THINKING OF BECOMING A COUNCILLOR?

Prospective Councillor Information Pack

Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council

Information for people considering standing for election or applying for co-option

Updated November 2026

WELCOME

Thank you for taking an interest in becoming a parish councillor.

Being a councillor is an opportunity to play an active part in the community you live in and to help shape the future of Saxilby with Ingleby.

You do not need to have been a councillor before, and you do not need to be an expert in local government. What matters is an interest in our community, a willingness to listen to different views, and a commitment to working constructively with other councillors, our officers and the wider community.

Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council is responsible for a wide range of local services, facilities and projects. We look after community assets, support local activities and organisations, respond to planning consultations, and work with other organisations to improve the parish.

Councillors give their time to public service, but the role is a formal position of public office, with responsibilities and standards that are different from those of a council employee or a community volunteer. There are regular meetings to attend, papers to read and decisions to consider. Councillors are also encouraged and expected to take an active interest in what is happening across the parish and to support community events and projects. Some periods are busier than others, and the time commitment can vary depending on the committees and working groups in which you become involved.

At the same time, being a councillor can be a rewarding way to contribute to your community. You will have the opportunity to learn about how local government works, meet people from across the parish, contribute to projects and help make decisions about matters that affect local people.

This pack is intended to give you an honest and straightforward introduction to what being a councillor involves. It explains how the parish council works, what councillors do, how meetings and decisions work, and the standards and responsibilities that come with the role.

Whether you are considering standing for election or applying to be co-opted to the council, we hope this information will help you decide whether becoming a parish councillor is right for you.

Cllr Carla Saunders
Chair, Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council

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1. ABOUT SAXILBY WITH INGLEBY

Saxilby with Ingleby is a thriving rural parish in Lincolnshire, with a population of around 4,700 residents. The parish combines the character of a traditional village with strong connections to Lincoln and the wider region, and has a wide range of community facilities, green spaces, and local services.

The parish is a relatively settled community, with strong connections to the local area. Its population is older than the national average, with more residents who are retired or economically inactive, and fewer young adults and students. This creates both opportunities and challenges for the parish council, particularly in ensuring that community facilities, public spaces, and local services remain accessible and responsive to changing needs.

The Parish Council

Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council is the first tier of local government and the democratic voice of the local community. The council has fourteen councillor seats. Councillors represent the interests of residents, set the strategic direction of the organisation, determine policy, and make decisions on behalf of the parish. They are supported by professionally qualified officers who deliver services, provide professional advice, and support the council in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities.

The council maintains and enhances community assets, delivers local services, supports local organisations, and invests in projects intended to improve the parish for current and future generations.

Assets and services managed by the parish council include:

Assets and Services	
St Andrews Community Centre – room hire	Grass cutting and grounds maintenance
Saxilby Waterfront Public Facilities	Maintenance of public spaces and facilities
Mill Lane Changing Facilities and Football Pitches	Support for community groups and events
Saxilby and District Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA. All weather sports training pitch for football and basketball)	Delivery of council-led community events
Play park and wheeled/skate park	
Saxilby Library Hub	
Saxilby Burial Ground	
Benches, litter bins, and bus shelters	
Green spaces	

A councillor, therefore, needs to be interested in the whole parish: its residents, facilities, environment, businesses, community organisations, and its future development.

Our Priorities

The parish council has a clear vision for the future of Saxilby with Ingleby, and has identified five strategic objectives to guide its work:

1. A thriving community
2. Great facilities and connected places
3. Green and sustainable living
4. Supporting the local economy and tourism
5. Celebrating our heritage

KEY POINT

Councillors are involved in helping to decide what the council should prioritise, how resources should be used, and how projects and services should develop over time.

These objectives provide the framework for the council's longer-term planning, and help shape decisions about projects, services, and investment across the parish.

The council's current business plan sets out a range of projects and priorities under these objectives. These include improvements to community and leisure facilities, investment in green spaces and biodiversity, better walking and cycling opportunities, support for local tourism and heritage, and measures to improve the sustainability of council facilities.

Current Major Projects

The parish council has a programme of projects intended to improve facilities, enhance the environment, and support the long-term development of Saxilby with Ingleby. The projects below are some of the key areas of work identified in the corporate plan.

