

Requirements to be elected or co-opted as a member of Charlton Kings Parish Council

Adopted at the Full Council meeting on 31st October 2022
(Minute 138/22/23)

Step 1 – Confirm that you are eligible to be a member of the council.

To become a Parish Councillor, Section 79(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires you to be:

- A qualifying citizen of the Commonwealth or a European Union citizen; **and**
- 18 years of age or over on the day on which you are nominated (and if there is a poll, on the day of the election), or on the day on which you are co-opted.

and, additionally:

- On the day of your election or co-option, and thereafter, you continue to be a local government elector for the area of the Council; **or**
- You have, during the whole of the twelve months preceding that day occupied, as owner or tenant, any land or other premises in that area, **or**
- Your principal or only place of work during that twelve months has been in that area, **or**
- You have, during the whole twelve months, resided in that area or within 3 miles of it.

If you are unclear whether you meet these requirements, please contact the Parish Clerk for advice: telephone 01242 250087 or email clerk@charltonkingsparishcouncil.gov.uk or call in to the Council's office on Church Piece. In the case of an unresolved query, the matter will be referred to the Borough Council's Democratic Services Officer.

Step 2 – Confirm that you are not disqualified to be a member of the council

The criteria set out in Section 80 of the Local Government Act 1972 say you cannot stand if you:

- Hold any paid office or employment to which you have been appointed by the Council or any committee or subcommittee of the Council, or by a paid officer, or by any joint committee on which the Council is represented; **or**
- Are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order under Section
- Have, within five years before the day of election or co-option, or since that day, been convicted of any offence and have passed on you a sentence of imprisonment of at least three months (whether suspended or not) without the option of a fine, **or**
- Have been found guilty of corrupt or illegal practices or were responsible for incurring expenditure and the court orders your disqualification.

If you are unclear about these criteria, please contact the Parish Clerk for advice or read the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) publication: Legal Topic Note LTN 8 – Elections (January 2015).

Step 3 – Make sure you understand what is involved

It is recommended that you read the NALC booklet, 'Being a Good Councillor', which explains more about the role and the responsibilities of councillors – the Parish Clerk can lend you a copy and discuss any questions you may have. It is a good idea to attend at least one Council meeting when considering whether to stand for election or apply to be co-opted or to have a conversation with the Clerk or a Councillor.

Step 4 – Standing for election or applying to be co-opted

By election – Elections to Parish Councils are held every 4 years, which in Cheltenham will be in 2026, 2030, etc. The Borough Council's Returning Officer is responsible for oversight of all Parish Council elections and will provide the papers that are required to be completed in order to stand as a candidate. Charlton Kings Parish Council is allocated 17 Councillors.

By co-option - send a letter of application to the Parish Council

Once a vacancy has been advertised, the Council is expected to fill it as soon as possible. Applications will be considered at the next available full Council meeting. To ensure that your application is included on the agenda, it should be sent to the Clerk at least one week before the meeting (earlier if there are bank holidays intervening).

A covering letter should explain how you are **eligible** (see step 1) and confirm that you are **not disqualified** (see step 2). Your letter should say why you are interested in applying and what you think you can bring to the role of Parish Councillor. For those who have not stood for public election, Charlton Kings Parish Council has adopted a **Person Specification** (below) for the role of Parish Councillor. The first column sets out what is expected of **every** councillor and the second column identifies the range of skills that the Council needs to carry out its business and to which you would be expected to contribute.

Co-option of new Parish Councillors: Person Specification

| Essential for every Councillor | Experience or an interest in any of the following would be beneficial. |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiasm and flexibility in performing the role of Parish Councillor. • Sound knowledge and understanding of local issues and the local community. • Willingness to maintain good working relationships with all councillors and staff. • Recognition that this Council's business is conducted in a non-party-political context. • Availability to contribute positively to the work of standing committees, subcommittees and working groups. • Ability to communicate clearly, both orally and in writing. • Flexibility to get on well with a wide range of people. • Readiness to undertake training and learn new skills. • Availability to attend (as far as possible), meetings of Council and events, whenever they are held i.e. daytime, evenings, weekends. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial control, budgeting, risk management and compliance. • Human resource management. • Dealing with legal issues relating to Town and Parish Councils and Local Authorities. • Procurement and contract management. • Public relations and working with the media. • Working with the private sector. • Working with public bodies or not for profit organisations. • Working with voluntary and local community /interest groups. • Professional or voluntary experience working with young people. |
| <p>The Council will seek to co-opt, and actively facilitate working arrangements for people with a disability as defined in the Equality Act, 2010.</p> | |

Step 5 – Attend the meeting at which your application will be considered

Once your application has been processed and it has been determined that you are eligible to stand as a Parish Councillor, you will be invited to attend the full Parish Council meeting at which your application to be co-opted will be considered. The Parish Clerk will provide you with an agenda for the meeting. Full Council meetings are normally held at 7.00pm, on the last Monday of every month, in the Stanton Hall, Church Piece.

At the meeting, members will have read your letter of application and you will be given the opportunity to speak for a maximum of 5 minutes to introduce yourself and explain the reasons you have given. You may be asked questions about what you have said.

If there are *fewer candidates than vacancies*, a candidate or candidates will be co-opted to the Council unless they fail to meet the eligibility criteria or Council's published Person Specification for Councillors.

If there are *more candidates than vacancies*, the co-option is decided by a ballot of the members. Voting will be according to the statutory requirements, which require a successful candidate to have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. If there are two or more candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, the candidate with the fewest votes will be rejected. The remaining candidates will be put to the vote again and this process will be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained. Councillors will vote by ballot, having first waived the Standing Order that requires a show of hands. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

Step 6 – Joining the Parish Council

On successful co-option, you will be invited to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office in the presence of the Clerk as Proper Officer and, within 28 days of co-option, you are also required to complete a Register of Disclosable Interests. This completes the process for joining the Council.

If you are unsuccessful, you can request that your details be kept on file for up to 6 months should any new vacancies arise.

October 2022