

AWBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

Awbridge Parish Council's vision is for the Council and the local community to work together to protect and improve the social, recreational and environmental well-being of all who live, study, visit or work here.

To this end, Awbridge Parish Council aims to:

- Provide effective, efficient and accountable local government for Awbridge residents.
- Listen to and value the opinions of the community which it serves, thus enabling residents to be involved in decision making and future development plans which will affect their environment or lives.
- Engage in open dialogue with all residents to understand their needs and concerns and seek ways of assisting in meeting them.
- Be a strong voice to represent residents' views to Test Valley Borough Council and to other agencies where appropriate.
- Engage positively in the protection and improvement of both the built and natural environment within the means of the council.
- Achieve the best financial value in the provision of high quality amenities and services for residents.
- Keep residents informed about the work undertaken by the Parish Council and about local issues.
- Be open and transparent in all aspects of the Council's operation.
- Pursue excellence through continuous improvement, training and self-evaluation.

The above statement of the Council's wider aims helps to frame the

2. Human resources

Awbridge Parish Council recognises that its human resources are its most valuable asset in supporting and achieving its aims and it is committed to ensuring its councillors and staff (including volunteers) are motivated and trained to the highest appropriate standard. To support this, funds are allocated to a training budget each year to enable councillors and staff to attend training relevant to their office. Prospective councillors and staff should be made aware of the content of this policy and the expectations that it places upon them.

2. Policy Statement

Awbridge Parish Council is committed to ensuring:

- a) that it professionally fulfils its duties and responsibilities to residents
- b) that as a responsible employer, it takes seriously its duty towards the personal and professional development of its staff.

To this end the council's intention is that councillors and staff are suitably equipped with the knowledge and skills to carry out their roles and to maintain effective working practices and

relationships. The council will procure or provide such training and development opportunities as it deems necessary and relevant for the delivery of its work.

3. Training and Development Activity

Awbridge Parish Council consists of seven elected councillors. It employs one part-time clerk, who also acts as Responsible Finance Officer. Occasionally volunteers provide invaluable support for the Council's work. Training and development for each of these groups will be regularly reviewed but will contain as a minimum requirement:

3.1 For Councillors

- a. Attendance at induction sessions explaining the role of councillors
- b. Provision of an APC councillor information handbook containing copies of standing orders, financial regulations, code of conduct, policies of the council and other information deemed relevant
- c. Access to relevant courses provided by bodies such as the Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC).
- d. Expenses for attending briefings, consultations and other general meetings for councillors in Hampshire.
- f. Circulation of documentation such as briefings and newsletters/magazines

3.2 For the Clerk

- a. Induction session explaining the role of the clerk
- b. Provision of copies of the standing orders, financial regulations, code of conduct, policies of the council and other information deemed relevant.
- c. Attendance at a "Working with Your Council" course or similar.
- d. Gaining the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) (this is a condition of employment).
- e. Any other training, identified through regular training needs assessments, relevant to the proficient discharge of the duties of the clerk, such as Information Technology (IT), legal powers, finance and understanding the planning system,
- f. Attendance at relevant local meetings of bodies such as the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and briefings by HALC.
- g. Subscription to relevant publications and advice services.
- h. Provision of 'Local Council Administration' by Charles Arnold Baker and other relevant publications, which will remain the property of the council.
- i. Regular feedback on performance from the HR Working Group.

3.3 For volunteers on Parish Council activities

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

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

4. Training needs identification

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

4.2 Annually, the council will formally review the training needs of councillors 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 appraisal. 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 An allocation will be made in the annual budget to enable training and development.

5.2 The council will consider an allocation in the annual budget for the payment of a subscription to the SLCC and HALC to enable councillors and the clerk to take advantage of training courses and other relevant events provided by these bodies.

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

6. Evaluation and review of training

6.1 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 into the training identification process 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 and staff.

6.3 The clerk will maintain a record of training undertaken by councillors and staff.

This Policy was adopted by Awbridge Parish Council on 13th October 2016