

Chelmsford Garden Community Council Co-option Policy

The co-option of a Councillor occurs when a casual vacancy has arisen on the Council and no poll (by-election) has been called. In addition, the Council has the power to co-opt members within 35 days of an election if there are less than the number of Councillors permitted to be elected for the Parish (currently 13).

To ensure that a fair and transparent process is undertaken, the procedure below will be followed by Chelmsford Garden Community Council (the Council)

1. Commencing the co-option process

Upon receipt of written confirmation from the Electoral Service of Chelmsford City Council that the casual vacancy can be filled by means of co-option, the Clerk will:

- a. Advertise the vacancy on the council notice boards, website and social media
- b. The advert will include a deadline of no less than 6 weeks after the date of the notice and will include the date of the meeting when the co-option will be considered.
- c. Advise the Council that the co-option policy has been instigated by sending a memorandum to all Councillors.
- d. Speak with any prospective candidates to provide information on the role, responsibilities and conduct required of the office.

In the event of vacancies following the close of nominations for a full Council election, the Clerk shall follow the same procedure and the co-option shall take place at a meeting within 35 days of the election.

2. The application process

Applicants for co-option will be asked to:

- a. Provide information about themselves by way of completing a short application form (A copy of which is attached).
- b. Confirm their eligibility for the position of Parish Councillor within the statutory rules (A copy of which is attached).
- c. Attend a council or committee meetings in advance of the meeting where co-option will take place.
- d. Consider any committee and working party structure and action plans and advise the council at the meeting of areas of interest and which committee/working groups they would wish to be members.
- e. Prior to the meeting where the co-option is to be considered the Clerk shall provide Councillors with a copy of each application form and the information shall be treated confidentially.

3. The meeting for co-option

At the meeting where the co-option is to be considered, each candidate will be asked to speak for up to 5 minutes. At the discretion of the Chair, questions may be

asked of the candidates by Councillors. When all of the candidates have spoken the Chair shall seek proposers and seconders for each candidate (whether or not they have spoken) and the vote will follow.

4. Voting procedure

In order to be co-opted onto the Council the candidate must receive an absolute majority vote of those present and voting even if there is only one candidate or an equal number of candidates for the position available.

In the event that there are more candidates than the number of positions available and none of the candidates has received a 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. Any tie may be settled by the Chair's casting vote.

Voting shall be by show of hands.

5. Canvassing Councillors

Canvassing Councillors or members of committees of sub-committees, directly or indirectly for appointment to or by the Council shall disqualify the candidate from appointment and this shall be made clear in the application process

This Policy and the application form below were adopted by the Chelmsford Garden Community Council on 6th April 2023.

Date of Review: May 2025

Councillor Application form

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Telephone No. Email.....

Are you over 18 yes/no

Please tick in the box below which of the following descriptions applies to you

I am registered on the electoral roll as an elector in the Chelmsford Garden Community Parish	
For at least the past 12 months I have lived within the boundaries of the Chelmsford Garden Community Parish	
For at least the past 12 months I have worked within the Chelmsford Garden Community Parish	
For at least the past 12 months I have lived within 4.8 Kilometres of the boundaries of the Chelmsford Garden Community Parish	

What experience can you bring to the Chelmsford Garden Community Council? If necessary continue of a separate sheet of paper

How would you like to get involved with the Council? If necessary continue on a separate sheet of paper

Are there any specific projects which are of interest to you?

Any other information?

Please confirm whether you are or have ever been bankrupt - yes/no

If yes please provide more information

Do you currently hold a paid office or employment for this Parish Council?
Yes/No

Have you within the last 5 years been convicted of an offence the punishment for which was a term of imprisonment (including a suspended sentence) in excess of 3 months?

Yes/No

Do you have any convictions under the Part III of the Representation of the People Act 1983?

Yes/No

Are you a person who is currently subject to notification requirements set out in part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 or has such an order been made against you as from 28th June 2022?

Yes/No

Please note that the canvassing of Councillors to be co-opted onto the Council shall disqualify the candidate from being co-opted.

I confirm that the details provided in this form are correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed..... Dated