to Swale Borough Council's planning authority)
  - **Liaising with higher authorities** such as:
    - **Swale Borough Council (SBC)**
    - **Kent County Council (KCC)**  
on matters like **highways, footpaths, drainage, waste services, and community safety**
  - **Representing the interests of residents**
  - **Supporting community initiatives** and promoting local events
  - **Raising the precept** (a portion of the council tax) to fund parish services
  - Developing and delivering **local improvement projects**
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## The Role of a Parish Councillor

Parish Councillors are **either elected or co-opted, unpaid public officials** who act collectively as the decision-making body of the parish. As a councillor, you will:

- Serve the **interests of all parish residents**
  - Attend and participate in **monthly Parish Council meetings**. For Borden, these are held every 3rd Thursday of the month from 7:00 p.m. at the Pavilion on Wises Lane.
  - Sit on **working groups or committees** as needed (e.g., finance, highways), to help improve local services, ensure responsible budget management, address community concerns, organise events, and support the delivery of parish priorities through collaborative decision-making.
  - Help develop and approve the **annual budget and precept**
  - **Support Parish Council responses to local issues**, queries, and concerns
  - Provide input on **highways, traffic, development, infrastructure**, and more
  - Ensure compliance with governance, transparency, and ethical standards
  - Comply with the Code of Conduct at all times, demonstrating integrity, transparency, accountability, and respect in all council activities and interactions with fellow councillors, staff, and members of the public.
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## Who Can Apply?

You are eligible to be co-opted if you meet **all** of the following:

# BORDEN PARISH COUNCIL



- Aged **18 or over**
- A **British citizen**, an eligible **Commonwealth citizen**, or a qualifying **citizen of the European Union**
- Satisfy at least **one** of these criteria:
  - You are registered as a local government elector in the parish
  - You have lived in the parish (or within 3 miles) for the last **12 months**
  - You have worked in the parish during the last 12 months
  - You own or rent land/premises in the parish

**!** **Certain disqualifications apply**, including bankruptcy restrictions and recent criminal convictions. If you are unsure of your eligibility, please contact the Parish Clerk for advice.

For full eligibility information, please see the Electoral Commission's website at <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance>

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## What Skills Are Needed?

You do not need any formal qualifications to become a councillor. However, the following qualities are especially valuable:

- A genuine **interest in local affairs**
  - **Integrity**, objectivity, and impartiality
  - **Listening and communication skills**
  - **Problem-solving and decision-making ability**
  - **Teamwork** and collaboration
  - Willingness to **learn and engage** with policies, procedures, and legislation
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## Time Commitment

Being a councillor typically involves a commitment of **1–3 hours per week**, which can vary depending on your level of involvement.

- **Full Council meetings** are held **monthly**, and your attendance is essential.
- You may also take part in **project work, working groups, or community events**.
- You are expected to attend meetings of any working groups or committees to which you are appointed, as well as extraordinary Parish Council meetings when they are convened.

# BORDEN PARISH COUNCIL



## Training and Support

All newly co-opted councillors will receive:

- Guidance from the **Parish Clerk**
  - Access to voluntary **training courses** provided by the **Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)**, for example, covering:
    - Planning and development
    - Council finances and budgets
    - Roles and responsibilities
    - Code of Conduct and ethical governance
  - Ongoing **peer support** from fellow councillors
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## Why Become a Parish Councillor?

Serving as a councillor is a rewarding way to:

- **Make a meaningful impact** in your community
  - Ensure local services reflect the needs of residents
  - Gain experience in **local governance, finance, and planning**
  - Learn about **decision-making, public accountability, and collaborative leadership**
  - Develop both personally and professionally
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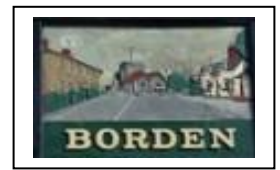
## How to Apply for Co-Option

To express your interest in becoming a Parish Councillor:

1. **Visit the Borden Parish Council website:**  
 [www.bordenparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.bordenparishcouncil.gov.uk)  
➤ Download the **Co-Option Application Form** under *Councillor Vacancies*
2. Or **contact the Parish Clerk** to request a form or ask questions:  
 [clerk@bordenparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@bordenparishcouncil.gov.uk)

Once we receive your application, we will invite shortlisted candidates to attend a council meeting, where they may be asked a few informal questions before a vote is taken.



# BORDEN PARISH COUNCIL



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## Questions or Further Information?

Please get in touch with the Parish Clerk for a confidential discussion:

-  [clerk@bordenparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@bordenparishcouncil.gov.uk)
-  Contact details are available on our website.

We look forward to welcoming committed, community-minded individuals to our Council.

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