

Co-Option Policy
Adopted 12th May 2025
Review date May 2027

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the procedure for co-opting a councillor to fill a casual vacancy on Haddenham Parish Council, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972.

The council aims to ensure a fair, transparent, and democratic process in appointing new members through co-option.

2. Circumstances for Co-Option

Co-option will occur when:

- 2.1.** A casual vacancy arises, and an election is not called following the statutory public notice period.
- 2.2.** The number of candidates at an election is less than the number of available seats.

3. Eligibility

To be eligible for co-option, a candidate must:

- 3.1.** Be at least 18 years old.
- 3.2.** Be a British citizen, a Commonwealth citizen, or a citizen of a European Union member state.

Meet at least one of the following criteria:

- 3.3.** Be registered as a local government elector in the parish.
- 3.4.** Have occupied land or premises in the parish for at least 12 months.
- 3.5.** Have their principal place of work in the parish.
- 3.6.** Have lived within the parish or within 3 miles of its boundary for at least 12 months

A person is disqualified from being co-opted if they:

- 3.7.** Hold a paid office or employment under the parish council.
- 3.8.** Have been declared bankrupt.
- 3.9.** Have been convicted of an offence leading to a prison sentence of three months or more within the last five years.

4. Application Process

- 4.1.** The council will invite eligible candidates to submit a written application outlining their interest in the role, relevant experience, and how they can contribute to the council.
- 4.2.** Applications will be reviewed by the council, and candidates may be invited to attend a council meeting to introduce themselves and answer any questions.

5. Selection Process

- 5.1.** If there is only one candidate for co-option, the council may resolve to co-opt them if they meet eligibility criteria.
- 5.2.** If there are multiple candidates, the council will conduct a vote by show of hands. A candidate must receive an absolute majority (more than 50% of votes) to be co-opted.
- 5.3.** If no candidate receives an absolute majority, the candidate with the lowest votes will be eliminated, and another round of voting will take place. This process will continue until a candidate is selected.
- 5.4.** In the event of a tie, the Chair of the meeting will have the casting vote.
- 5.5.** If there are multiple vacancies and the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies each vacancy will be filled in turn by a voting process as in 5.2 to 5.4 until all the vacancies are filled, with the newly co-opted candidate being excluded from the next round of voting.

6. Appointment & Induction

- 6.1.** The successful candidate will sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office before acting as a councillor.
- 6.2.** New Members will be provided with council documents, policies, and relevant training to support their role.

7. Review & Adoption

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains up to date and in line with legal requirements.