

Westbourne Parish Council
Training and Development Policy
Adopted: 9 March 2017

1. Policy statement

Westbourne Parish Council is committed to training its staff and councillors. It recognises that well-trained and informed officers promote good practice within the Council and increase and encourage community activities. As a voluntary organisation, the Council values the time given by its councillors to the community. This policy is aimed at maximising the rewards for that time by ensuring that its councillors understand and enjoy the role they undertake in their community and are properly equipped for it. It is also important that the role of the clerk is acknowledged and therefore training should be sought to facilitate the clerk in acquiring the skills and qualifications commensurate with the role, in achieving competent person status, for the smooth operation of the Council.

2. Training and development activity

Westbourne Parish Council consists of nine councillor places and employs one part-time Parish Clerk. In addition, volunteers provide invaluable support for its work. Training and development for each of these grounds will be regularly reviewed, and will contain as a minimum requirement the following:

2.1 For councillors:

- Attendance at induction sessions explaining the role of councillors.
- Provision of an induction pack, including copies of the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, policies of the Council and other information deemed relevant.
- Access to relevant courses provided by the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils (SSALC).
- Expenses for attending briefings, consultations and other general meetings for councillors.
- Circulation of documentation, such as briefings and newsletters/magazines.

2.2 For the Clerk:

- Induction session explaining the role of the Clerk
- Provision of copies of the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct, policies of the Council and other information deemed relevant.
- Attendance at the New Clerk's Course, or similar, run by SSALC.
- Gaining the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA)
- Any other training relevant to the proficient discharge of their duties, such as IT, legal powers, finance and understanding of the planning system, as identified through regular training and needs assessments.
- Attendance at relevant local meetings of bodies run by SSALC and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).
- Subscription to relevant publication and advice services.
- Provision of Local Council Administration by Charles Arnold Baker and other relevant publications, which will remain the property of the Parish Council.
- Arranging networking opportunities with suitably qualified clerks from neighbouring parishes.

- Regular feedback from the Chairman of the Council in their performance.

2.3 For volunteers:

- Briefings on relevant health and safety matters and the scope of their work prior to starting.
- Assessment of their skill, knowledge and capacity to complete the task in hand.
- Briefing on the safe use of any equipment provided by the Council.
- Training for volunteers will not be beyond that which is necessary for the role.

3. Training needs identification

Training requirements for councillors will usually be identified by themselves, the Chairman or the Clerk. Opportunities to attend courses will be investigated by the Clerk and brought to the attention of the full council.

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

Training needs for the Clerk will be identified through the recruitment process, including the application form and interview, formal and informal discussions, and the annual staff Personal Development and Performance Review. The Clerk is expected to keep up-to-date with developments in the sector and highlight to the Council any training that is required.

4. Resources

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

Annually, the Council will consider an allocation in the budget for the payment of a subscription to the SLCC and SSALC to enable the Clerk and councillors to take advantage of their training courses and conferences.

Purchase of relevant resources, such as publications, will be considered on an ongoing basis.

5. Evaluation and review of training

All training undertaken will be subsequently evaluated by the Council to gauge its relevance, content and appropriateness. Any additional training needs highlighted as a result will be brought to the training identification process in section 3 above.

Training will be reviewed in 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.

The Clerk will maintain a record of training attended by themselves and councillors.