



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET  
PARISH COUNCIL

## **CO-OPTION POLICY**

## **1 BACKGROUND**

Vacancies can arise during the term of office of the Council, whether because there were insufficient candidates at an election to fill the number of seats, or due to retirement or disqualification of a member. The Council has the power to co-opt members to fill such vacancies. If a vacancy occurs less than six months prior to the end of the terms of office, the Council is not obliged to co-opt.

## **2 PROCESS**

- a If insufficient candidates stand at an election to fill all of the seats, or to warrant a contest, the Parish Council is permitted to proceed with the co-option process immediately, subject to checking this with Uttlesford District Council.
- b If a vacancy arises at any other time during the term of office, the Clerk notifies the vacancy to the District Council. The District Council produces paperwork for the advertisement of the vacancy and instructions on how candidates may apply, together with the deadline for receipt of applications.
- c Vacancies will be posted on the Parish Council's noticeboards, website and social media pages with guidance as to how to apply and the deadline date.
- d Applications will be considered at the next Full Council meeting following the deadline date. Applicants will be invited to attend the meeting. Copies of all applications will be sent to all members of the Council prior to the meeting.
- e As part of the Co-Option agenda item, members will be permitted to ask questions of the candidates.
- f Where there are more candidates than vacancies, a ballot will be held. The successful candidate must secure an absolute majority. After round one of voting, if there is no absolute majority, then the person with the least number of votes is removed from the list and further rounds of voting take place until an absolute majority is secured. In the event of a tie, the Chairman shall use his/her casting vote.
- g The successful candidate, having signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office, takes their seat at the meeting.