

Bere Ferrers Parish Council

Councillor & Staff Training and Development Policy

This policy outlines the training and development that Councillors and Staff can expect to receive. As the first tier of local government, Parish Councils are uniquely placed to make a major contribution to localism. If Parish Councils are to play a significant part in democracy, it is essential that Councillors and Staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Engaging in learning, training and development is essential in gaining experience and enabling both Councillors and Staff to understand their role and contribute fully to the democratic process. There is a wide range of training available to Parish Councils. Sector-specific training is delivered through a number of different mechanisms and organisations at both national and local (county) level.

Councillors

On expressing an interest in joining the Council:

Prospective Councillors should first contact the Clerk to the Council confirming that they are interested in joining the Council or filling the vacancy. The Clerk will ask the prospective Councillor to complete a questionnaire, including some eligibility questions.

On joining the Council by election or co-option:

All new Councillors will be given an induction pack. Copies of the below information will either be emailed to Councillors as required, or Councillors will be directed to the documents/policies on the Parish Council website.

1. The Good councillor guide (book & pdf)
2. The Good Councillor guide to Finance (pdf)
3. Code of Conduct for Parish Councillors
4. Current Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
5. Terms of Reference for each Committee of the Council.
6. A timetable of all the scheduled Committee and Council meetings
7. Details of the Council's website
8. Any current and relevant information

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 the 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 DALC (Devon Association of Local Councils) The Parish Council will pay for any training involved/required.

The following training is required for new Councillors:

1. Being a Good Councillor – This must be completed within 6 months of attaining office or as soon as a course becomes available. Can be completed either face to face or virtual.
2. Code of Conduct – This must be completed within 6 months of attaining office or as soon as a course becomes available.
3. Any Councillor training, such as provided by DALC for example Finance for Councillors, Budgeting for Councillors, or HR, should be completed as required or agreed by the Council.

Further development:

1. Chairing Meeting Effectively
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 three to six months of office where possible.
2. Reading through council agendas and minutes of meetings.

Council 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 will work with employees to develop their abilities; and will identify time and budgets to enable this to happen.

Performance Management

The Council will undertake an annual appraisal with employees to review the past year's performance, identify training or development needs if required, and to plan for the coming year. The Clerk's appraisal will be undertaken by the Chair. The Clerk will undertake the appraisals of all other Council Staff. Employees will be encouraged to discuss in an open and honest manner any ideas or issues they have concerning their employment.

Other circumstances may present the need for training:

- Legislative requirements i.e. First Aid, Fire Safety, Manual Handling
- Changes in legislation
- New or revised qualifications become available
- Accidents
- Professional error
- Introduction of new equipment

- New working methods and practices
- Complaints to the Council
- A request from a member of staff

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

Evaluation of Training

Records of all training undertaken by employee(s) and Councillors will be kept.

Conclusion

The adoption of a training and development policy should achieve many benefits for the Council. It will assist in demonstrating that the Council is committed to continuing professional development and enhancing the skills of both Councillors and staff.

Date of Policy	July 2022
Approving Committee	F & G.P Committee
Date of committee Meeting and minute No	25 th October 2023. Minute 313.
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