

Co-option Eligibility and Verification Process

1. Purpose

This process sets out how Marbury & District Parish Council will verify the eligibility of individuals seeking appointment to the Council by co-option. It is intended to ensure transparency, legal compliance, and consistency, and may be adopted as a formal Council procedure.

2. Legislative Basis

Eligibility and disqualification requirements for parish councillors are set out in primary legislation and supporting regulations. The Council must be satisfied that any co-opted member meets at least one statutory qualification and is not subject to any disqualification at the time of appointment.

3. Eligibility Criteria (Qualifications)

A person is eligible to be co-opted to Marbury & District Parish Council if, on the date of appointment, they meet **at least one** of the following criteria:

- They are registered as a local government elector for the parish; **or**
- They have occupied, as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the parish during the whole of the previous 12 months; **or**
- Their principal or only place of work during the previous 12 months has been in the parish; **or**
- They have resided in the parish or within three miles of the parish boundary during the whole of the previous 12 months.

For residency-based qualifications, an applicant intending to take up permanent residence within the parish may rely on their residence once this is established at the point of co-option.

4. Disqualification Criteria

A person is disqualified from being a parish councillor if they:

- Are employed by the Parish Council (other than as a sole trader contracted for services);

- Are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order;
- Have, within the previous five years, been convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to a term of imprisonment (including a suspended sentence) of three months or more without the option of a fine;
- Are disqualified under any other enactment relating to local government.

5. Application Requirements

All applicants for co-option must:

1. Complete a Councillor Application Form;
2. Provide a short written statement in support of their application, outlining relevant skills, experience, and reasons for wishing to serve;
3. Confirm which eligibility criterion they rely upon;
4. Sign a declaration confirming that they are not disqualified from holding office.

6. Clerk's Verification Role

The Clerk shall:

- Check that the application form is complete;
- Confirm that at least one eligibility criterion is identified;
- Seek clarification where eligibility is based on residence that is in the process of changing (e.g. an imminent move into the parish);
- Advise the Council if any eligibility or disqualification concerns are identified.

The Clerk does not determine eligibility but supports the Council by ensuring the information provided is sufficient for decision-making.

7. Council Consideration and Decision

- Applications shall be considered at a properly convened Parish Council meeting;
- Applicants may be invited to attend and speak briefly if the Council so decides;
- Eligibility shall be confirmed by resolution of the Council prior to or as part of the co-option decision;
- The decision to co-opt shall be made by a majority vote of councillors present and voting.

8. Post-Appointment Requirements

Following co-option, the successful applicant must:

- Complete and sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office;
- Complete a Register of Members' Interests form within 28 days;
- Undertake any required induction or training identified by the Council.

9. Review and Adoption

This process shall be reviewed periodically and may be amended by resolution of the Parish Council. Adoption of this process shall be recorded in the Council's minutes.