Community and leisure facilities

Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)	Developing improved opportunities for sport and recreation
Outdoor gym	Providing additional opportunities for outdoor exercise
Play facilities	Continuing to improve opportunities for children and families
St Andrews Community Centre	Developing the Centre, including improvements to its facilities and provision
Saxilby Waterfront public facilities	Improving the waterfront as a community and leisure asset

Environment and sustainability

Tree planting and community orchard	Increasing tree cover and creating opportunities for community involvement
Biodiversity Action Plan	Improving biodiversity across the parish
Wildflower areas	Creating and enhancing areas for wildflowers and wildlife
Climate strategy	Developing the council's approach to tackling climate change and improving sustainability

Solar panels at St Andrews Community Centre and Mill Lane Facilities	Exploring renewable energy generation

Transport and connected places

Speed indicator devices	Measure intended to improve road safety and driver awareness
Bus shelters	Improvements to local bus shelter provision
Walking and cycling opportunities	Developing family walks and cycling maps and supporting better connections around the parish
Quiet Lane	Exploring measures to create a more attractive and accessible route for walking and cycling

Heritage, tourism, and the local economy

Tourist information and heritage centre	Developing opportunities to promote the parish and its heritage
Digital history trail	Making the parish's history more accessible to residents and visitors
Community workspaces	Exploring opportunities to support local working and economic activity
Electric vehicle charging	Exploring provision to support more sustainable travel

KEY POINT

These projects are not a fixed list. Priorities can develop as projects progress, funding opportunities arise, and the needs of the parish change. Councillors may therefore be involved in reviewing priorities, considering proposals, and making decisions about how the council's resources are used.

2. HOW THE COUNCIL WORKS

How the council is organised

Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council is made up of Full Council, committees, and working groups, supported by the council's officer and staff.

Full Council

Full Council is the main decision-making body of the parish council. It considers the council's overall direction, and agrees key policies and decisions.

The chair and vice-chair of the parish council are elected annually at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, which usually takes place in late May.

The Council's Team

The council's team includes:

- **Administration team**, including the Clerk/RFO, Assistant Clerk, and Administration Officer(s)
- **Caretaking and Facilities staff**, who manage and maintain St Andrews Community Centre on a day-to-day basis
- **Grounds and Estates staff**, who look after the wider village

The administration team provides professional advice and support to the council, manages services, and supports the council's governance and decision-making.

The distinction between the roles is important: councillors make decisions and provide direction, while officers and staff put those decisions into practice, support councillors in ensuring that decisions are legally made, and manage the council's day-to-day operations.

How councillors get involved

There are several ways in which councillors contribute to the work of the council.

Committees

The council has three main committees, each covering a particular area of responsibility.

Finance and Risk

Deals with the council's financial management, risk, and financial planning, including the annual budget, and precept.

Personnel

Deals with matters relating to the council's employees, including staffing, employment policies, appraisals, and recruitment.

Planning and Development

Considers planning and highways matters affecting the parish, and oversees a range of council projects and events.

Councillors can indicate which committees they would like to serve on, with membership agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council, and any subsequent changes agreed by Full Council.

Working groups and projects

Councillors may also become involved in particular projects or areas of work through working groups, and task and finish groups.

These groups provide an opportunity to look in more detail at a particular issue, develop ideas, undertake research, or work through project proposals. They may include councillors, officers, and where appropriate, members of the community.

Current working groups include the Westcroft Green Space Project and the Events Group. Working groups do not normally have their own decision-making powers, and report their work or recommendations to the appropriate committee.

Beyond meetings

Being a councillor is not only about attending meetings. Councillors are encouraged and expected to take an active interest in the parish, and to support council and community events.

You may therefore find yourself involved in projects, community activities, site visits, discussions with residents or other organisations, or work arising from the particular areas in which you have an interest.

KEY POINT

Councillors contribute as part of a team. You will not be expected to know everything or take on every area of council work, but you will be expected to take an active and constructive part in the areas where you are involved.

Meetings and decision-making

Meetings provide the formal structure through which councillors consider information, discuss issues, and make decisions.

The meeting pattern

Full Council meetings on the first Wednesday of each month, except August.

Finance and Risk, and Planning and Development, normally meet on the third Wednesday of each month, except August. Planning and Development may also meet additionally when required, for example to consider planning applications.

Personnel and working groups meet as required, in accordance with their Terms of Reference (ToR).

Most council and committee meetings take place in the evening, although other meetings may vary.

