St Buryan and Lamorna Parish Council

Election and Co-Option Policy

Adoption: 16 February 2026

Review: February 2028

1. Introduction

Parish Councillors are elected every 4 years (referred to as an Ordinary Election).

In St. Buryan and Lamorna Parish, there are twelve Parish Councillor positions. Councillors do not represent areas (wards). The Parish Council always encourages a mix of Parish Councillors representing all areas and populations of the Parish as far as is practicable.

2. Becoming a Parish Councillor

Ordinary Election

Anyone who meets the eligibility critera outlined below can apply to become a Parish Councillor.

When an Election is announced potential candidates need to apply to become a Parish Councillor. Cornwall Council provide a nomination pack for candidates together with guidance. These can be found at Guidance for Candiadates on the Cornwall Council website.

If the number of nominated candidates does not exceed the number of Parish Council seats at the closing date for nominations then the nominated candidates are deemed elected and a vote will not take place.

Casual Vacancies

Casual Vacancies occur between Ordinary Elections and can occur for a variety of reasons. Typically a casual vacancy can occur when:

1. Fewer than twelve nominated candidates have been deemed elected at an Ordinary Election.
2. A Parish Council seat(s) becoming vacant during a council term up to 6 months prior to an Ordinary Election.

Vacancies can occur for a variety of reasons, including a Councillor resignation, or failing to attend meetings for six months. When a vacancy occurs the Parish Clerk notifies the Elections Office at Cornwall Council and the vacancy will be advertised. If at least 10 electors of the parish have not called for a poll (by-election) within the legally specified time (currently 14 days) following publication of the Notice of Vacancy, then the Parish Clerk will be notified by the Electoral Services Office at Cornwall Council that the vacancy can be filled by co-option. See section 5 below for process of co-option.

Anyone who is thinking of becoming a Parish Councillor and would like further information before applying, please, in the first instance, read The Good Councillor's Guide (available on the Parish Council Website).

If you would like a chat about the role of the Parish Council and current projects and any issues, please contact the Chair or the Vice Chair via email. Details can be found on the Parish Council website (https://www.stburyanlamorna-pc.gov.uk/).

3. Who is eligible to become a Parish Councillor?

In order to be eligible for co-option as a St Buryan and Lamorna Parish Councillor, applicants **must**

1. Be a British Citizen, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union;
2. Be 18 years or older on the day of nomination.
3. Be registered as a local government elector
4. During the whole of twelve months before the date of nomination/application, resided in the parish or within 3 miles (4.8km) of it. **Or**
5. During the whole of the preceding twelve months before the date of nomination/application, occupied as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the parish. **Or**
6. During the whole of the preceding twelve months before the date of nomination/application principal or only place of work has been in the parish.

4. Who cannot become a Councillor, even if they meet the above qualifications?

The basic disqualifications (in summary) from the above qualifications are if the potential candidate

1. Is a paid office holder or employee of the Parish Council
2. Is subject to or has been subject to a bankruptcy order (note that this disqualification ceases under certain circumstances, applicants are advised to check the full wording of the disqualifications - see below).
3. Has 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.
4. Has been disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal electoral practices.

The full details of qualification and disqualification can be found in Sections 79 to 81 of the Local Government Act 1972.

5. Co-option process

To ensure a fair and transparent process is undertaken, the following procedure will be followed by the Parish Council.

On receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Services Office that the casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option:

1. The Parish Clerk will advertise the vacancy on the Parish Council noticeboards, website and social media.
2. Applicants may apply using the Parish Council Application for Co-option available on the Parish Council website.
3. The Parish Clerk will invite those eligible from the application form to give a short introductory presentation at the next available full Parish Council meeting.
4. The submitted Application Forms, which meet the eligibility criteria outlined in sections 4 and 5 above, will be circulated to all Parish Councillors before the meeting. These will be treated by the Parish Clerk and Councillors as Strictly Private and Confidential.
5. Any candidate who is unable to attend the full Parish Council meeting may submit a short introductory presentation in writing to be read by the Parish Council to the Parish Councillors at the full Parish Council meeting.

Once all candidates' introductory presentations have been made, the meeting Chair will call for a vote.

6. The voting procedure

There are no set criteria beyond eligibility to be considered by Parish Councillors when voting.

However, Parish Councillors, when making individual candidate choices, will consider whether a candidate has, or the potential to develop, the skills needed to be a good Councillor as set out in the Good Councillors Guide. Also to be considered is whether the candidate has the potential to represent an underrepresented area or demographic within the Parish, and whether they can bring a skill set that will be a valued addition to the Parish Council.

Only Parish Councillors attending the meeting may vote. The meeting must be quorate.

1. Councillors shall vote by show of hands, or, if at least two members so request, by signed ballot prepared by the Parish Clerk in advance of the meeting. In the case of equal votes, the person chairing the meeting has a second or casting vote.
2. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority over the total votes cast for the rest, the candidate with the least number of votes will be removed from consideration and the remainder will then be put to the vote again.
3. This process will, if necessary, be repeated until a majority is obtained.
4. This process will be followed separately for each individual vacancy open to be filled by co-option at the time.
5. If no candidate secures an absolute majority of votes cast for an individual vacancy, that vacancy remains unfilled (eg if 11 councillors are present and 6 abstain from voting then there is no absolute majority)

The candidate(s) receiving an absolute majority will be duly co-opted to the Parish Council.

After the vote is completed, the person chairing the meeting will declare the successful candidate(s), and any candidates not present will be notified by the Parish Clerk of the result promptly, in the days following the meeting.

The Council is not obliged to provide feedback on the application process to unsuccessful candidates.

7. Initial requirements of successful candidates

Before the successful candidate(s) can participate in Parish Council business, they must sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Parish Clerk.

The Parish Clerk will advise Democratic Services at Cornwall Council of the names of anyone co-opted to the Council

The Parish Clerk is responsible for providing each new Parish Councillor with an induction pack including an email address for the conduct of Parish Council business. All new Parish Councillors are required to read and understand the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders adopted by the Parish Council.

All new Parish Councillors must, within 28 days of appointment to office, register their interests with the Cornwall Council Monitoring Officer. Forms will be supplied by the Parish Clerk, and new Councillors must return the completed forms to the Monitoring Officer within this timescale.