



PARISH
COUNCIL

Co-Option Policy

Document Configuration Management & Control

Version	Description	Originated	Reviewed	Approved
Version 1	Annual Review	03/11/2023	06/11/2023	06/11/2023
			13/05/2024	13/05/2024
			12/05/2025	12/05/2025

Casual Vacancy

A casual vacancy occurs during the four-year term when:

- A councillor fails to make their declaration of acceptance of office at the proper time;
- A councillor resigns;
- A councillor dies;
- A councillor becomes disqualified; or
- A councillor fails 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 for a period of six consecutive months, unless the failure to do so was due to some reason approved by HPC before the expiry of this period.

Ordinary Vacancy

An ordinary vacancy occurs when there are insufficient candidates to fill all of the seats on Hilton Parish Council (HPC) at the ordinary elections every four years. HPC can fill those vacancies by co-option without issuing a notice of vacancy.

Notice of Vacancy

HPC must notify Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) as and when a casual vacancy arises and then proceed to advertise the vacancy to give electors the opportunity to request an election. An election will be called if ten or more electors write to HDC requesting this. If more than one candidate is then nominated a by-election will take place. If ten electors do not request a ballot within fourteen clear days of the vacancy notice being posted, HPC is able to fill the vacancy by co-option.

Co-option Process

On receipt of written notification from HDC that a casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option, the Clerk will place a notice announcing that the vacancy(ies) can be filled by co-option and invite applications. This notice will be published in the following locations:

- Noticeboards
- Website
- Facebook page
- The Journal, if this suits the publishing schedule

Application Form

The Clerk will provide the applicants with the application form and answer any questions. Candidates must be able to comply with the qualification criteria and must not be disqualified from holding office.

Qualification Criteria:

- be at least 18 years old
- be a British citizen, an eligible Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of any member state of the European Union,
- meet at least one of the following four qualifications:
 - a) You are, and will continue to be, registered as a local government elector for the Hilton in which you wish to stand from the day of your co-option onwards.

- b) You have occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in Hilton during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your co-option.
- c) Your main or only place of work during the 12 months prior to the day of your co-option has been in Hilton.
- d) You have lived in Hilton area or within three miles of it during the whole of the 12 months before the day of your co-option.

Disqualification Criteria:

- holding a paid office under HPC;
- bankruptcy;
- having been sentenced to a term of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) of not less than three months without the option of a fine during the five years preceding the co-option;
- being disqualified under any enactment relating to corrupt or illegal practices.

Meeting

Co-option will be a separate item on the agenda at a full Council meeting. Applicants will be invited to the meeting by the Clerk but are not required to be present.

Circulated to Councillors

Completed application forms will be circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting but will not be included in the published documents as they are properly regarded as private.

Vote by Secret Ballot

Each candidate must have a proposer and a seconder. The vote will be conducted by secret ballot on named slips of paper. The Clerk will count the votes and declare the decision of the Council. The Council is under no obligation to accept any candidate, even if they are the only candidate.

The successful candidate must secure an absolute majority of the votes. This means that in the case of more than two candidates, the successful candidate must have more votes than the other candidates added together.

Charles Arnold-Baker states:

Where more than two persons have been nominated for a position to be filled by the Council and none of those persons has received an absolute majority of votes in their favour, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken. This process shall continue until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. A tie in votes may be settled by the casting vote exercisable by the chairman of the meeting.

Appointment

The successful candidate(s) may join the meeting once their declaration of acceptance of office is signed. The Clerk will advise the candidates of this before the meeting.

Induction

After the meeting, the Clerk will carry out the induction process including the completion of the declaration of interests, which must be submitted to HDC within 28 days of co-option. The Clerk will inform the unsuccessful candidates of the outcome.

Hilton Parish Council

Application for Co-Option



Candidate's Details:

Name in Full:	
Address:	
Home Telephone Number:	
Mobile Telephone Number:	
Email Address:	

Eligibility for Office as a Parish Councillor *(Please circle the answer):*

Are you over 18 years of age?	Yes	No
Are you a British, Commonwealth or Irish Citizen, or a citizen of another Member State of the European Union?	Yes	No
Can you confirm that you: a) will be a local government elector for the area of the authority on the day of co-option and thereafter, <i>or</i> b) have during the whole of the 12 months preceding the day of co-option occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the area, <i>or</i> c) have had your principal or only place of work in the area during the whole of the 12 months preceding the day of co-option, <i>or</i> d) have resided in the parish or within 3 miles of it for the whole of the 12 months prior to co-option. Please satisfy one of the above	Yes	No
Do you hold any paid office or employment under Hilton Parish Council	Yes	No
Have you been a person adjudged bankrupt	Yes	No
Have you, within five years before the day of co-option, been convicted of any offence or had passed on you a sentence of imprisonment for a period of not less than 3 months (whether suspended or not) without option of a fine	Yes	No

Background Information (Continue on a separate sheet if required):

Please detail any experience you have that may be relevant to the Parish Council:

Please state why you wish to be a Parish Councillor:

Declaration:

I declare to the best of my knowledge and belief that the information provided as part of my application for the role of Parish Councillor is accurate:

Candidate's Signature:

Date:

Co-option Procedure:

On receipt of an application by the Parish Council, a formal resolution to co-opt will be tabled at the next full Council meeting if there is a vacancy. All applicants will be invited to attend the meeting at which their application will be considered. Once formally co-opted, new members will sign the Declaration of Acceptance and complete their Declaration of Interests, agreeing to abide by the Code of Conduct which applies to everyone serving on Parish Councils.

Please return your application form and any other correspondence to the Clerk to Hilton Parish Council – clerk@hiltonparishcouncil.com