

Whissonsett Parish Council Policy for Training and Development

Adopted: 8th March 2021

Date of next Review: 2024

Background to Training in the Local Council Sector

Training has been at the heart of local councils for over twenty years ⁽¹⁾. Its evolution has coincided with a general willingness of higher tier authorities to accept that parish councils are at grass root level and as a result can understand and react to the needs of their communities efficiently and effectively. Local Councils have also become far more accountable to their communities in recent years, particularly in relation to their finances ⁽²⁾.

Above all community members have become more challenging and openness and accountability are, rightly, high on any agenda ⁽³⁾. We must all know what we are doing and why we are doing it.

Overall aim of this Policy

The Council is committed to the provision of training and development for its members and staff to help raise the council's profile, fulfil the roles played by its members both individually and as a team and to maximise the potential of the Council in its role of serving the community. The Council has an overall strategy to actively respond to its parishioners and to ensure that the Council is efficiently and effectively governed. Personal development of staff and members will help formulate, guide and facilitate this strategy.

Budget

While the Council is mindful of its costs, it also considers that appropriate training can reap financial rewards. Training can be provided through a number of sources. Training can also be on variety of subjects. The Council aims to be selective with the training it uses. Relevance, value for money and training provider will be considered. While there is no right for staff to request time off work for training or any obligation on its members to undergo training, the Council agrees to fund training costs provided there is a commitment to attend that course and to continue in the role for at least a year. Funding includes the cost of the course and the cost of transport to the course. There is a budget for training and agreement must be given for attendance at any course prior to the event.

Personal Development Plans

The clerk will have a personal development plan as part of their annual appraisal which will identify skills and knowledge needs. The clerk is encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal development in terms of identifying appropriate external training and courses. Undertaking training will not only ensure job satisfaction but will support effective time management. The clerk will be responsible for facilitating the training needs of members both new and experienced – identifying relevant courses or by coaching or mentoring. The need for training can be prompted by legislation or by new activities which the council undertakes.

Appropriate Training and Development

These are currently identified as:

- Initial Training for new councillors – a one day or two evening session arranged through the Norfolk Parish Training & Support at varying locations.
- Chairmanship Course – a day session arranged through Norfolk Parish Training & Support.
- Training Courses for the Clerk – topic specific courses (such as allotments and data protection) and the Clerk's CiLCA qualification.
- Seminars provided by the planning authority (Breckland District Council) for planning, usually held at the District Council offices.

Responsibilities

Further and new opportunities for training will be identified by the Clerk. The Clerk will be responsible for disseminating information concerning training to members. Members are encouraged to discuss any needs they identify for themselves with the Clerk. The Clerk is responsible for identifying situations where volunteers may need training. This includes such things as discussion about risk assessments and training regarding the use of equipment. Such training opportunities will help the Council achieve its overall objectives.

Review of the Policy

This Policy will be reviewed by the Parish Clerk and any recommendations for changes will be advised to members. The training opportunities not only change throughout the year, but individual needs change during the year.

(1) *The National Training Strategy 1996*

(2) *Accounts and Audit Regulations 2014*

(3) *The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014*