

Leaffield Parish Council Training and Development Policy

Adopted by Leaffield Parish Council on 21 July 2021

Last approved on 11 February 2025

Introduction

Leaffield 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 and priorities, as well as ensuring the Council is kept up to date with all new legislation. 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. 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.

Policy Statement

- a. Leaffield 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, the 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.
- b. 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 be an effective Council. Councillor and staff development should be recognised as an integral part of the Council's business.

Training and development activity

Leaffield Parish Council consists of seven elected Councillors and employs one part-time Clerk/RFO. In addition, volunteers support some parish activities.

Training and development for each of these groups will be regularly reviewed but will contain as a minimum requirement:-

- a. Councillors
 - i. Attendance at induction session(s) explaining the role of Councillors and the Clerk
 - ii. Provision of a Councillor Induction Pack plus copies of the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, policies of the Council and other information deemed relevant
 - iii. Attendance at OALC's "Roles and responsibilities" training course for new councillors
 - iv. Access to relevant courses provided by external bodies such as Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), and the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC)
 - v. Expenses for attending briefings, consultations and other general meetings for councillors in Oxfordshire
 - vi. Circulation of documentation such as briefings and newsletters
- b. Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
 - i. Induction session(s) explaining the role of the Clerk and Councillors
 - ii. Provision of copies of the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, policies of the Council and other information deemed relevant
 - iii. Attendance at OALCs "Roles and responsibilities" and "The Clerk's Year" training courses or equivalent
 - iv. Any other training relevant to the proficient discharge of their duties such as IT, legal powers, finance, understanding the planning system, identified through regular training needs assessments
 - v. Attendance at relevant training courses and/or local meetings of external bodies such as Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), OALC, OCC and WODC.
 - vi. Subscription to relevant publications and advice services

- vii. Provision of the Local Council Administration handbook by Charles Arnold Baker/Paul Clayden and other relevant publications, which will remain the property of the Council
 - viii. Arranging mentoring opportunities with suitably qualified Clerks from neighbouring parishes
 - ix. Regular feedback from the Chairman of the Council in their performance
 - x. Expenses for attending briefings, consultations, training and other general meetings
- c. Volunteers on Parish Council activities
 - i. Briefings on relevant health and safety matters and the scope of their work prior to starting
 - ii. Assessment of their skill, knowledge and capacity to complete the task in hand including Risk Assessments
 - iii. Briefing on the safe use of any equipment provided by the Council
 - iv. Training for volunteers will not be beyond that which is necessary for their role

Training Needs Identification

- a. Appropriate training, development and learning opportunities for all Councillors and staff are identified through self-assessment, the Council's aims and objectives, and changes in legislation.
- b. Training requirements for Councillors will usually be identified by themselves, the Chairman and the Clerk, with opportunities to attend courses being investigated by the Clerk and brought to the attention of full Council.
- c. Annually, the Council will formally review the training needs of the Councillors and the Clerk at a Parish Council meeting.
- d. Training needs for the Clerk will be identified through the recruitment process for a new Clerk, including application form and interview, formal and informal discussions and annual staff appraisals.
- e. The Clerk is expected to keep up-to-date with developments in the sector and highlight to the Council any training required.
- f. Training requirements for volunteers will usually be identified by the Council as those necessary for the specific role.

Resourcing Training

- a. An allocation will be made in the annual budget each year as required to enable reasonable training and development.
- b. Annually, the Council will consider an allocation in the budget for the payment of a subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC) to enable the Clerk and Councillors to take advantage of their training courses and conferences.
- c. Purchases of relevant resources such as publications will be considered on an ongoing basis.

Evaluation and review of Training

- a. All training undertaken will be evaluated by the Council to gauge its relevance, content and appropriateness. Any additional training needs, highlighted as a result, will be brought into the training identification process (above).
- b. Training will be reviewed in the light of changes to legislation, new qualifications, new equipment, complaints received or incidents which highlight training needs and requests from Councillors, the Clerk or volunteers.
- c. The Clerk will maintain a record of training for staff and Councillors.