FERRYHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

Telephone: 01740 652157
Email: enquiries@ferryhill.gov.uk

28th October 2026

Dear Councillor,

I Hereby Summon You to attend an **Extraordinary Meeting** of **Ferryhill Town Council** at **6pm** on **Wednesday, 4th November 2026,** which will be held at **Ferryhill Town Hall, Chapel Terrace, Ferryhill, Co Durham, DL17 8JL**

E. Gildersleeves

Elizabeth Gildersleeves
Acting Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**
   To invite members to declare any interest they may have.

3. **Members' Dispensation**
   To consider written requests for dispensations from members who have declared interests under Disclosable or Non-Disclosable Pecuniary Interests – Section 33 of the 2011 Localism Act.

4. **Public Participation (Subject to Public Participation Policy)**
   Members of the public are permitted to make representations, ask questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. Questions will not be received by the Council which are in furtherance of a person's individual circumstances or which are about a matter where there is a right of appeal to the courts, a tribunal or government minister. A question will not be received by the Council where the issue it concerns has been the subject of a decision of the Council in the last six months.

5. **Co-option of Councillor – Candidate Presentation**
   In accordance with the Council's co-option policy (attached), candidates will be given a maximum of five minutes to introduce themselves to the town councillors (members), give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a member of the Town Council.

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The process will be carried out in the public session and there will be no private discussions between members prior to a vote being taken. However, where the Town Council is discussing the merits of candidates and inevitably their personal attributes, this could be prejudicial, and they should resolve to exclude the members of the press and public, including candidates.

6 Exclusion of Press and Public

Members are requested to move the following motion:

"That in accordance with the provision of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council do now exclude the public and press for the remaining items on the Agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to public interest."

7. Co-Option of Councillor – Appointment

FERRYHILL TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY

CO-OPTION OF MEMBERS

1. Introduction

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

2. Co-option

The Co-option of a Town Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Town 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 becomes disqualified;
- A Councillor fails for six (6) months to attend meetings of a Council committee or sub-committee or to attend as a representative of the Town Council a meeting of an outside body.

The Town Council must notify the Returning Officer of Durham County Council (DCC) of a Casual Vacancy and then advertise the vacancy and give electors the opportunity to request an election. This occurs when ten electors notify DCC stating that an election is requested.

If a by-election is called, a polling station(s) will be set up by DCC and the electors will be asked to vote for candidates who will have put themselves forward by way of nomination paper. The Town Council will pay the costs of the election. The electors have fourteen (14) days (not including weekends, bank holidays and other notable days) to claim the by-election; but DCC will advise the Clerk of the closing date.

If more than one candidate is 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 (14) days of the vacancy notice being posted, as advertised by DCC, the Town Council is able to co-opt a volunteer.

3. Confirmation of Co-option

On receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Services Office of DCC the casual vacancy can be filled by means of Co-option. The Town Clerk will:

- Advertise the vacancy for four weeks on the Town Council's notice boards and website;
- Advise the Town Council that the Co-option Policy has been activated.

The Town Council is not obliged to fill any vacancy. Even if the Town Council invites applications for co-option, it is not obliged to select anyone from the candidates that apply.

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

Councillors elected by co-option are full members of the Town Council.

4. Eligibility of Candidates

The Town Council can consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that:

- He/she is an elector of the Parish; or
- has resided in the Parish for the past twelve (12) months, or rented/tenanted land or other premises in the Parish; or
- had his/her principal place of work in the Parish; or
- has lived within three (3) miles (direct) of the Parish.

There are certain disqualifications for election, of which the main are:

- 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 (3) months without the option of a fine during the five (5) years preceding the election; and
- Being disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal practices.

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

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 full Council meeting will have an agenda item ‘To receive written applications for the office of Town Councillor and to Co-opt a candidate to fill the existing vacancy’. Copies of the application(s) will be circulated to all Councillors by the Clerk at least three (3) clear days before the meeting of the full Council when the Co-option will be considered.

All such documents will be treated as strictly confidential by the Clerk and Councillors.

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 the Town 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 the town councillors (members), give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a member of the Town Council. The process will be carried out in the public session and there will be no private discussions between members prior to a vote being taken. However, where the Town Council is discussing the merits of candidates and inevitably their personal attributes,

this could be prejudicial, and they should resolve to exclude the members of the press and public, including candidates.

As soon as all candidates have finished giving their submissions, the Town Council will proceed to a vote with each candidate being proposed and seconded by the Councillors in attendance (as defined in the Standing Orders) and a vote by a show of hands (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 13).

