

Training policy

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 Sandon and Burston Parish Council is committed to appropriate and effective training for members and staff. The parish council believes that proper training enables all involved with the council to understand the needs of the community, deliver services and engage in partnerships more effectively.
- 1.2 The council values the time and commitment given by members to their community. This policy is aimed at maximising the rewards from that time by ensuring that elected members understand and enjoy the role they undertake in their community and are able to discharge that role effectively.
- 1.3 Staff and councillors are expected to embrace the ethos of training and the merits of a well-run and pro-active council structure.
- 1.4 Councillors and staff should be aware of current issues facing the local government sector and the local community.
- 1.5 Training includes but is not restricted to:
 - attendance at formal courses and conferences;
 - informal networking;
 - being mentored and mentoring;
 - online courses; and
 - reading and private study.

2 General issues

- 2.1 The council will set aside an adequate training budget each year to meet training needs for staff and councillors.
- 2.2 The council is a member of the Staffordshire Parish Council Association and pays to join the Annual Training Scheme. All employees and members are encouraged to attend its training programme.
- 2.3 Anyone attending training is required to report back to the council informing others of the value of the training and how appropriate it was to the objectives set.
- 2.4 Training material should be shared to ensure all involved with the council are made fully aware of issues and updates relating to law and administration.
- 2.5 The council will take note of any matters which should be pursued as a result of training attended. Where appropriate, best practice procedures should be implemented or updated.

3 Local Council Award Scheme

To achieve an award within the Local Council Award Scheme¹, the following criteria regarding training and development must be met.

3.1 Bronze

The council will confirm by resolution at a full council meeting that it meets all requirements for the Foundation Award and that it also publishes on its website:

- disciplinary and grievance procedures;
- a policy for training and developing of staff and councillors;
- a record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year;
- a clerk who has achieved 12 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points in the last year.

What is the accreditation panel looking for?

A training policy for staff and councillors can be a short statement of intent while a training record gives dates, titles and providers of development activities undertaken by named individuals in the last year, including, for example, updating events, online courses, CPD activity and qualifications. Councillors should note that they should undertake training on financial management for which they are all responsible. In particular, the clerk's training record includes evidence of CPD such as training, conference attendance, mentoring and studying for qualifications. CPD points are allocated according to a system published by the SLCC. <https://www.slcc.co.uk/>

3.2 Silver

The council also confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it has:

- a qualified clerk;
- a formal appraisal process for all staff;
- a training policy and record for all staff and councillors.

What is the accreditation panel looking for?

The panel can ask to see the document setting out the formal appraisal process that must be in place for all staff. It checks that the council has a training budget and may ask to see a general training policy for staff and councillors with a detailed record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year. The panel seeks assurance that a training culture is embedded in the council. The clerk is expected to achieve at least 12 CPD points every year.

3.3 Gold

¹ Criteria for Local Council Award Scheme and comments relating to what accreditation panels are looking for are taken from *A guide to the Local Council Award Scheme*, published by NALC - <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/>

The council also confirms by resolution at a full council meeting, that it has prepared statements (of no more than one page each) to be presented to the accreditation panel showing how it:

- manages the performance of the council as a corporate body to achieve its business plan;
- manages the performance of each individual staff member.

What is the accreditation panel looking for?

The statement on performance management explains the process by which the performance of the council as a corporate body is constantly improved and shows how the performance, skills and knowledge of each individual in the council is managed to help the council achieve its objectives on behalf of the community. This includes confirming that each member of staff has their own professional development plan and that the majority of councillors participate in a member development programme. It is important to show evidence that the council is a good employer.

4 Staff training

- 4.1 The clerk to council is fundamental to all areas of development and service delivery. It is essential that they are trained to carry out their duties as effectively as possible.
- 4.2 The clerk will receive an annual staff appraisal and this will be an opportunity to discuss any training needs.
- 4.3 In addition, the clerk is encouraged to raise at any time the perceived need for further training in any of the areas of work they are required to carry out, if need is identified.
- 4.4 The parish council may request that staff undertake further training at its discretion, where this is deemed necessary, and in view of any specialist activities that the employee is required to undertake on its behalf.
- 4.5 Full support will be given to all employees undertaking training of any kind in furtherance of the Council's activities.

5 Qualifications and professional associations

- 5.1 The clerks to council are expected to be members of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC <https://www.slcc.co.uk/>).
- 5.2 The parish council will pay the clerks' subscriptions to the SLCC. <https://www.slcc.co.uk/>
- 5.3 The Clerk to Council is expected to hold a Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). If the Clerk to Council is not CiLCA qualified at the time of appointment, they will be supported to achieve the qualification. The council will pay for the cost of training and for additional hours worked achieving that qualification.
- 5.4 The council will give permission to the clerk to use council documents as evidence for the CiLCA portfolio.

- 5.5 A clerk who has CiLCA should undertake Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in line with the National Improvement Strategy for town and parish councils. Appropriate CPD can be identified during discussion of the clerk's annual appraisal.
- 5.6 The clerk will keep a record of all CPD attended and will keep this updated at SLCC.
- 5.7 The clerk is encouraged to attend branch meetings, conferences and to contribute to online communities with other professionals.
- 5.8 The parish council will pay the cost of training activities and for additional hours worked for local networking meetings, conferences or training events. Attendance at such meetings forms part of CPD. Informal networking also takes place through national and local e-forums.
- 5.9 The parish council will consider contributing to the cost of attending regional or national conferences.

6 Councillor Training

- 6.1 The council will encourage all members to attend training in relation to the corporate activities of the Council, and its administrative procedures.
- 6.2 Formal training for councillors is provided by Staffordshire Parish Council Association (SPCA) and other providers. The clerk is expected to keep councillors briefed on current issues and may deliver training sessions to councillors.
- 6.3 Councillors will also be expected to undertake specialist courses as need arises, and dependent on any specific responsibilities that are allocated.
- 6.4 All council policies will reflect the requirement for member training and updating on key elements of council procedure and policy.
- 6.5 If additional, specialist training is required on any matter, the clerk will source the appropriate qualified person to deliver that training in-house to members.
- 6.6 A record of all training attended by members will be kept and publicised via the council's publication scheme and the council's website.
- 6.7 As a minimum, all councillors should be adequately trained in:
- roles and responsibilities of individual members;
 - the council as a corporate body;
 - the chairman and the clerk;
 - the law applicable to local councils;
 - procedures of local councils;
 - financial rules and procedures;
 - the planning system and local councils' role in the planning system;
 - community engagement.
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- 6.8 New councillors will be guided in their role through the use of a Councillor Induction Pack which will provide an overview of information about the Council's procedures, roles and responsibilities and its corporate activities.

7 Volunteer Training

- 7.1 The council will encourage all volunteers to attend training relevant to volunteer activities.
- 7.2 All council's volunteer policies will reflect the requirement for volunteer training and updating on key elements of procedure and policy.

8 Review

- 8.1 This policy should be reviewed by the full Council or in response to changes in relevant legislation, training procedures or criteria for accreditation.

9 Version control and amendment history

Date approved	Version Number	Revision / amendments made	Review date
09.09.2025	1.0	New policy	May 2026