

SOUTH HEIGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

Training and Development Policy

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Notes and Background

The Parish Council is committed to achieving good local governance. This means that the Parish Council wants to ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

To help the Parish Council achieve this we aim to follow the six principles of good local governance:

- 1 Focusing on the purpose of the Council and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
- 2 Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
- 3 Promoting values for the Council and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
- 4 Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
- 5 Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective;
- 6 Engaging with local people and other interested persons to ensure robust public accountability.

As a first tier of local government the Parish Council is directed and controlled by central government legislation. This document is one of a number, which together, sets out the systems and processes of how the Parish Council works within this framework and, as importantly, our culture and values on the way we work, so that we may fulfil these six principles.

This Training and Development Policy has been prepared from the model provided by the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils (SSALC) on their website as at 18th January 2018. It has however been adapted to meet the specific circumstances of South Heighton Parish Council.

It should be read in conjunction with the other adopted policies, procedures and protocols of the Parish Council such as the “Roles and Responsibilities of Councillors and Officers Protocol”, which deals in more detail with what is expected of Councillors and the Parish Clerk in respect of their roles, responsibilities and working relationships. In particular it should be read in association with the Parish Clerk’s Contract of Employment and the Council’s Performance Management and Appraisal Policy and Protocol which includes details of how the Parish Clerk’s Training Plan is prepared and monitored.

The Council is committed to being a responsible employer and the adoption and application of this Policy/Procedure is part of this commitment.

For their part the Parish Clerk is expected to comply with the principles of this Policy/Procedure.

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In the context of this document reference to the “Council” and/or “Parish Council” means South Heighton Parish Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council recognises that training and development for the Parish Clerk and Councillors is a major investment in its ability to deliver effective services, and will seek to create a culture of continuing development.
- 1.2 The Council will seek to comply with the principles of the National Training Strategy for Town and Parish Councils and the National Improvement Strategy for Parish and Town Council's (see Appendix A).
- 1.3 To help achieve this the Council will normally subscribe to the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils (SSALC) to help facilitate both the Parish Clerk and Councillors in attending their training opportunities and the Parish Clerk will be encouraged to become a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks and utilise their training programme.

2. Policy Commitments and Funding

- 2.1 The Council commits to enabling the Parish Clerk and Councillors to be trained to fulfil their various roles and responsibilities and to be kept up to date with new relevant legislation and practices.
- 2.2 To support this commitment, funds will be allocated in the annual budget to enable the Parish Clerk and Councillors to attend appropriate training and conferences relevant to their office. This budget will be reviewed annually in the autumn and informed by the results of the Performance Management and Appraisal Process and the needs identified following Councillor's election/co-option, the roles and responsibilities assigned to them at the Annual Council Meeting and the adopted aims and objectives of the Council established following the Annual Parish Meeting.
- 2.3 Training and personal development needs however must be balanced against the overall resources and responsibilities of the Council. The Council will give priority for training and attendance at conferences to meet its commitments under 2.1 above and, where appropriate, its obligation to pay the cost of registering for and submitting the CiLCA portfolio by the Parish Clerk (see paragraph 4.2).

3. Training Plan and Induction

- 3.1 The Council will be responsible for determining, meeting and monitoring the training needs of the Parish Clerk and Councillors, and managing the allocated budget.
- 3.2 Records of the training of the Parish Clerk will be kept by the Chairman on the Parish Clerk's Personnel File and a record of Councillors' training will be kept by the Parish Clerk.

- 3.3 A Training Plan for the Parish Clerk will be drawn up by the Chairman for approval by the Council. This Plan will be informed by the training needs of the Parish Clerk identified through the Performance Management and Appraisal Process and will seek to ensure all training is relevant, fit for purpose and is carried out in a cost effective manner. Particular consideration will be given to carrying out training locally through SSALC, or possibly in liaison with other local councils.
- 3.4 All new Councillors will receive an induction pack prepared by the Parish Clerk and be invited to attend an induction meeting with the Parish Clerk and Chairman of Council following the parish elections every four years, where basic information relating to the Council's organisation and responsibilities will be provided. Re-elected Councillors will also be invited to this meeting. New Councillors will also be encouraged to attend an appropriate SSALC induction course, the cost and expenses for which will be paid for by the Council.

4. Professional Qualifications and Continuing Professional Development

- 4.1 It is a requirement of the Parish Clerk role for the job holder to hold the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) or equivalent qualification, or commit to achieving it within six months of appointment, to comply with paragraph 2.16 of the Parish Clerk's Job Description.
- 4.2 The Parish Clerk will be given a reasonable time (to be agreed as part of the establishment of the Parish Clerk's Training Plan, but not normally more than two years from their appointment) to obtain the CiLCA or equivalent qualification. The Council will meet the financial cost of registering for and submitting the CiLCA portfolio, or similar costs for an equivalent qualification. If the Parish Clerk is unsuccessful, the Parish Clerk will be responsible for the cost of any re-submission, or further costs related to an equivalent qualification.
- 4.3 Should the Parish Clerk already hold a relevant qualification, or obtain the CiLCA qualification, the Council will support them to continue to acquire the necessary professional knowledge required for the efficient management of the affairs of the Council. Suggested is membership of the professional body The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). Any training requirements to maintain membership of the SLCC through continuing professional development (CPD) will normally be supported by the Council when identified and agreed through the Performance Management and Appraisal Process and adequate funding is available.
- 4.4 Additional higher level qualifications or specific qualifications relevant to the role of Parish Clerk will be discussed as part of the annual Performance Management and Appraisal Process. The Council may agree to meet the cost, or part thereof, of a qualification which will be of mutual benefit to both the Council and the Parish Clerk if approved through the annual Performance Management and Appraisal Process and adequate funding is available.

