

Shepherdswell *with* Coldred Parish Council

Briefing Note

Co-option of Parish Councillor

1. Purpose of the Briefing Note

To brief Members on the statutory process for filling the current casual vacancy by co-option, to confirm the applications received, and to outline the procedure to be followed at the meeting.

2. Background

A casual vacancy arose following the resignation of Cllr Symes.

A Notice of Vacancy was published in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972. The 14-day period for electors to request an election expired with **no election being called**, therefore the Parish Council is required to fill the vacancy by co-option.

This process is governed by:

- **Local Government Act 1972, s.16(2)** – power to fill casual vacancies by co-option
 - **LGA Schedule 12, para. 10** – voting requirements
 - **LGA 1972, s.79** – eligibility criteria
 - **Council Standing Orders (SO 8)**
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3. Eligibility

Applicants must meet at least one of the statutory criteria:

- Registered local government elector for the parish
- Occupied land or premises in the parish for the preceding 12 months
- Principal place of work in the parish for the preceding 12 months
- Resident within 3 miles of the parish boundary for the preceding 12 months

The Clerk has carried out initial eligibility checks based on the information supplied.

4. Applications Received

The following valid applications have been received for consideration, these are listed in order of application received:

- **Matthew Thornton**
- **Lucy Emma Little**
- **John Davis**
- **David Cox**

All applicants have confirmed they meet the eligibility requirements.

5. Procedure at the Meeting

The following procedure is recommended to ensure fairness, transparency, and compliance:

1. **Chair introduces the item** and confirms the number of valid applications.
 2. **Clerk outlines the process** and confirms eligibility checks completed.
 3. **Optional applicant statements** – typically 2–3 minutes each.
 4. **Questions from Members.**
 5. **Voting**
 - Voting must be by **written ballot**.
 - A candidate must receive an **absolute majority** of votes cast.
 - During the co option process the chair has **NO** casting vote
 - If no candidate achieves a majority, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is removed and further rounds are held.
 6. **Clerk counts votes** and advises the Chair of the result.
 7. **Council resolves** to co-opt the successful candidate.
 8. **Result recorded** in the minutes.
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6. Post-Meeting Actions

If a candidate is co-opted, the following actions are required:

- Arrange signing of the **Declaration of Acceptance of Office** at the meeting.
 - Provide **Register of Interests** form for completion within 28 days.
 - Notify **Dover District Council** of the co-option.
 - Update the **Parish Council website**.
 - Add the new Member to circulation lists and governance documents.
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7. Recommendation

That Members consider the applications received and proceed to co-opt **one Parish Councillor** in accordance with the statutory process and Standing Orders.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Jan Rousell](#)
Subject: My Co-option Application Form
Date: 12 April 2026 14:23:16
Attachments: [REDACTED]

Good afternoon Jan,

Please find attached my application form. I have also printed off a hard copy & dropped it off at the Shepherdswell with Coldred Parish Council post box @ the Village Hall.

Shepherdswell *with* Coldred Parish Council

Co-option Application Form

1. Personal Details

Full Name: Matthew Thornton

Address:



Postcode:

 _____

Telephone:

 _____

Email:

 _____

2. Eligibility to Serve as a Parish Councillor

To be eligible for co-option, you must meet *at least one* of the following criteria and **not** be disqualified under relevant legislation.

Please tick all that apply:

- I am registered as a local government elector for the parish.
- I have lived in the parish, or within 3 miles of it, for the past 12 months.
- I occupy as owner or tenant land or premises in the parish for the past 12 months.
- My principal or only place of work has been in the parish for the past 12 months.

Please confirm you are not disqualified from holding office:

- I confirm I am not disqualified under the Local Government Act 1972 or other relevant legislation.

3. About You

Why would you like to become a parish councillor?

(Please outline your motivation and what you hope to contribute.)

Since moving to the heart of the village, I have sought to immerse myself in the community through my involvement with the Village Green Association. This village has been incredibly welcoming, and I am keen to give back by offering my time and energy to the Parish Council.

Having worked in the Civil Engineering industry, I am used to demanding environments that require patience, clear communication and solution-oriented mindset. My goal is to use my professional and personal experience to help ensure our parish remains a vibrant, well supported place to live.

What skills, experience, or interests would you bring to the council?

(Community involvement, professional background, local knowledge, etc.)

I bring a unique combination of technical expertise and governance experience. In terms of leadership, I served on the committee of the London and Surrey Mini Owners Club for over twenty years, including seven years as Chairman. Managing the UK's largest regional Mini Club required high-level organisation, financial oversight, and the ability to build consensus through effective chairing of meetings.

I pride myself on an objective and balanced approach to decision making, ensuring all viewpoints are considered to reach fair, evidence-based conclusions.

My interests are rooted in local life. I am eager to apply my skills and experience in community leadership to help maintain and improve our local environment.

4. Declarations

Are you willing to attend council meetings regularly and undertake training as required?

- Yes
- No


Are you willing for your name to be published as an applicant?

