



Old Woughton Parish Council Co-option Policy

Reviewed and adopted November 2025

In the event of there being a vacancy to serve as a Councillor that is to be filled by co-option, the Parish Council shall adopt the following procedure:

1. The co-option shall be advertised on the public noticeboards and Parish website, with an appropriate deadline, advising that an application form can be obtained from the Parish Clerk or the website.
2. The Clerk will advise each applicant if he/she is legally qualified to serve as a Councillor (Requirements are as for elections run by Milton Keynes City Council).
3. Applicants must demonstrate an interest in a broad range of the issues that come before the Parish Council.
4. From time to time, the Council may seek particular skills or expertise. In such cases, the decision to restrict applicants to those with that skill or expertise shall be made when advertising for candidates for co-option, and the skill or expertise required shall be stated in the invitation. The Parish shall then not normally fill the last vacancy by co-option without meeting the skill/expertise needed.
5. Two Councillors will conduct a preliminary interview with the candidate(s).
6. The names of eligible applicant(s) will be included on the agenda for the meeting at which the co-option will take place.
7. The applicant shall be asked to attend at least two consecutive public meetings and submit information about themselves in writing on the application form, limited to 300 words. The applicant(s) written statements will be included in the papers for the relevant meeting.
8. The applicant(s) shall then be invited to give a verbal presentation to full council that lasts no more than three minutes.
9. Any Councillor arriving at the meeting after the first applicant has started to speak may not take part in any voting.
10. Councillors will then be given the opportunity to ask questions of the applicant(s). The total question and answer time will be limited to a maximum of ten minutes.
11. The Council will then vote by show of hands on whether it considers that each applicant has met the criteria set for that round of co-options. If one or more candidates are deemed to have failed, then the Council shall agree a statement as to the criteria that has not been met.

12. If no more applicants have met the criteria than the number of vacancies in that ward of the Parish, then the candidates shall be co-opted. If more candidates than places have met the criteria, then the Councillors shall vote on which candidate to accept. The vote shall be by a secret ballot.
13. Councillors should write the name of their preferred applicant or write the word “abstain” on the ballot paper and hand it back to the Clerk.
14. If an applicant has received more than 50% of the vote, he/she is duly co-opted.
15. In the event of a tie between only 2 applicants, the Chair will have the casting vote.
16. If as a result, vacancies still exist, then the Council shall consider advertising the vacancies at a future date. Candidates who failed the criteria shall be entitled to reapply and to submit evidence as to how they now meet the criteria.

Review History

November 2025

New policy adopted