

For Maulden Parish Council, Monday 10th November 2025 – with clerk's notes

Ward Cllr Susan Clinch Briefing Note:

Community Governance Review - 2nd Consultation, on Draft Proposals.

Following CBC General Purposes Committee on 23rd October 2025, draft proposals arising from the CBC Cllr and officer working group were put forward to progress to a second stage consultation. This consultation will run from 3rd November 2025 to 26th January 2026.

The full set of papers are available here: [Meetings](#) under item 7 and the meeting can be viewed here: [General Purposes Committee - Thursday 23 October 2025, 6:30pm - Central Bedfordshire Council Webcasting](#)

The full set of proposals for parishes, in alphabetical order are here: [7.2 CGRWG Appendix A v2.pdf](#)

The previous consultation and lead in period allowed parishes to submit ideas for boundary changes, ward changes (within larger town council areas) and changes to numbers of councillors. It was open to the public and these responses were also considered.

The working group reviewed these comments alongside the Local Government guidance on boundary setting, including considering new and future planned development, appropriate elector/councillor ratios, past electoral records and size of precept.

My understanding from the GP meeting is that, in determining councillor numbers, the working group applied principles of

- encouraging contested elections for town and parish councils
- ensuring democratic accountability for use of public funds
- ensuring ratios of electors to councillors were reasonable, dependent on the size of the parish and nature of work expected of councillors

These principles were applied across all parishes, and has led to the draft proposal for Maulden Parish Council as below:

Maulden	Parish Seats	WG Proposal	Current Electors	Ratio of Electors to seats	Forecast Electors	Revised Ratio of Electors to seats	Candidates			
							2023	2019	2015	2011
	12	9	2689	224	2781	309	8	6	13	12
Response from Consultation: Parish Council: No proposal received 5 responses Comments: <i>"The age profile of the PC does not fully reflect the Village community"</i> <i>"We never see a Councillor and the PC never responds to correspondence"</i> <i>"More Councillors might just improve communication"</i> <i>"Maulden PC is uncommunicative and inward looking"</i> <i>"Too many. Less would save money and those remaining should do more than they do already."</i> Feedback received through the public consultation, indicated a preference to retain the current level of representation and to make no other changes. This view has been considered alongside the Working Group's rationale to ensure that any final draft recommendation reflects the aims of the terms of reference as well as the views of the community. Draft Recommendations: 1. That the parish name of Maulden should remain unchanged 2. That number of parish councillors on Maulden Parish Council are reduced from 12 to 9 Reason for recommendations The recommendation to reduce the number of councillors is made in accordance with the terms of reference due to the number of councillors being disproportionate to the electorate or to avoid uncontested elections and the subsequent need to co-opt members to fill the outstanding vacancies.										

If Maulden Parish Council makes no response to the 2nd Stage consultation, this reduction from 12 to 9 councillors will take effect from the 2027 Local Elections.

Next Steps:

Maulden Parish Council should consider at the 10th November meeting whether there is a desire to accept this reduction, continue at the current level of representation, or make an alternative suggestion.

This consideration should include the time demands on councillors – physical meeting time, preparation time for meetings, other time commitments to council and associated community work. Could this be managed with fewer councillors?

It should also include the numbers of councillors present when decisions are made, ability to make meetings quorate, and ensuring council represents all parts of the community.

If Maulden Parish Council does not wish to see a reduction in councillor numbers, this will need to be presented to the consultation as a well-reasoned and evidenced case. Ward Councillors will represent the views of Maulden PC in their response. The case to retain 12 councillors (or alternative number) will also need to be made to residents as they also have a right to respond.

Cllr Susan Clinch

24th October 2025

NOTES FROM MPC CLERK TRACEY BEARTON

As CBC's comment states, the consultation feedback is to keep the current level of representation so CBC's decision to go against this and recommend reducing the number of cllrs, flies in the face of both the village and PC's wishes.

MPC have had 12 cllrs since at least 1979 when the village was significantly smaller so CBC's comment about "ensuring ratios of electors to councillors were reasonable, dependent on the size of the parish and nature of work expected of councillors" shows that 12 cllrs are still needed given the increase in the size of the village and the increasing work expected of cllrs.

MPC have consistently objected to reducing the number of parish councillors and do not want to do so, having 12 means there is a broad range of abilities, ages, skills, and commitment - having 12 people commit to a couple of hours a week on council duty is one thing, trying to get 9 people to commit to more each to cover things is a different kettle of fish!

In addition, surely CBC should be encouraging more people to get involved in local government and their community, rather than cutting back on the number of places available.

Parish cllrs cost residents absolutely nothing, there is no allowance paid and expenses are only covered for anything bought for the parish.

This proposal will actually end up costing residents more because more work will fall onto the clerk which will mean either more hours to be paid for or more staff members to be employed to cover the workload so the precept will have to rise to cover those extra costs.

I don't understand the issue with having an uncontested election, it saves money and there are always co-opted candidates found, with an election every four years to ensure fairness and, when a vacancy occurs mid-term, residents always have the option of calling for an election, which has not happened therefore co-options are allowed.

There were 8 candidates at the 2023 election, a 9th didn't get their papers completed and submitted in time but stood for co-option immediately afterwards, and the full complement of 12 was filled by co-option within a relatively short period.

The comments will need to be taken on board, although there are only five so MPC can't be doing such a bad job.

However, in response to "We never see a councillor and the PC never responds to correspondence", every single item of residents' correspondence is always answered, if only with an explanation that their question or issue is not something the PC can deal with, and I always try to point them in the right direction. And cllrs are visible at least at the regular PC meetings which are fully advertised.

Not sure how MPC can be more communicative when a report from every meeting is in the parish magazine, the minutes are on the website, information is regularly posted on Facebook, cllrs are part of the StreetWatch patrols talking to residents, and public consultations such as the one for The Rec are carried out. I am now posting the Maulden Magazine report to Facebook as well.

The clerk's phone number and email address are on the website, and the email address is regularly posted on Facebook as well as being in the profile, and, as an example, within half an hour of the issue of broken glass in the play area being raised one day a couple of weeks ago, I was there

sweeping it up with a dustpan and brush with Peter attending also, and speaking to the residents who'd reported it.

And re comment about the age profile of the PC, firstly MPC have a younger person up for co-option at the upcoming meeting – and has that person put themselves forward to become a cllr and change that?