GLOSSARY

Terms of Reference (ToR)

A document that sets out what a committee or working group is responsible for, what it can consider, and the limits of its role. It provides a clear framework for the group's work and helps make sure decisions are made by the appropriate part of the council.

What happens at a meeting?

An agenda and supporting papers are provided in advance. Councillors are expected to read the relevant information before the meeting and come prepared to discuss the items on the agenda.

During the meeting, councillors may ask questions, consider different views, and discuss the information provided. Where a decision is required, councillors vote on the matter and the decision is recorded in the minutes.

Some items will be for information or discussion rather than a decision.

How decisions are made

The council has a formal structure for making decisions. Full Council makes decisions on matters affecting the council as a whole, while committees are given responsibility for particular areas of work. Committees can make decisions within the responsibilities given to them by Full Council, as set out in their Terms of Reference.

The important thing for a prospective councillor to remember is that you do not need to understand all of this before you join. New councillors will receive further information and guidance about meetings, procedures, responsibilities, and the areas of council work they become involved in.

> **IN PRACTICE**
>
> Before a meeting, you will normally receive an agenda and supporting papers. A councillor's role is to read the relevant information, ask questions where you need clarification, listen to other views, and take part in the discussion and decision-making.

3. BECOMING A COUNCILLOR

What is a councillor?

A parish councillor is an elected or co-opted holder of office. These terms are explained further on page 13. Councillors are neither employees of the parish council, nor volunteers in the usual sense. They hold a public role and take on responsibilities as part of the council's democratic decision making process.

As a councillor, you are not employed by the council. You do not have an employment contract, a salary, or the employment rights that come with being a member of staff. You are not expected to carry out the council's day-to-day work or provide its services yourself. Those responsibilities sit with the council's officers and staff.

Equally, although councillors give their time and commitment to serving the community, the role is not simply voluntary work. Councillors hold public office and are expected to act in the public interest, follow the council's Code of Conduct, declare relevant interests, attend meetings, and take part in decisions responsibly.

What does being a councillor involve?

Being a parish councillor means taking an active role in the work of the parish council, and representing the interests of the whole parish.

Councillors are expected to:

- Take an interest in the needs and priorities of the local community
- Attend meetings and read information provided in advance
- Contribute to discussions and decisions
- Listen to different views and consider information objectively
- Work constructively with other councillors, officers, and community organisations
- Take an interest in council projects, services, and facilities
- Support council and community events where appropriate
- Uphold the standards and responsibilities that come with public office

You will not be expected to know everything when you join. There will be a learning curve, and you will have opportunities to understand more about the council, its responsibilities, and your role as you become involved.

Being a councillor is a collective role. Individual councillors do not make decisions on behalf of the council by themselves; decisions are made through the council's formal decision-making arrangements.

What being a councillor does - and doesn't - mean

Being a councillor gives you an opportunity to influence the direction of the parish and contribute to decisions about council services, facilities, projects, and priorities.

It does not mean that you are personally responsible for solving every problem raised by a resident, or that you can instruct council staff to take action.

A councillor's role is to represent, contribute, question, listen, and make decisions as part of the council.

KEY POINT

You are elected or appointed to serve the parish as a whole. Your role is to contribute to the council's collective decisions, rather than to act as an individual decision-maker.

For example, a resident may approach you about an issue with a council service. You can listen to their concerns, help them understand how the council can respond, and raise the matter through the appropriate council process. However, you should not promise a particular outcome, or instruct an officer or member of staff to take action yourself.

Similarly, being a councillor means representing the interests of the whole parish, rather than acting only for your own street, neighbourhood, or particular group.

Time commitment

Being a councillor involves regular commitment, although the amount of time required will vary depending on the responsibilities you take on.

At a minimum, you should expect to:

- Attend the meetings relevant to your role
- Read agendas and supporting papers before meetings
- Allow time for preparation and follow-up
- Contribute to council projects and areas of work where you are involved
- Support community and council events

Some councillors may also become involved in working groups, particular projects, or additional meetings. The time commitment can therefore vary from one councillor to another, and from one period to another.

There will be quieter periods and busier periods, particularly when major projects are being considered or important decisions need to be made.

> **IN PRACTICE**
> Being a councillor is not necessarily a large time commitment every week. However, it is a commitment that needs to be taken seriously. The important thing is to make sure you have enough time to attend the meetings you are expected to attend, prepare properly, and contribute to the work of the council.

