

Hargrave Parish Council

Training and Development Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Hargrave Parish Council is committed to the training and development of its Councillors and staff, in order to assist the Council in achieving its aims, objectives, priorities and vision in accordance with the Council Plan, as well as ensuring Council is kept up to date with all new legislation.

1.2 To support this, funds are allocated to a training budget annually to enable staff and Councillors to attend training and conferences relevant to their office.

1.3 Prospective Councillors and applicants for the post of Clerk should be made aware of the content of this policy and the expectations placed upon them contained within.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Hargrave Parish Council is committed to ensure that it continues to fulfil its duties and responsibilities to residents professionally. To that end the Council's intention is that Councillors, Clerk and any other workers of the Council are suitably equipped with the correct knowledge and skills to carry out their roles and maintain effective working practices. The Council will procure or provide such training and development opportunities as it deems necessary and relevant for the delivery of its work.

2.2 It is essential that Councillors and staff are given equal opportunity to develop their knowledge of local government and the law relating to parish councils, and to learn new skills to promote partnership working and community engagement in order to become effective Councillors and lead a modern and progressive Parish Council of the future. Councillor and staff development should be recognised as an integral part of the Council's business.

3. TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Councillors

3.1.1 Training and development for councillors will be regularly reviewed and as a minimum requirement includes :-

- a) Attendance at induction sessions explaining the role of Councillors
- b) Provision of a Councillor Information Handbook and access to Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, policies of the Council and other information deemed relevant
- c) Attendance at NCALC's 'Off to a Flying Start' training course for new Councillors
- d) Attendance of NCALC's 'Planning Nuts and Bolts'
- e) Access to relevant courses provided by external bodies such as North Northants Council, and Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC)
- f) Links to NALC's *Good Councillor Guides* (see Appendix 1)
- g) Circulation of documentation such as briefings and newsletters/magazines to all Councillors

3.1.2 Other training will be identified for councillors as needed. Councillors are required to actively participate in identifying their training and development needs.

3.1.3 Training course fees will be paid from the individual councillor training allowance set in the annual budget. Where a greater sum of expenditure is required, this will need to be approved by full council.

3.1.4 Expenses for attending briefings, consultations and other general meetings for Councillors in Northamptonshire will be paid in accordance with the Members Allowances Policy

3.1.5 Councillors are encouraged to attend free webinars and Councillor networking events held by outside organisations such as Northants ACRE, CPRE, Scribe Academy, OPFCC to broaden their knowledge of the local government sector.

3.1.6 Councillors that are appointed specific areas of responsibilities e.g. the Staffing Committee are encouraged to utilise appropriate training webinars available, read NALC's *Good Councillor Guides* (see Appendix 1) and attend training courses at the earliest opportunity or provide evidence recent completion of other industry-appropriate employment training.

3.1.7 The Clerk will maintain a central record of the training courses undertaken by Councillors and include the information on the NCALC 'councillor development framework' matrix.

3.2 Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

3.2.1 The Council employs one part-time Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer. Training and development for the Clerk will be reviewed through the annual appraisal process and on an ongoing basis, especially where the Council considers a new service or project. The Clerk is required to be proactive in identifying training needs and suitable courses that will assist with the delivery of council services and execution of the role.

3.2.2 The development programme for a newly appointed Clerk, with no or limited previous experience, will include as a minimum:

- a) Induction sessions explaining the role of Clerk
- b) Provision of copies of the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, policies of the Parish Council and other information deemed relevant
- c) Attendance at a 'New Clerk's' training course or similar
- d) Work towards gaining the *Certificate of Local Council Administration (CiLCA)* within 24 months of appointment (this is a condition of employment)
- e) Other training relevant to the proficient discharge of their duties such as I.T., Legal Powers, Finance and understanding the planning system, cemetery management identified through regular training needs assessments
- f) Attendance at relevant training courses and/or local meetings of external bodies such as Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC), and North Northants Council.
- g) Subscription to relevant publications and advice services
- h) Membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks paid for by the Council
- i) Provision of the Local Council Administration handbook by Charles Arnold Baker/Roger Taylor and other relevant publications, which will remain the property of the Council
 - j) Arranging mentoring opportunities with suitably qualified Clerks from neighbouring parishes
 - k) Regular feedback from the Chairman of the Council, or other designated councillor, on their performance