- Yes
 - No
-

5. Signature

I declare that the information given in this application is true and complete.

Signature: _____



Date: _____

12 April 2026

From: [REDACTED]
To: parishclerk@shepherdswellcoldred-pc.gov.uk
Subject: Application for Parish Cllr: Lucy Emma Little
Date: 18 April 2026 17:36:23
Attachments: [REDACTED]

Dear Cllr J. Rousell,

Please find attached my completed application form for the Parish Councillor position.

I am very keen to contribute to the local community and would welcome the opportunity to support the council's work. My background in education, SEND, and social care, alongside my experience working with local stakeholders, has given me a strong understanding of community needs and local services.

I would be happy to provide any further information if required and look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

Lucy Emma Little

Shepherdswell *with* Coldred Parish Council

Co-option Application Form

1. Personal Details

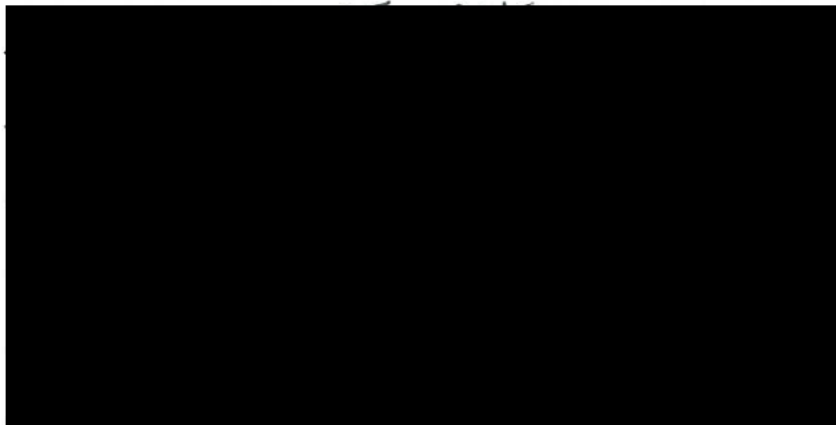
Full Name: LUCY EMMA LITTLE

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

Email:



2. Eligibility to Serve as a Parish Councillor

To be eligible for co-option, you must meet *at least one* of the following criteria and **not** be disqualified under relevant legislation.

Please tick all that apply:

- I am registered as a local government elector for the parish.
- I have lived in the parish, or within 3 miles of it, for the past 12 months.
- I occupy as owner or tenant land or premises in the parish for the past 12 months.
- My principal or only place of work has been in the parish for the past 12 months.

Please confirm you are not disqualified from holding office:

- I confirm I am not disqualified under the Local Government Act 1972 or other relevant legislation.
-

3. About You

Why would you like to become a parish councillor?

(Please outline your motivation and what you hope to contribute.)

PLEASE SEE ADDITIONAL FORMS

What skills, experience, or interests would you bring to the council?

(Community involvement, professional background, local knowledge, etc.)

PLEASE SEE ADDITIONAL FORMS.

4. Declarations

Are you willing to attend council meetings regularly and undertake training as required?

- Yes
- No

Are you willing for your name to be published as an applicant?

- Yes
- No

5. Signature

I declare that the information given in this application is true and complete.

Signature:  _____

Date: 18-04-2026

3. About Me

Why would you like to become a parish councillor? (Please outline your motivation and what you hope to contribute.)

Having lived in the parish for eight years, I care deeply about its future and the well-being of the people who live here. Over the last few years, I have seen changes in our community spirit, and I would like to work with others to ensure our parish continues to thrive.

I would like to become a parish councillor because I am committed to contributing to my local community in a practical, visible, and accountable way. Through both my professional work and community involvement, I see how local decisions directly shape residents' daily lives, from access to services and community safety to the quality of local facilities and support for families.

My background in education, SEND, and social care gives me a strong understanding of the challenges faced by children, families, and vulnerable adults. I am experienced in navigating complex systems, balancing competing priorities, and ensuring that decisions are fair, transparent, and grounded in the best interests of those they affect. I bring strong organisational skills, attention to detail, and the ability to analyse information and contribute constructively to discussions and decision-making.

I am particularly interested in strengthening communication between the council and residents, ensuring people feel informed, included, and able to participate. I am especially committed to making the parish welcoming, accessible, and supportive for families, older residents, and those with additional needs.

There is currently much confusion around the unitary authority and the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). I would like to be involved so I can advocate for our community, support improvements to local facilities, and help ensure decisions are made with transparency and fairness.

I am motivated by a desire to strengthen community engagement, support local initiatives, and contribute to improving outcomes for residents. I would bring consistency, professionalism, and a strong sense of public duty to the role, with a clear focus on ensuring the parish council operates effectively and transparently in the best interests of the community it serves.

What skills, experience, or interests would you bring to the council? (Community involvement, professional background, local knowledge, etc.)

I would bring a combination of professional expertise, community involvement, governance experience, and strong local knowledge to the parish council.