Councillors and officers - who does what?

Councillors and officers work together, but they have different roles.

Councillors provide democratic leadership and make decisions collectively as a council. They consider information, set priorities, agree policies, and decide how the council should use its resources within its powers and responsibilities.

Officers and staff provide professional advice, manage the council's services and operations, and act upon the council's decisions.

This distinction is important because councillors do not manage individual members of staff or direct day-to-day operations themselves. Officers are responsible for carrying out their duties professionally and advising the council on the matters within their areas of responsibility.

> **GLOSSARY**
> **Professional advice**
> Advice provided by the council's officers based on their professional knowledge, experience, and responsibilities. Councillors are responsible for considering that advice alongside other relevant information when making decisions.

The relationship works best when councillors and officers respect each other's roles: councillors provide direction and make decisions; officers provide advice and implement those decisions.

HOW TO BECOME A COUNCILLOR

There are two ways to join Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council: standing for election, or being co-opted to fill a vacant seat. The route available to you will depend on whether a seat is being contested at an election, or a vacancy is being filled between elections.

> GLOSSARY
>
> **Election**
> The process by which eligible residents vote to choose who will represent them on the parish council. Parish council elections normally take place every four years.
>
> **By-election**
> An election held between the regular four-yearly elections to fill a vacant councillor seat. A by-election must be held if the required number of local electors request one within the specified period after a vacancy is announced.
>
> **Co-option**
> The process by which the parish council appoints a person to fill a vacant councillor seat without a public election, where the rules allow the vacancy to be filled in this way

You do not need previous experience as a councillor. The first step is to understand the eligibility requirements, and the process for the route relevant to you.

Am I eligible?

To become a parish councillor in England, you must be at least 18 years old, meet the relevant citizenship requirements, satisfy at least one of the legal qualification criteria below, and not be disqualified from service.

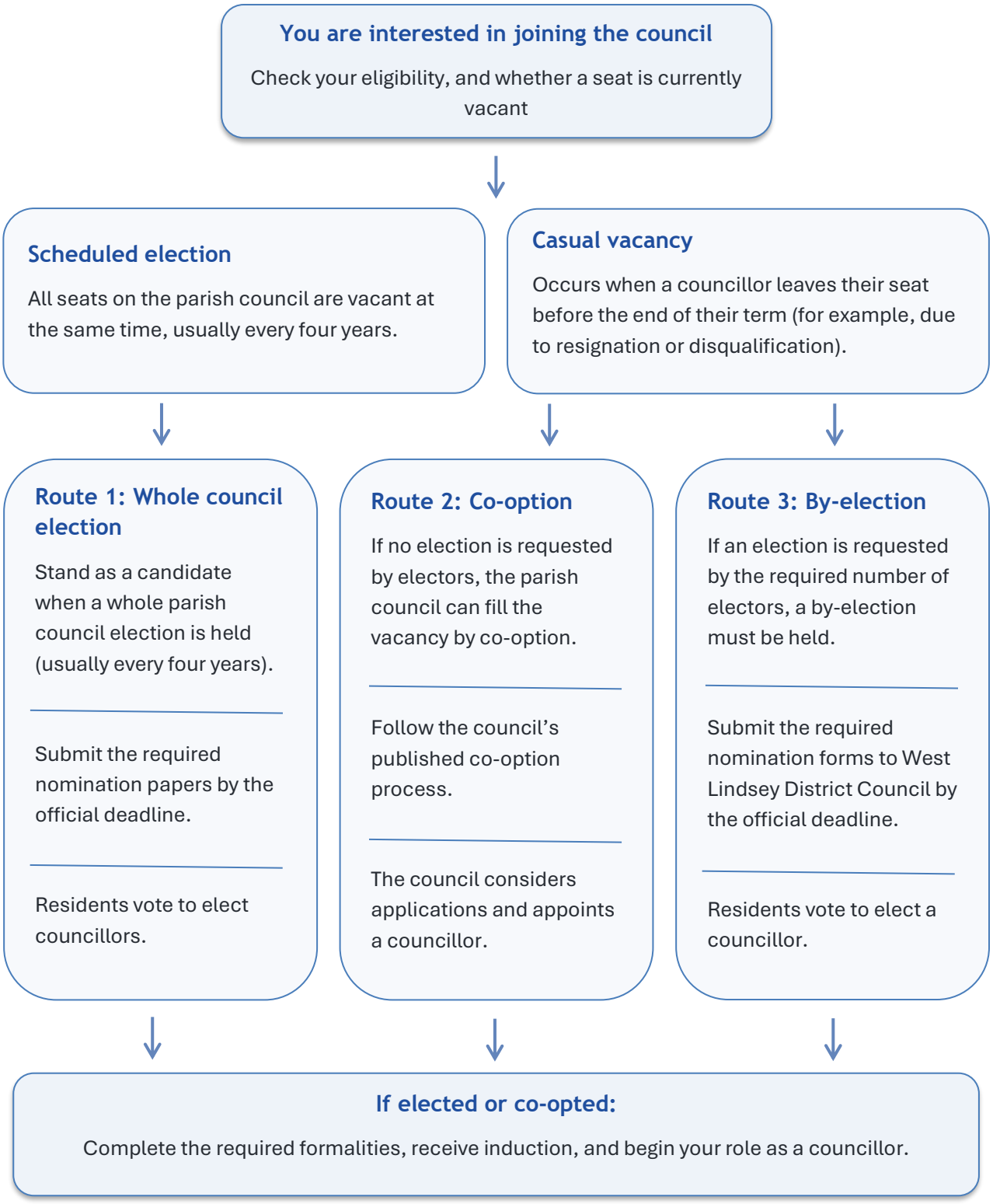
The qualification criteria generally relate to one or more of the following connections with the parish:

- Being registered as a local government elector in the parish;
- Having occupied land or premises in the parish, as owner or tenant, for the required period;
- Having your main or only place of work in the parish for the required period; or
- Having lived in the parish, or within three miles of it, for the required period.

The rules have specific conditions, and some disqualifications may apply. You should read the official guidance before proceeding, particularly if you are unsure whether your qualify.

> IN PRACTICE
>
> You do not necessarily have to live within the parish boundary to qualify. There are several ways to meet the eligibility requirements, but you must satisfy at least one of the legal criteria.

Election or co-option?



The routes are different, but all lead to the same responsibilities and standards once you become a councillor.

Standing for election

Parish council elections are administered through the local electoral process. If you wish to stand, you must complete the required nomination papers and submit to the designated officer, in person, by the published deadline.

If you are considering standing for election, you should:

- Check that you meet the eligibility requirements.
- Read the official candidate guidance and election timetable.
- Obtain and complete the required nomination papers.
- Submit your nomination forms by the deadline and follow the relevant election rules.

Election dates and deadlines are fixed for each election, so you should use the current official guidance rather than relying on dates from the previous election.

Applying for co-option

Co-option is a way of filling a councillor seat without an election. It may be used when a vacancy arises between scheduled elections, subject to the applicable vacancy process.

When a vacancy arises, there is a formal process to determine whether a by-election is required, or whether the seat can be filled by co-option. It is not simply a matter of the council advertising a vacancy and immediately appointing them.

Where co-option is available, the parish council will provide information about the vacancy, how to apply, and any relevant deadlines. Applicants should follow the published guidance and provide the information requested.

The council then considered applications and appoints a candidate in accordance with the relevant process. Submitting an application does not guarantee appointment.

If you are interested in co-option, check the parish council website to find out whether a vacancy is currently available and how to apply.

What happens after election or co-option?

Once elected or co-opted, there are some formal steps to complete before you settle into the role. The council will guide you through these and provide the information you need.

You can expect to:

- **Complete the required formalities**, including signing the declaration of acceptance of office and completing the relevant interests and conduct documentation.
- **Receive an induction pack and attend a welcome meeting**, introducing you to the council, its responsibilities, key policies, procedures, and current work.
- **Learn about your responsibilities**, including the Code of Conduct, declaration of interests, and principles of holding public office.
- **Become involved in the council's work**, including committee membership, and any relevant projects or working groups.
- **Get to know the officers and staff** who support the council, and understand how to work with them appropriately.

KEY POINT

Becoming a councillor is the beginning of a learning process, not a test of how much you already know about local government. You will be given information and guidance to help you understand your responsibilities and contribute effectively.

LINKED DOCUMENTS

- Code of Conduct
- Civility and Respect Pledge
- Committee Structure
- Schedule of Meetings