



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL: CO-OPTION POLICY

This procedure is based on NALC Legal Briefing L15-08 – Good practice for selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils.

Parish Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to 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 fewer than 10 registered electors have requested an election by a deadline date specified by the Returning Officer.

Although seeking ‘expressions of interest’ is not a legal requirement, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) recommends that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more potential candidates.

Whenever the need for co-option arises, Flitwick Town Council will:

Consider advertising the vacancy to seek and encourage ‘expressions of interest’ by a specified date from anyone in the Parish who is eligible to stand as a Parish Councillor. All potential candidates will be requested to put their request for consideration in writing with the following additional information:

1. The reason for wishing to be a Councillor.
2. Previous Community/Council work.
3. Other skills they can bring to the Council. Please note it is a condition of a Councillor that a means of contact by telephone and/or email will be public information.

The Clerk will confirm that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and s80.

The Leader and Deputy Leader will:

1. Offer the opportunity for candidates to be interviewed
2. Determine the acceptability of each candidate for co-option, utilising the ‘person specification’ criteria as set out and any personal statements requested from and provided by candidates.
3. Recommend to the Town Council any candidates who are deemed suitable for co-option.

At the next available Town Council meeting, an absolute majority vote is required for each candidate from all members present and entitled to vote (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 39).

The applicant with the least number of votes casted will be deleted and the vote taken again and again etc. until the number of candidates equals the number of vacancies.

The successful candidate's co-option is formally ratified at the full Council meeting.

The Town Clerk will notify Electoral Services of the new Councillor appointment, initiate 'acceptance of office' paperwork and 'registration of interests'.

If no one accepts the vacant post(s), the whole process is to be repeated when new individuals expressing interest are identified or until the next election.

COMPETENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Personal Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound Knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community. • Forward Thinking. • Ability to listen constructively. • A good team player. • Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects. • Solid interest in local matters. • Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community. • Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see other views and accept majority decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council. • Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body. • Experience of working with voluntary and local community interest groups. • Basic Knowledge of legal issues relating to Town and Parish Councils or Local Authorities. • Experience of public speaking.
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly. • Ability and willingness to work with Councils partners, voluntary groups, other Parish Councils, principle authority and charities. • Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and any other relevant training. 	
Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council and its committees. • Attend meetings of the local authority and any other bodies at any time. • To attend events in the evening and at weekends. 	

