

# Guidance for applying to be a co-opted member of Stotfold Town Council

## Step 1 – Confirm that you are eligible to be a member of the Council

The criteria set out in section 79 of the Local Government Act 1972 say that you have to be:

- a British citizen, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union; and
- 18 years of age or over;

and additionally:

- a local government elector for the council area for which you want to stand; or
- have during the whole of the 12 months preceding that day occupied as owner or tenant any land or other premises in the council area; or
- have during that same period had your principal or only place of work in the council area; or
- during that 12 month period resided in the council area

If you are unclear about your eligibility, please contact the Town Clerk for advice 01462 730064 or email [enquiries@stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@stotfoldtowncouncil.gov.uk)

## 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:

- are subject of a bankruptcy restriction order or interim order.
- have, within the previous five years, been convicted in the United Kingdom of any offence and have had a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of over three months without the option of a fine.
- work for the council you want to become a councillor for (but you can work for other local authorities, including the principal authorities that represent the same area).

## Step 3 – Make sure you understand what is involved

It is recommended that you read the publication '[Good Councillors Guide](#)' which explains more about the role and the responsibilities of councillors (a hard copy can be provided if requested). If you have any questions you are welcome to raise them with the Town Clerk.

## Step 4 – Send a letter of application to the council

Once a casual vacancy has been advertised the council is expected to fill it as soon as practicable. To ensure that your application is included on the agenda it should be sent to the Town Clerk by the application deadline.

Your application should include a supporting letter (suggested content outlined below) and a completed 'Eligibility form' (attached) to confirm your eligibility (see step 1) and confirm that you are not disqualified (see step 2).

Your supporting letter should tell us why you are interested in applying and what you think you can bring to the role of Town Councillor. Some topics that you might like to consider are shown in the table below, but please note that you are not expected to be able to demonstrate all of these competencies.

COMPETENCY	DEMONSTRATED BY:
Relevant knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of local affairs and the local community</li> <li>• Experience or knowledge of local councils</li> </ul>
Experience, Skills, Knowledge and Ability	<p>We welcome people with a wide range of life skills and experience that reflects the local community. We are looking for councillors who can bring enthusiasm and commitment as well as some of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest in local matters</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to represent the Council and their community</li> <li>• Good interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Ability to communicate succinctly and clearly both orally and in writing</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to work closely with other members and to maintain good working relationships with councillors and staff</li> <li>• Good reading and analytical skills</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to work with the Council's partners (e.g. voluntary groups, other Parish Councils, principal authorities, charities)</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to undertake relevant training</li> </ul>
Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability or willingness to attend meetings of the council (or meetings of other local authorities and local bodies) in the evening and events in the evening and at weekends</li> <li>• Flexible and committed to the council</li> <li>• Enthusiastic</li> </ul>

### Step 5 – Attend Town Council meeting

You will be invited to attend a full Town Council meeting at which your application will be considered. The Town Clerk will provide you with an agenda for the meeting.

At the meeting you will be given the opportunity to speak for a maximum of 5 minutes to introduce yourself and explain why you want to join the Council.

If there are more candidates than vacancies the co-option will be decided by a ballot of the members. Voting will be according to the statutory requirements, in that, a successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. If there are more than two candidates for one vacancy and no one of them at the first count receives a majority over the aggregate votes given to the rest, steps must be taken to strike off the candidate with the least number of votes and the remainder must then be put to the vote again; this process must, if necessary, be repeated until an absolute majority is obtained.

As per the Town Council's Standing Orders, voting on co-options for casual vacancies shall be by secret ballot. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chairman of the meeting has a second or casting vote.

### **Step 6 – joining the Town Council**

On successful co-option you will be invited to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office which completes the process for joining the Council. Within 28 days of co-option you are also required to complete a Register of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests which will be provided by the Town Clerk. You will be required to attend an introductory Councillor Induction session with the Town Clerk on the requirements of a Town Councillor and how Stotfold Town Council operates. Further formal training will be provided by Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils (BATPC).