Professionally, I have over 18 years of experience across education, SEND, and social care. This has given me a deep understanding of the challenges faced by children, families, and vulnerable adults, as well as the wider pressures on public services. I am experienced in safeguarding, policy implementation, and working within statutory frameworks, which supports informed, responsible, and accountable decision-making.

I bring strong organisational and administrative skills, including managing complex workloads, analysing information, writing reports, and ensuring regulatory compliance. I am confident in contributing to meetings, critically reviewing information, and supporting clear, transparent decision-making processes.

Alongside my professional background, I have direct governance experience. I served as the SEND Governor at Shepherdswell and Eythorne Schools for over a year, working closely with the leadership team to support compliance, strengthen safeguarding, SEND practice, and improve outcomes for vulnerable groups. This role required careful scrutiny, clear communication, and a strong understanding of statutory responsibilities, all of which translate directly into effective parish council work.

I am also the Deputy Chair of a local branch group, where I support community engagement and local initiatives. Through this work, I have built a strong online presence, sharing local and national information with an audience of over 10,000 followers (in less than a year). This has helped improve communication, raise awareness of local issues, and strengthen connections between residents and local services.

Through my work with local authorities, schools, and community groups across Kent and the Southeast, I have developed strong community engagement skills. I am used to listening to residents, understanding local priorities, and helping to find practical, workable solutions. I have also built strong working relationships with councillors across Kent and Medway, as well as with KALC committee members, which have given me valuable insight into local government processes and regional priorities.

I have designed and implemented a candidate development pathway to support potential future councillors, helping them build the skills, confidence, and understanding needed for public service. This reflects my commitment to developing others, strengthening local leadership, and ensuring communities have capable, well-prepared representatives.

Having lived in the parish for eight years, I have a good understanding of local issues and the changes our community has experienced, particularly around communication, cohesion, and access to services. I am particularly interested in strengthening communication between the council and residents, ensuring people feel informed, included, and able to participate. I am also committed to making the parish welcoming, accessible, and supportive for families, older residents, and those with additional needs.

Overall, I would bring a practical, organised, and community-focused approach, with a strong sense of public duty and a commitment to ensuring the council operates transparently and in the best interests of residents.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Jan Rousell](#)
Subject: Parrish application form
Date: 19 April 2026 15:07:03
Attachments: [REDACTED]

Hi Jan

I hope you are well ?
Please see attached my application form for parish councillor.
I do hope this is all okay ?
Any problems or questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks and best regards

John Davis

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Shepherdswell *with* Coldred Parish Council

Co-option Application Form

1. Personal Details

Full Name: John Davis

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

2. Eligibility to Serve as a Parish Councillor

To be eligible for co-option, you must meet *at least one* of the following criteria and **not** be disqualified under relevant legislation.

Please tick all that apply:

- I am registered as a local government elector for the parish.
- I have lived in the parish, or within 3 miles of it, for the past 12 months.
- I occupy as owner or tenant land or premises in the parish for the past 12 months.
- My principal or only place of work has been in the parish for the past 12 months.

Please confirm you are not disqualified from holding office:

- I confirm I am not disqualified under the Local Government Act 1972 or other relevant legislation.

3. About You

Why would you like to become a parish councillor?

(Please outline your motivation and what you hope to contribute.)

I would love to be a parish councillor because i care deeply about the place i live, bring my children up in and the community.

I feel i would bring a new fresh approach to our community.

What skills, experience, or interests would you bring to the council?

(Community involvement, professional background, local knowledge, etc.)

I would bring a strong mix of real world experience.

I am a good listener, approachable and committed to fairness and transparency.

4. Declarations

Are you willing to attend council meetings regularly and undertake training as required?

- Yes
- No

Are you willing for your name to be published as an applicant?

- Yes
- No

5. Signature

I declare that the information given in this application is true and complete.

Signature: Mr John Davis

Date: 19-04-2026

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Jan Rousell](#)
Subject: Application for co-option
Date: 20 April 2026 15:42:02
Attachments: [REDACTED]

Please find attached application form.

3. About You

Why would you like to become a parish councillor?

(Please outline your motivation and what you hope to contribute.)

I have lived in the village since 2004 and would welcome the opportunity to support ongoing development. I am particularly interested in supporting initiatives that strengthen community cohesion and improve local services. I believe in transparent, collaborative decision making with a respectful environment especially for female councillors, free from bullying or intimidation.

What skills, experience, or interests would you bring to the council?

(Community involvement, professional background, local knowledge, etc.)

I am an active member of the Green Spaces Group working alongside the Parish Council to enhance village facilities. I am currently helping in the organising of this year's summer fete. I have experience in community involvement including serving as a school governor and managing an under 10 football team. Recently, I volunteered in the village, helping to collect donations for the poppy appeal. Professionally I have built a career in IT and I believe the Parish Council would benefit from my experience.

4. Declarations

Are you willing to attend council meetings regularly and undertake training as required?

- Yes
- No

Are you willing for your name to be published as an applicant?

- Yes
- No

5. Signature

I declare that the information given in this application is true and complete.

Signature: David Cox

Date: 20/04/2026