



The Clerk to Hilton Parish Council
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Staff & Councillor Training Policy

Staff and Councillor training policy:

This Staff and Councillor Training Policy outlines the training and development (or continuous professional development) that staff and councillors can expect to receive.

As the first tier of local government, parish and town councils are uniquely placed to make a major contribution to localism. If parish and town councils are to play a significant part in democracy, it is essential that councillors fully understand their role and responsibilities.

Engaging in learning, training and development is essential in gaining experience and enabling both staff and councillors to understand their role and contribute fully to the democratic process.

There is a wide range of training available to local councils. Sector-specific training is delivered through a number of different mechanisms and organisations at both national and local (county) level.

Staff

Training and Development

The council recognises that its employees are its principal asset. To ensure that the council can deliver the appropriate services to the community it is essential that all employees are fully trained to perform their roles to the highest level. The responsibility for growth and development is shared between employees and the council. The council will support employees to develop the skills and experience needed for their roles and work with employees to develop their abilities; and will identify time and budgets to enable this to happen.

Performance Management

Each line manager will undertake an annual appraisal with employees to review the past year's performance, identify training or development needs, and plan for the coming year. The Clerk's appraisal will be undertaken by the Chair, or in the absence, the Vice-chair. The Clerk will undertake the appraisals of all other Council Staff.

Members, fellow staff, service users and other council contacts may be sought in support of the appraisal process. Employees are encouraged to discuss in an open and honest manner any ideas or issues they have concerning their employment. Appraisal forms can be obtained from the Parish Clerk.

Further training and refresher courses will be arranged where there is an identified need.

Councillors

On expressing an interest in joining the council:

Prospective councillors should first contact the Clerk to the council confirming that he/she is interested in joining the Council or filling the vacancy. The Clerk will ask the prospective Councillor to answer some qualifying/disqualifying questions. (see the Policy on The Eligibility of a Councillor procedure) .

On joining the council by election or co-option:

All new councillors will be given an information pack containing copies of the following documents:

1. Good councillor guide
2. The Code of Conduct for parish councillors
3. Council's current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
4. A timetable of all the scheduled council meetings for the year

Background

Councillors are from a range of diverse backgrounds and bring different and valuable skills to the role. Despite this, few new councillors have extensive knowledge of the system of local government, how a council works or the full range of their roles and responsibilities.

From their first council meeting councillors will be required to make important decisions on behalf of their communities and take responsibility for those decisions. Those decisions often involve significant use of public money, assets or natural resources. It is important that councillors have, or may quickly attain, a clear understanding of the system of local government, how their council works and the full range of their roles and responsibilities.

It is equally important that all councillors have ongoing opportunities to undertake appropriate skills development and training in areas needed to assist them to carry out their role effectively.

Training courses:

Many of the recommended training courses are run by the Derbyshire Association of Local Councils (DALC). The Parish Council will pay for any training involved/required.

The following training is required for new councillors:

1. Essential Councillor Training – This must be completed within 6 months of attaining office.
2. Any Councillor training, such as provided by DALC (see DALC Circulars sent via email by the Clerk for future training courses)

Further development:

1. Chairmanship Training
2. Refresher courses for all councillors where appropriate.

Other sources of support:

1. Working closely with another councillor acting as a mentor for at least the first six months of office
2. Reading through council agendas and minutes of meetings and asking members of staff for an explanation or clarification of the various terms used
3. Reading the various council sector publications that the council subscribes to from for example DALC

Notification of Training Opportunities to Councillors

Any training or educational opportunities for councillors will be notified to councillors by email or via the DALC circular from the Parish Clerk. If you wish to attend a certain training course you must let the Clerk know as soon as possible for a place to be booked. If you are booked onto training that the Council are paying for, you must make sure that you attend that training.

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