



2026

WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

CO-OPTION POLICY



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Version History

Version	Reviewed at	Approved at
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 10 th May 2017	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 10 th May 2017
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 9 th May 2018	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 9 th May 2018
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 15 th May 2019	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 15 th May 2019
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 5 th May 2021	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 5 th May 2021
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2022	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 11 th May 2022
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 17 th May 2023	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 17 th May 2023
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 8 th May 2024	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 8 th May 2024
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 14 th May 2025	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 14 th May 2025
Version 1.00	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 13 th May 2026	Annual Meeting of Wootton Parish Council on 13 th May 2026

To be reviewed at the next Annual Council Meeting.

CO-OPTION POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the procedures for the co-option of Councillors.

The Local Government Act 1972, s86 states a casual vacancy occurs under the following circumstances:

- Councillor fails to make their Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the proper time;
- Councillor resigns;
- Councillor dies;
- Councillor becomes disqualified;
- Councillor fails for six months to attend meetings of a council committee or sub-committee or to attend as a representative of the Council a meeting of an outside body.

Wootton Parish Council must notify Bedford Borough Council's Monitoring Officer of the casual vacancy and advertise the vacancy on parish council noticeboards, website and Facebook page. The public notice (produced by Bedford Borough Council) specifies all relevant dates. Purpose of advertising gives local government electors for the parish of Wootton opportunity to request a by-election – if ten give notice on or before specified dates that they wish a by-election to be held to fill the vacancy, then a by-election will be held.

2. Co-option to Wootton Parish Council

If ten local government electors do not request a by-election, Wootton Parish Council is able to co-opt, unless the casual vacancy occurs within a six-month period ahead of a general election in which case Wootton Parish Council may decide not to co-opt.

3. Eligibility

Wootton Parish Council is able to consider any person to fill a vacancy provided that:

- He/she is over 18 years of age on the day of nomination;
- Is a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any other member state of the European Union.

And at least one of the following criteria is met:

- Is registered to vote in Wootton, from the day of nomination onwards;
- Has lived in Wootton (or within three miles of its boundary) for the whole of the previous 12 months;
- Has had their main or only place of work in Wootton for the whole of the previous 12 months;
- Has occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in Wootton for the whole of the previous 12 months.

A person is disqualified from being a Parish Councillor if at the time of nomination and on the day of the by-election:

- They have served a prison sentence (including suspended sentences) of three months or more, without the option of a fine, within the last five years;
- Has been subject to a bankruptcy restriction order or interim order;

- Is an employee of Wootton Parish Council;
- Is disqualified under legislation.

(Further information can be obtained as follows:

https://wootton-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/simple-file-list/Documents/PoliciesProcedures/Councillor/Councillor_eligibility.pdf

4. Applications

Applicants for co-option will be asked to submit information about themselves by completing a short application form (Appendix 1) and submitting a personal statement (no more than 300 words).

Completed application forms and personal statements will be circulated to all Members for consideration at a Full Council meeting of Wootton Parish Council. Consideration of applications will be dealt with in **public session**.

5. Voting Process

The voting process will be preceded with a proposal to consider the candidate(s) for co-option and if seconded, the voting process will commence. If no proposal is made, or a proposal is made but not seconded, the co-option process for that candidate(s) proceeds no further.

Voting will be according to the statutory requirement in that each successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. For example, if there are 14 members voting, the successful candidate must receive eight votes, even with three or more candidates. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and neither receives an absolute majority vote, steps must be taken to 'strike off' the candidate with the least number of votes. The remaining candidates are then subject to the voting process again. In the case of a tie between the bottom candidates, the Chairman has a casting vote to eliminate one of those candidates. In the event of a tie between the remaining two candidates, the Chairman has a casting vote to select the winning candidate.

Example one: Three candidates (A, B & C) standing for one position with 14 members at the meeting. Candidate A gets six votes; candidate B gets five votes and candidate C receives three votes. Candidate C is eliminated and a subsequent vote takes place between candidates A & B.

Example two: Three candidates (A, B & C) standing for one position with 14 members at the meeting. Candidate A gets six votes; candidate B gets four votes and candidate C receives four votes. The chairman (with a casting vote) determines which of candidate B or C is eliminated and a subsequent vote takes place between the remaining candidates.

This process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.

In each round voting will be by named paper ballot, in the event a recorded vote is requested¹.

¹ Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, p13.

APPLICATION FOR CO-OPTION TO WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone Number(s) _____

Email _____

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- Is an employee of Wootton Parish Council;
- Is disqualified under legislation.

I confirm that I am eligible to apply for the vacancy of Wootton Parish Councillor in accordance with the above provisions:

I have read further information regarding eligibility on Wootton Parish Council's website:

<https://wootton-pc.gov.uk/parish-council/policies-and-procedures/>

Signed:

Date:.....