A recorded vote may be requested under Standing Orders, so as to show whether each councillor present and voting, gave his/her vote for or against that question.

In order for a candidate to be co-opted to the Town Council, it will be necessary for them to obtain an absolute majority of votes cast (50% + 1 of the votes available at the meeting). If there are more than two candidates 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. Further rounds of voting will then take place with the process repeated until a candidate has an absolute majority.

A co-opted candidate will sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, including an undertaking to abide by the Town Council's Code of Conduct, either before or at the next meeting of the Town Council.

The Clerk will notify DCC Electoral Services Office of the co-option of the new town councillor.

The co-opted town councillor will complete a 'Notification of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests' form which the Clerk will submit to the Monitoring Officer at DCC within 28 days of the co-option.

If insufficient candidates are co-opted, the process should continue, whereby the vacancies are again advertised.

APPENDIX A

Application for Co-option

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Town Councillor. Please provide the below information to assist Ferryhill Town Council in making their decision.

Full Name & Title	
Home Address	
Home Telephone	
Mobile Telephone	
Email Address	

About You Please provide the Town Council with some background information about yourself. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Reasons for Applying Please provide the Town Council with your reasons for wanting to become a Town Councillor.

Use of Personal Information The Town Council will use your information, including that which you provide on this application form, to assess your suitability to be a town councillor.

Declaration & Consent I have read the section entitled “Use of Personal Information” and by signing this form I consent to the use and disclosure of my information included in this application form. I declare the information given on this form to be true and correct.	
Signature	Name (print)
Date	

Your application also requires signatures of two (2) registered electors (known as a proposer and seconder) from the Parish area:

	Proposer	**Seconder**
Name		
Address		
Signature		

Please complete and return this form, together with the completed Co-option Eligibility Form to: The Town Clerk, Ferryhill Town Council, Town Hall, Ferryhill. DL17 8JL. Tel 01740 652157 - Email: enquiries@ferryhill.gov.uk

APPENDIX B

Co-option Eligibility Form

1.	In order to be eligible for co-option as a Ferryhill Town Councillor you must satisfy certain criteria. You **must** satisfy (a) and (b) below and **at least one** of the options (c) – (f). Please tick which apply to you	
		Tick
a.	I am 18 years of age or over; **and**	
b.	I am a British citizen or a citizen of the Commonwealth or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union; **and**	
c.	I am registered as a local government elector for the parish; **or**	
d.	I have, during the whole of the twelve months preceding the date of my co-option occupied, as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the parish; **or**	
e.	My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in the parish; **or**	
f.	I have during the whole of those twelve months resided in the parish or within 3 miles of it.	

2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 a person is disqualified from being a parish councillor if he/she:

a. Is employed by the parish council or holds paid office (other than chairman, vice-chairman or deputy chairman) under the parish council (including joint boards or committees);
b. Is employed by an entity controlled by the parish council;
c. Is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order or a debt relief restrictions order or an interim debt relief restrictions order; or
d. Has within five years before the day of co-option, or since his/her co-option, been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man of any offence and has been sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for not less than three months without the option of a fine;
e. Is otherwise disqualified under Part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (relating to corrupt or illegal electoral practices and offences relating to donations) or the Audit Commission Act 1998.

Use of Personal Information
The Town Council will use the information provided on this form to assess your eligibility to be a town councillor.

Declaration & Consent
I hereby confirm that I am eligible for the vacancy of Ferryhill Town Councillor and I am not disqualified under section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 from being a town councillor and that the information given on this form is true and correct.

I have read the section entitled “Use of Personal Information” and by signing this form I consent to the use and disclosure of my information included in this form.

Signature	Name (print)
Date	

APPENDIX C

CO-OPTED COUNCILLOR PERSON SPECIFICATION

COMPETENCY	REQUIREMENTS
Relevant knowledge, Education, Professional Qualifications & Training	• Sound knowledge and understanding of local issues and the local community.
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	• Solid interest in local matters. • Ability and willingness to represent the Town Council and their community. • Good interpersonal skills. • Ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing. • Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with all members and staff. • Good reading and analytic skills. • Ability and willingness to work with the Town Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other town/parish councils, Durham County Council, charities). • Ability and willingness to undertake relevant training. • Ability to work under pressure.
Other requirements	• Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Town Council (or the meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) in the evening and events in the evening and at weekends. • Flexible. • Enthusiastic.