3.2.2.1 The Council will seek advice from Northants CALC on a training programme if it is felt necessary.

3.2.2 The development programme for a newly appointed Clerk, with sector experience, will include as a minimum:

- a) *Certificate of Local Council Administration (CiLCA)* within 24 months of appointment (this is a condition of employment) if not already held.

b) Any other training relevant to the proficient discharge of their duties such as I.T., Legal Powers, Finance and understanding the planning system, cemetery management identified through regular training needs assessments

c) Attendance at relevant training courses and/or local meetings of external bodies such as Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC), and North Northants Council.

d) Subscription to relevant publications and advice services

e) Membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks paid for by the Council

f) Provision of the Local Council Administration handbook by Charles Arnold Baker/Roger Taylor and other relevant publications, which will remain the property of the Council

3.2.3 The Clerk will be expected to continue their professional development through webinars and networking events held by outside organisations such as Northants ACRE, CPRE, Scribe Academy, HMRC, NCALC, ICCM, SLCC to broaden their knowledge of the local government sector.

3.2.4 The Clerk will be able to attend conferences relevant to the sector such as those held by SLCC and NCALC either in person or remotely as deemed most appropriate.

3.2.5 Training course fees and conference fees will be paid from the clerk's training allowance set in the annual budget. Where a greater sum of expenditure is required, this will need to be approved by full Council. The Council will determine when the clerk is able to manage their own training budget.

3.2.6 Where the Council funds a training course or qualification over the value of £500 e.g. CiLCA:

i) The employee must re-pay 75% of the course fee if they leave Hargrave Parish Council within 1 year of obtaining the qualification, or completing the paid for course, whichever is later.

ii) The employee must re-pay 50% of the course fee if they leave Hargrave Parish Council within 2 years year of obtaining the qualification, or completing the paid for course, whichever is later.

3.2.7 Expenses for attending briefings, consultations, training and any other general meetings will be paid by the Council.

3.2.8 Staff will be allowed reasonable time off work to attend work related training courses, conferences, briefings, networking events or similar. This does not apply to course assigned homework or time to prepare course portfolios.

3.3 Volunteers on Parish Council Activities

3.3.1 When volunteers involved in Council activities, as a minimum the following will be delivered:

a) Briefings on relevant health and safety matters and the scope of their work prior to starting

b) Assessment of their skill, knowledge and capacity to complete the task in hand including Risk Assessments

c) Briefing on the safe use of any equipment provided by the Council

3.3.2 Training for volunteers will not be beyond that which is necessary for their role

4. HOW TRAINING NEEDS WILL BE IDENTIFIED

4.1 Training requirements for Councillors will usually be identified by themselves, the Chairman and Clerk, with opportunities to attend courses being investigated by the Clerk and brought to the attention of full Council

4.2 Annually, the Council will formally review the training needs of the Councillors and the Clerk at a meeting of the Parish Council

4.3 Training needs for the Clerk will be identified through the recruitment process for new Clerks, including application form and interview, formal and informal discussions and annual staff appraisals

4.4 The Clerk is expected to keep up-to-date with developments in the sector and highlight to the Council any training required

5. RESOURCING TRAINING

5.1 Annually, an allocation will be made in the budget each year as required to enable reasonable training and development.

5.2 Annually, the Council will budget for the payment of a subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks and Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils to enable the Clerk and Councillors to take advantage of their training courses and conferences.

5.3 Purchases of relevant resources such as publications will be considered on an ongoing basis.

6. EVALUATION & REVIEW OF TRAINING

6.1 All training undertaken will be subsequently evaluated by the Council to gauge its relevance, content and appropriateness. Councillors are expected to make a brief report at the next suitable council meeting. Any additional training needs highlighted as a result, will be brought into the training identification process stated in section 4 above.

6.2 Training will be reviewed in the light of changes to legislation or any quality systems relevant to the Council; new qualifications; new equipment; complaints received or incidents which highlight training needs and requests from Councillors, the Clerk or volunteers.

6.3 The Clerk will maintain a record of training attended by themselves and Councillors with an annual summary presented at the March meeting.

Version	Date adopted	Minute ref	Reviewed
1	Sept 2023	23-68 a	

Appendix 1

Good Councillor Guides include:

The Good Councillors Guide

The Good Councillors Guide to Neighbourhood Planning

The Good Councillors Guide to finance and transparency

The Good Councillors Guide to being a good employer

The Good Councillors Guide to cyber security

The Good Councillors Guide to community business

The Good Councillors Guide to transport planning

How to respond to planning applications: an 8 step guide

The Clerk can provide details on how to access these guides online.