

**SWALLOWFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**



**COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION**

*Adopted at the  
Parish Council Meeting held on  
8<sup>th</sup> April 2025*

REVISION HISTORY

Revisions

Adopted	Significant Amendments
April 2025	First adopted

**CONTENTS**

<b>PARISH COUNCILLOR CASUAL VACANCY TIMELINE .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Vacancy arises .....	4
Co-option process starts.....	4
Co-option Meeting .....	4
The Vote.....	4
Completing the Co-option .....	5
Co-option unsuccessful .....	5
<b>Appendix A .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Application Form .....	6
<b>Appendix B .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Co-opted Councillor Person Specification.....	11
<b>Appendix C .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Candidate Process .....	13

## PARISH COUNCILLOR CASUAL VACANCY TIMELINE

### Vacancy arises

- 1) Wokingham Borough Council, Electoral Services (WBC) are informed
- 2) Vacancy is advertised giving electors the opportunity to request an election (10 days)
- 3) Confirmation from WBC that no election has been called

### Co-option process starts

- 4) Advertise the vacancy, prospective candidates given 3 weeks to apply
- 5) Send application pack to any interested parties
  - a. Good Councillor Guide
  - b. Application Form (Appendix A)
  - c. Person Specification (Appendix B)
  - d. Co-option process (Appendix C)
- 6) Candidates will be asked to return the application form.
- 7) At the next suitable Parish Council Meeting there will be an agenda item "To receive written applications for the office of Parish Councillor and to co-opt a candidate to fill the existing vacancy".
- 8) Eligible candidates will be invited to attend the co-option meeting.
- 9) Copies of the eligible candidates' applications will be circulated to all parish councillors by the Clerk at least 3 clear days prior to the meeting of the full Parish Council, when the co-option will be considered.

### Co-option Meeting

- 10) Candidates will be given three minutes maximum to introduce themselves give information on their background and experience and explain why they wish to become a member of the Parish Council. The process will be carried out in the public session and there will be no private discussions between members prior to a vote being taken.
- 11) As soon as all candidates have finished giving their submissions, the Parish Council will proceed to a vote with each candidate being proposed and seconded by the councillors in attendance (as defined in the Standing Orders) and a vote by a show of hands (LGA 1972 Sch. 12. Para 13). In the case of multiple candidates standing, each councillor can only vote for one candidate in each round of the process.
- 12) A recorded vote may be requested under Standing Order 6.2 so as to show whether each councillor present and voting gave his/her vote for or against or abstained.

### The Vote

- 13) In order for a candidate to be co-opted to the Parish Council, it will be necessary for them to obtain an absolute majority of votes cast (50% + 1 of the votes available at the meeting). If there are more than two candidates and there is no candidate with an overall majority in the first round of voting the candidate with the least number of votes will drop out of the process. As stated in the Standing Orders (3 r) in the case of an equity of votes the Chair may exercise a casting vote.
- 14) Further rounds of voting will then take place with the process repeated until a candidate has an absolute majority.

#### Completing the Co-option

- 15) If present, a candidate who is co-opted will sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, including an undertaking to abide by the Parish Council's Code of Conduct, and may take office thereafter. If not present, a co-opted candidate will sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office either before or at the next meeting of the Parish Council.
- 16) The Clerk will notify Wokingham Borough Council Electoral Services of the co-option of the new parish councillor.
- 17) The co-opted parish councillor will complete a Declaration of Members Interests Form which the Clerk will lodge with the Wokingham Borough Council Electoral Services within 28 days of the co-option.

#### Co-option unsuccessful

- 18) If insufficient candidates are co-opted, the process should continue, whereby the vacancies are again advertised.

**Appendix A**

Application Form

<b>Full Name and Title</b>	
<b>Home Address</b> Including Postcode	
<b>Home Telephone</b>	
<b>Mobile Telephone</b>	
<b>Email Address</b>	

If co-opted then you will be given a council email address which will be published on the council website.

#### LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR BECOMING A COUNCILLOR

(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to both of the questions below)		
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
(To qualify you must be able to answer 'Yes' to at least one of the questions below)		
Are you on the electoral register for Swallowfield Parish	Yes	No
Have you lived either in Swallowfield 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**

(You must be able to answer No to all of the questions below to be eligible to serve as a councillor)

Do you hold any paid office or employment of the parish council	Yes	No
Are you the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order?	Yes	No
Are you the subject to the notification requirement of or under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, and the ordinary period allowed for making an appeal or application in respect of the order or notification has passed	Yes	No
Have you been sentenced to a term of imprisonment of three months or more (including a suspended sentence), without the option of a fine, during the five years before polling day and the ordinary period allowed for making an appeal or applications in respect of the conviction has passed	Yes	No
Have you been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 (which covers corrupt or illegal electoral practices)	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
Have you been convicted of an intimidatory criminal offence motivated by hostility towards a candidate, future candidate or campaigner or holder of a relevant elective office	Yes	No
Are you disqualified by order of a court from being a member of a local authority?	Yes	No

Please briefly outline why you are interested in being a parish councillor:

Please outline the skills, knowledge and experience you could bring to the council:

Please outline if any personal or work commitments might prevent you from fulfilling the role of councillor:

Are there any questions you would like to ask the Council?

**Use of Personal Information**

The Parish Council will use the information provided on this form to assess your eligibility to be a parish councillor.

If co-opted you will be asked to complete a Declaration of Interests Form which must be completed and will be published on our website.

Please complete and return this form to: [clerk@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk) or The Clerk, Parish Office, Swallowfield Street, Swallowfield RG7 1QX

**DECLARATION**

I ..... hereby confirm that I am eligible to be co-opted as Parish Councillor for the Parish of Swallowfield; and the information given on this form is a true and accurate record.

Signed..... Date: .....

If co-opted you will be asked to complete a Declaration of Interests Form which must be completed and will be published on our website.

Please complete and return this form to: [clerk@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@swallowfieldpc.gov.uk) or The Clerk, Parish Office, Swallowfield Street, Swallowfield RG7 1QX

## **Appendix B**

Person Specification

COMPETENCY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Personal Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sound knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community</li> <li>• Forward thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can bring a new skill, expertise or key local knowledge to the Council</li> </ul>
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to listen constructively</li> <li>• A good team player</li> <li>• Ability to pick up and run with a variety of projects and a solid interest in local matters</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community</li> <li>• Good interpersonal skills and able to contribute opinions at meetings whilst willing to see other views and accept majority decisions</li> <li>• Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and maintain good working relationships with all members and staff</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other Parish Councils, principle authority, charities)</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to undertake induction training and other relevant training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of working or being a member in a local authority or other public body</li> <li>• Experience of working with voluntary and or local community / interest groups</li> <li>• Basic knowledge of legal issues relating to town and parish Councils or local authorities</li> <li>• Experience of delivering presentations</li> </ul>
Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability and willingness to attend meetings of the Council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) at any time and events in the evening and at weekends.</li> </ul>	

## **Appendix C**

Candidate Process

- 1) Request application pack
  - a. Good Councillor Guide
  - b. Application Form (Appendix A)
  - c. Person Specification (Appendix B)
  - d. Candidate Process (Appendix C)
- 2) Complete application form and return to the Clerk
- 3) Attend the co-option meeting
- 4) Three minute presentation to council. to introduce yourself, give information on their background and experience and explain why you wish to become a member of the Parish Council.
- 5) Vote will take place with each candidate being proposed and seconded by Councillors in attendance
- 6) If successful:
  - a. sign the declaration of acceptance of office and agree to abide by the council's code of conduct
  - b. join the meeting
  - c. complete a Declaration of Interests Form