5. Personal Development

- 5.1 The Council recognises that personal development often provides continuous professional development for the Parish Clerk, while enhancing specific skills. Training courses for personal development should be motivational and consistently lead to improved performance by the Parish Clerk in their role.
- 5.2 The Council may agree to meet the cost, or part thereof, of personal development training where there is clear benefit to the Council and it has been discussed and approved as part of the annual Performance Management and Appraisal Process. The Parish Clerk will be expected to use their new or improved skills in their role.

6. Repayment of Training and Personal Development Costs

- 6.1 Where the Council is meeting the costs of training for the Parish Clerk and Councillors to fulfil their various roles and responsibilities and to be kept up to date with new relevant legislation and practices, the repayment of these costs will not normally be expected, provided these were approved by the Council.
- 6.2 The Council acknowledges that training, continuing professional and personal development may well lead the Parish Clerk to seek alternative employment to maximise their new or improved skills. In these circumstances the Council will require the repayment of costs where the Council has not had adequate benefit from them on the following basis:
- a. Where the costs relate to the payment of fees or for CPD as referred to in paragraphs 4.2 and/or 4.3 above the Parish Clerk will repay to the Council the full cost of the fees/training if they leave the employment of the Council within 12 months of the registering for and submitting the CiLCA portfolio and/or completion of the CPD training.
 - b. Where the costs relate to the payment of fees for training as referred to in paragraphs 4.2 and/or 4.3 above the Parish Clerk will repay to the Council the full cost of the fees/training if they leave the employment of the Council within 12 months of the payment of the fees and/or the completion of the training and 50% of the costs if they leave the employment of the Council after 12 months, but within 24 months of the payment of the fees and/or the the completion of the training..

The agreement to these conditions will be part of the acceptance of the payments by the Parish Clerk and will be recorded in their Personnel File.

- 6.3 The provisions within part 6.2 above do not apply to any training course deemed by the Council to be compulsory for the Parish Clerk to carry out their role, for example due to a change of regulations or insistence on particular qualifications. These exempt costs will be identified in the Parish Clerk's Training Plan and/or recorded in their Personnel File.

Appendix A

National Training Strategy for Town and Parish Councils and the National Improvement Strategy for Parish and Town Council's

The following are extracts from the above documents and are intended to give a guide as to their principles which the Council seeks to comply with.

Working with a local council really makes a difference in the community. Whether clerk or councillor, qualified and trained people are needed to carry out challenging roles. A council of quality embraces learning and development among councillors and staff. Appropriate training provides a council with the necessary tools to be effective. Clerks and councillors should both understand the legal framework, how a council operates, how responsibilities are allocated and how to manage council activities and finances. There is a range of professional qualifications designed for clerks of local councils within the National Training Strategy.

The National Training Strategy supports the growth of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme for local council clerks and other local council staff. CPD is a personal conscious commitment to maintain professional knowledge, skills and standards in a particular role. CPD helps to develop an individual's competence and capability through their working life and enhances the work of their council and its services to the community. Although the programme is currently aimed at Clerks, Councillors are also free to participate in the programme.

CiLCA is a foundation qualification for local council officers and others working with local councils. It is a Certificate in Local Council Administration awarded at Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) where it is worth 20 credits. The qualification is owned and managed by the Improvement and Development Board (IDB) working on behalf of local (parish and town) councils in England and the National Training Advisory Group (NTAG) representing local councils in Wales. Local councils in this instance are parish, town, community and neighbourhood councils. CiLCA is administered by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

Your local County Training Partnerships (CTPs) will provide training for Councillors. They will have access to materials to deliver a core set of training offers, as well as developing and delivering tailored local training offers. The core set of training materials includes:

- What's on the Agenda? - Ideal for introducing new councillors/clerks to parish council meeting procedures
- Training in Chairmanship Skills - Course for town and parish council chairman
- Being a Good Councillor - Core skills for new or prospective councillors
- The Next Step: Making the most of your role as parish and town councillors - Training on a variety of skills needed as a councillor
- Being a Good Employer - A guide for parish and town councillors
- The Good Councillor's Guide – An invaluable handbook for councillors

The Improvement and Development Board IDB undertook to set up an improvement strategy for the sector that would include, but not be limited to, the programmes currently under the National Training Strategy and the Local Council Award Scheme. The aim of the strategy would be to bring together existing work streams so that they complement each other and are seen and delivered as a single offer. This strategy would shape a vision for the sector into or beyond the next five years. It should be ambitious and include programmes or themes that have not been delivered before. It could also include a process of better describing and defining the range of improvement activities that takes place across the country, such as supporting councils in difficulty.