

MELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL

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Please note: New Parish Office opening hours:

Monday: 10.00-1.00, Wednesday: 10.00-1.00, Friday: 10.00-12.00

Alternatively, please call to arrange an appointment.

MELBOURN PARISH COUNCIL – CO-OPTION TO THE COUNCIL F.A.Q

If you are reading this short guide, then the Parish Council thanks you for showing an interest. The purpose of this document is to explain what being a Parish Councillor is all about, and exactly what the process of co-option is and how it works.

Parish Councillors are members of the first tier of local government and as such, are the closest to the community they represent. If you are the type of person who is passionate about the village you live in, wants to see tax-payers money spent responsibly, cares about future development and facilities, and wants to try and make a real difference to the community that your Council represents, then you should consider putting yourself forward.

F.A.Q

Q. What do Parish Councillors do?

A. Councillors have three main components to their work.

1. Decision making – Through meetings and attending committees with other elected or co-opted members, Councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented.

2. Monitoring – Councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services by keeping an eye on how well things are working.

3. Getting involved locally – As local representatives, Councillors have responsibilities towards their constituents and local organisations. These responsibilities and duties often depend on what the Councillor wants to achieve and how much time is available, and may include:

- Going to meetings of local organisations such as tenants' associations.
- Going to meetings of bodies affecting the wider community.
- Taking up issues on behalf of members of the public.

Q. What is Co-option?

A. Co-option is the process whereby the existing Council choose someone to fill an existing vacancy. There were fewer candidates than seats at the recent local elections, so six vacancies currently exist.

Q. When will the Co-option take place?

A. Co-option takes place at Parish Council meetings.

Q. Are there any qualifying criteria?

A. Yes. You must be: Over 18 and a citizen of the Commonwealth, Britain or the EU. Additionally you must meet any **one** of the following criteria:

- Be on the electoral register for Melbourn.
- Have lived either in the Parish of Melbourn, or within three miles of its boundary, for at least a year.
- Have been the owner or tenant of land in the Parish of Melbourn for at least a year.
- Have had your only or main place of work in the Parish of Melbourn for at least a year.

Q. Will I have to attend Parish Council Meetings?

A. Yes. You would be a properly constituted member of local government, and as such are summoned to meetings, not invited to them.

Q. How much of my time would being a Parish Councillor take up?

A. You can put as much time into it as you wish, but at a minimum, you must attend the monthly Parish Council meeting after having read all the relevant reports; approx. 8 hours per month.

Q. When are meetings?

A. The Full Council meets on Monday evenings, as do most of the Committees.

Q. Do I have to join any of the Committees?

A. No, but there are vacancies on most of them and you are welcome to express an interest in joining them.

Q. What Committees are there?

A. Currently we have Planning, Finance & Good Governance and Maintenance Committees?

Q. Do Parish Councillors get paid?

A. No.

Q. How will being a Parish Councillor fit around my work?

A. Meetings are in the evenings. Additionally, your employer is legally obliged to give you time off work to attend to Council duties.

Q. What is the term of office?

A. Usually four years. It can be shorter if you join part way through an election cycle.