STILTON PARISH COUNCIL

Stilton Pavilion, High Street, Stilton PE7 3RA
Telephone: 01733 639106 - Email: clerk@stiltonparishcouncil.gov.uk

Co-option Policy

Introduction

Stilton Parish Council will follow a process which is fair, open and transparent and in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. The Co-option of a Parish Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no poll (by-election) has been called.

On receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Services Office at Huntingdon District Council that the casual vacancy can be filled by means of Co-option, the Parish Clerk will:

a) Advise the Council that the Co-option process has been instigated.
b) Advertise the vacancy for 4 weeks on the Parish Council notice boards and Parish Council website, giving a closing date for receipt of applications.

Process

1. Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria in accordance with the LGA1972, s.79. Candidates must complete the signed undertaking confirming that they meet the eligibility requirements. This will form part of the application process and failure to complete this may render the co-option application invalid.

2. Applications will usually be made by the candidate completing the co-option form (available from the Parish Council, at www.stiltonparishcouncil.gov.uk or in Appendix A. The Council will have due consideration to the Equality Act 2010 and by discretion, may allow applications to be completed by third parties and/or submitted by alternative means.

3. Candidates will be provided with further details of Stilton Parish Council and the expectations of being a Parish Councillor. Completed applications must be submitted to the Parish Clerk no later than the advertised closing date. Following the closing date for applications, all eligible candidates will be invited to attend the Full Council meeting at which co-options will be considered. If candidate(s) are unable to attend this meeting, their application will still be considered in their absence. No alternative date or time for a meeting will be arranged.

4. All Members will receive copies of the candidate submissions that will be treated as strictly confidential papers because they may contain personal information relating to the candidate.

5. The co-option process will be determined in a public session of the Council and a specific agenda item will be set aside for applicants to make a brief, verbal presentation to Council in support of their application. A maximum of three minutes will be allowed per candidate.

6. Members may ask questions of the candidates following their presentations. N.B. the same question(s) will be put to each candidate

7. Following the conclusion of all presentations, the Public and Press will be excluded from the meeting whilst the members discuss the application(s) IF there are multiple applications for a position or for data protection needs. If not, the discussion and determination will be in public for transparency.

8. The Council can choose not to co-opt from the available applicant(s) and re-advertise the vacant position.

9. If the decision is deferred, or the Council decides to re-advertise, the Chairman will reconvene the meeting and move on to the next agenda item.

10. If the Council decides not to defer or re-advertise, the Chairman will ask Members to consider all candidates and voting will take place.

11. If there is more than one candidate Members present at the meeting will proceed to the vote in accordance with proportional voting. Voting will be by individual candidate in alphabetical order and Members will have one vote each.

If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and not one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again. This process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained. In accordance with Standing Orders, the Chair may exercise his/her right to use a casting vote

12. A successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote by those Councillors present . Following voting the Chairman will reconvene the meeting and it will be reopened to the Press and Public.

13. Successfully co-opted candidates become Councillors in their own right, with immediate effect (subject to the signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office), and are no different to any other member

14. The co-opted members will be asked to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and to agree to be bound by the Council's adopted Code of Conduct within 14 days of co- option. They may then take their seat at Council and will be appointed to working groups or committees and/or as a representative to local organisations.

15. Co-opted members are required to complete a Register of Interests Form within 28 days. This is held by Huntingdonshire District Council.

16. Any application can be considered in the candidate(s) absence, but if successful, members would need to agree for him/her to sign the Declaration of Office either before or at the next meeting

17. As soon as practicable following their co-option, any newly co-opted members will be invited to attend an Induction and Training session with the Parish Clerk and/or other officers. This should take place where possible before the next Full Council meeting.

18. Co-opted members are required to undertake formal Councillor training within 6 months of joining the Council.

Policy Review

Reviewed: 12 May 2026 (agenda item PC108/26)
Next review date: May 2027

APPENDIX A

Stilton Parish Council Co-option Application Form

Name:
Address:
Tel/Mobile numbers:
Email address:

PLEASE ANSWER THE YES/NO QUESTIONS CAREFULLY AS THEY SET OUT THE LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR BEING A PARISH COUNCILLOR

QUALIFICATIONS

Are you a British citizen, a Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of a European Union country? Yes/No

Are you 18 or over? Yes/No

(You only need one of the following four qualifications but please say Yes to all that apply)

Are you on the electoral register for the parish? Yes/No

Have you lived either in the parish, or within three miles of its boundary, for at least a year? Yes/No

Have you been the owner or tenant of land in the parish for at least a year? Yes/No

Have you had your only or main place of work in the parish for at least a year? Yes/No

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order? Yes/No

Have you within the last five years been convicted of an offence in the UK, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, which resulted in a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of three months or more without the option of a fine? Yes/No

Are you disqualified by order of a court from being a member of a Local Authority? Yes/No

BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE PARISH COUNCIL …

Why would you like to become a Parish Councillor?

Stilton Parish Council meetings are usually held in the evenings.

(Unfortunately, under present legislation the Parish Council is not permitted to contribute to the cost of councillors' childcare or care of dependents.)

Are there any factors, other than exceptional circumstances, that might prevent you from regularly attending Council and possibly Committee Meetings?

Are there any local issues that you are particularly interested in?

Are there any skills gathered through work or life experience you would bring to the Parish Council?

What are your hobbies/interests?

Lastly, are there any questions you would like to ask us?

As a councillor representing your community, you will help keep it a great place to live and work. You will be supported in your role and the Parish Council will provide training opportunities. You should be comfortable working electronically as a council email will be provided and meetings may be held remotely. A positive outlook, can-do attitude and willingness to be part of a team would be great too!

Signed ..... Date ...../...../20.....

Please return to :

Ms Julianne Lawrence, Parish Clerk, Stilton Pavilion, High Street, Stilton PE7 3RA
Email: clerk@stiltonparishcouncil.gov.uk or call 01733 639106 for further information