



WRITTLE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Office, The Green, Writtle CM1 3DT

Telephone: 01245 420066

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Email: clerk@writtle-pc.gov.uk

www.writtle-pc.gov.uk

Co-option Policy

Version Number	Date	Author	Notes
1.0	26 November 2019	Lauretta Fox	Approved at PCM meeting on 2/12/19
1.1	28 June 2021	Lauretta Fox	Approved at PCM meeting on 28/6/21
1.2	26 May 2022	L.Fox	Approved at PCM meeting on 06/06/22
1.3	27 June 2023	L Fox	Approved at PCM meeting on 03/07/23.
1.4	29 November 2024	L Fox	Approved at PCM Meeting on 02/12/24
1.5	25 November 2025	L Fox	Approved at PCM Meeting on 01/12/25

Next review date – December 2026

1. Introduction

Parish Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person onto the council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met – i.e. the vacancy has been the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered electors have requested an election by the deadline by the District Returning Officer.

To ensure a fair and transparent process is undertaken, the procedure below will be followed by Writtle Parish Council.

2. Procedure

a) On receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Services of Chelmsford City Council, the casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option. In this instance the Clerk will:

- i) Advertise the vacancy for four weeks on the council notice boards and website, and place an advertisement in Writtle News, if the date of the publication is appropriate.
- ii) Advise the Parish Council that the co-option policy has been instigated by sending an email to all councillors.

b) Applicants are requested to contact the Clerk to express an interest in becoming a Writtle Parish Councillor; the Clerk will arrange a meeting to outline the following:

- i) eligibility criteria

ii) role requirements including Code of Conduct, Acceptance of Office declaration and Declaration of Interest.

The Clerk will also provide the following documentation by email:

i) The Good Councillor Guide

c) The Clerk will advise the prospective councillor to attend some parish council meetings and committee meetings, if the prospective councillor has not already done so.

d) If the prospective councillor is still interested, they will be requested to submit a co-option application form (appendix 1).

e) When the applications have been received, the Parish Clerk will consider the application forms, check that the individuals meet the qualification requirements, and confirm that, if successful, they would be willing to accept the Code of Conduct and other obligations of a parish councillor.

f) Applications will be forwarded, under Private and Confidential along with the agenda for the next parish council meeting; the vote for co-option will be detailed on the agenda.

g) Prospective candidates will be expected to make every effort to attend the meeting at which the parish council proposes to appoint the co-opted member

h) Discussion about the applications will take place in council session without intervention from the candidates or public.

i) A vote will then be taken by signed ballot and all candidates will be considered.

j) Voting will be according to the statutory requirements in that a successful candidate must receive an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one, at the first count, receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, the applicant with the least number of votes will be taken off the list. The remainder will be put to the vote again, this process, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained. In the case of an equality of votes the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

k) The Chairman will declare the successful candidate duly elected, if applicable. The council reserves the right not to make a co-option.

l) Candidates will be provided with a full agenda of the meeting at which they are to be considered for appointment. The successful candidate/s will be appointed and sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office and can then act as a councillor in line with normal election procedures.

11. The Register of Interest form will be completed within 28 days and a copy passed on to the Monitoring Officer at Chelmsford City Council. The newly appointed councillor will be provided with an induction pack to include the Code of Conduct, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations of the council.



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Co-option Application Form

Name: _____

Address for Correspondence: _____

Tel: _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Are you over 18? Yes / No

Please detail any experience and skills you have that may be relevant to Writtle Parish Council. (If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet of paper)

Is there any other information you would like to disclose regarding your application? (If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet of paper)

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Please return your completed form, together with your eligibility form to: The Parish Clerk,
Writtle Parish Council, Parish Office, The Green, Writtle, CM1 3DT

Co-option Eligibility Form

1. In order to be eligible for co-option as a Parish Councillor you must be a British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or European Union. You must be 18 years of age or over on the "relevant date", that being the day on which you are nominated. You must additionally be able to agree with the following qualifications set out below:

- a. I am registered as a local government elector for the parish OR
- b. I have, during the whole twelve months preceding the date of my co-option, occupied as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the parish OR
- c. My principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been within the parish OR
- d. I have, during the whole twelve months resided in the parish, or within three miles of it

Please circle all those criteria that apply to you

2. Please note that under Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972, a person is disqualified from being elected as Local Councillor or being a member of a Local Council if he/she:

- a. Holds any paid office or employment of the local council (other than the office of Chairman) or of a joint committee on which the Council is represented OR
- b. Is a person who has been adjudged bankrupt or has made a composition or arrangement with his/her creditors (but see below) OR
- c. Has within five years before the day of election, or since his/her election, been convicted in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man of any offence and has been sentenced to imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for not less than three months without the option of fine OR
- d. Is otherwise disqualified under Part III of the Representation of People Act 1983 for corrupt or illegal practices.

This disqualification for bankruptcy ceases in the following circumstances:

- a. If the bankruptcy is annulled on the grounds that either the period ought not to have been adjudged bankrupt or that his/her debts have been fully discharged OR
- b. If the person is discharged with a certificate that the bankruptcy was caused by misfortune without misconduct on his/her part OR
- c. If the person is discharged without such a certificate

In a and b above, the disqualification ceases on the date of the annulment and discharge respectively. In c above, it ceases on the expiry of five years from the date of discharge.

I (insert name) _____ hereby
confirm, that I am eligible to apply for the vacancy of Parish Councillor and that this
information given on this form is a true and accurate record.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____