

# EAST HARPTREE PARISH COUNCIL

## Training and development policy

### Introduction

East Harptree Parish Council is committed to training its staff, members and volunteers and recognises that well trained and informed staff promote good practice in its organisation. The purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's position on the provision of training and development opportunities.

East Harptree Parish Council has identified 3 main objectives:

- *To be well managed; providing sound governance and financial management, and be an exemplar employer.*
- *To be a strong voice on behalf of the local people and businesses, representing their views.*
- *To improve the development, appearance, and environment in which we live; ensuring that these changes do not cause future harm.*

East Harptree Parish Council recognises that its most important resources are its Clerk and Councillors, therefore is committed to encouraging the enhancement of their knowledge and qualifications through appropriate training and development as well as being kept up to date with appropriate new legislation. An aim of the council is to have the General Power of Competence (GPC), thus enabling them to fulfil additional functions on behalf of the community. The council seeks to employ a clerk that is trained, competent and confident in their work, and for them to feel supported, thus enabling stability among the council.

This policy sets out:

- the identification of training and development needs;
- financial assistance;
- study leave;

### The Identification of Training and Development Needs

East Harptree Parish Council consists of 7 councillors and employs one part-time Parish Clerk, a sweeper and a small number of volunteers. Appropriate training and development will be necessary to ensure that the Clerk, Councillors are aware of their legal responsibilities and the Council's requirements. This may occur due to:

- a new clerk or councillor;
- change in the role of a current clerk;
- changes in legislation or feedback from audit;
- health and safety, eg an accident;
- a change in infrastructure eg new computer or IT system.

Training and development for these groups will be regularly reviewed and will constitute as a minimum:

**Clerk:**

The development of a clerk should include a comprehensive induction, and the provision of an annual appraisal and performance review, where personal development and training needs can be identified and discussed, and objectives set. In addition, the council will encourage the clerk to identify their own learning needs. A wide variety of learning and training methods will be offered, including:

- Induction sessions for new clerks;
- Attendance at conferences, seminars and short courses (eg The SLCC Practitioners Conference);
- Online training;
- Subscription to relevant publications and advice services
- Courses via ALCA
- In-house learning resources (reference books eg *Local Council Administration by Charles Arnold-Baker*, journals eg *The Clerk*, reference books etc.)
- Time for self-directed research and learning

The Clerk will be expected to hold (or be working towards) The Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) and will be encouraged to acquire additional training and qualifications as appropriate to the scope of their role as Clerk. Continual Professional Development is encouraged via training through:

SLCC, ALCA and NALC courses

Specific courses such as finance and planning (eg Parkinson Partnership courses)

Attendance at regular local clerks forum meetings

**Councillors:**

After joining the Council, a Parish Councillor will attend an induction training session to familiarise themselves with the general work of a parish council, and the roles of the council, councillors, and clerk. Councillors will be offered specific training (eg planning) when taking on a specific role.

The Clerk will provide a welcome pack to all new Councillors. The pack will include the following:

- Contact details for Councillors and the Clerk
- A copy of the Good Councillors Guide
- Adopted Code of Conduct
- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Training and Development Policy
- A copy of the Good Councillor's Guide to Finance & Transparency
- A copy of Good Councillor's Guide to Being a Good Employer
- Meetings calendar
- Details of website – [www.eastharptreeparish.org](http://www.eastharptreeparish.org)

- Any other relevant and current information, including details of other relevant courses.

### **Volunteers**

- Briefings on relevant health & 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 equipment provided by the council

### **Financial assistance**

Support for qualifications, training and personal development can include financial assistance towards the cost of tuition and resource materials in addition to time off for study leave. All sponsored training and development must be appropriate to the needs and objectives of the Council, be relevant to the individual's role, and is subject to the availability of financial resources. Any financial and non-financial support to training and development is entirely at the discretion of the council and will be approved by the Parish Council.

To support this, funds will be allocated to a training budget each year. Annually the council will consider allocating funds to subscribe to the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and Avon Local County Association (ALCA).

Any employee undertaking post-entry qualifications funded by the Council must be aware that should they leave the Council employment within two years of completion of the qualification they may be required to repay all costs associated with the undertaking of such training.

### **Study leave**

Where the clerk requires study leave to undertake mandatory training, they will be able to take all the leave within normal working hours, whilst ensuring essential tasks are maintained.

Time off for study leave must be approved in advance. To make a request the individual is asked to discuss with the Chair of the Council or REMPAG, setting out the details of the course of study, how it relates to their work, and the time being requested.

### **Evaluation and review of training**

All councillors who attend training are expected to report back to the full council meetings verbally with a report on the training attended and its relevance content and appropriateness.

The Clerk will maintain an updated training record for all councillors and the clerk.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually in line with the objectives of the council and needs of the staff, and any changes to legislation.

Adopted 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023