

Cosgrove Parish Council

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Cosgrove Parish Council is committed to the training and development of its Councillors and staff, to assist the Council in achieving its aims, objectives, priorities and vision, as well as ensuring the Council is kept up to date with all new legislation. To support this, funds are allocated to a training budget annually to enable Councillors and staff to attend training and conferences relevant to their office. Prospective Councillors and applicants for the post of Clerk should be made aware of the content of this policy and the expectations placed upon them.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Cosgrove Parish Council is committed to ensuring it continues to fulfil its duties and responsibilities to residents professionally. To that end the Council's intention is Councillors, Clerk and any other workers of the Council are suitably equipped with the correct knowledge and skills to carry out their roles and maintain effective working practises.

The Council will procure or provide such training and development opportunities as it deems necessary and relevant for the delivery of its work. It is essential Councillors and staff are given equal opportunity to develop their knowledge of local government and the law relating to parish councils and to learn new skills to promote partnership working and community engagement to become effective councillors and lead a modern and progressive Parish Council of the future. Councillor and staff development should be regarded as an integral part of the Council's business. It is acknowledged Councillors and staff bring to the role experience and training from other areas of their lives.

3. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Cosgrove Parish Council consists of eight elected or co-opted Councillors and employs one part time Parish Clerk who is also the Responsible Financial Officer. In addition, volunteers from within Cosgrove parish provide support for the parish's work.

Training and development for each of the Councillors will be reviewed regularly but will contain, as a minimum requirement:

Councillors

- a) Attendance at induction sessions explaining the role of a councillor, such as NCALC's 'Off to a Flying Start' training course for new councillors – within six months of the date on which they are elected or co-opted.
- b) Provision of an online Councillor Information Pack which includes copies of 'The Good Councillor's Guide', Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct and a list of the policies of the Council, together with any other information deemed relevant. This pack is to be provided within seven days of the date on which they are elected or co-opted.
- c) Councillors with primary responsibility for specific areas of work can receive relevant training within six months of the date on which they take on the specific role. For instance, those responsible for

finance will receive basic finance training, those responsible for planning will receive training basic planning training, including how to respond to planning applications etc. Account will be taken of qualifications and training gained outside of the Parish Council (ie in the workplace).

d) The Chair of the Council (and of any sub-committee) shall receive Chairmanship skills training as soon as possible but within six months of the date on which they are elected as Chair, unless they are able to evidence relevant training elsewhere.

e) Attendance at relevant courses provided by external bodies, such as West Northants Council and Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC) related to the Council's aims and objectives, as and when required and within three months of a training need being identified is encouraged.

Clerk/Responsible Financial officer

a) Induction sessions explaining the role of Clerk, such as attendance at a 'New Clerks' training course, or similar – within three months of the date on which they are employed.

b) Access to the online Councillor Information pack which contains copies of 'The Good Councillor's Guide', Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct and a list of the policies of the Council, together with any other information deemed relevant – to be provided within seven days of the date on which they are employed.

c) Gaining the Certificate of Local Council Administration (CiLCA) within twenty four months of appointment. This is a condition of employment.

d) Any other training relevant to the proficient discharge of their duties such as I.T., Legal Powers, Finance and understanding the planning system, identified through regular training needs and assessments – within three (3) months of the need being identified.

e) Attendance at relevant training courses and/or local meetings of external bodies such as Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC).

The Parish Council will meet the costs of all pre-approved training undertaken or meetings attended, including mileage and parking costs involved.

The Council will pay for pre-approved subscriptions to relevant publications and advice services, including the purchase of the approved handbook, Local Council Administration.

4. TRAINING NEEDS IDENTIFIED

Training requirements for Councillors will be ongoing but will usually be identified by the Councillors, the Chair and/or the Clerk with opportunities to attend courses being investigated by the Clerk and brought to the attention of full Council.

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

Training needs for the Clerk will be identified initially through the recruitment process for new Clerks, including the application form and interview, and then through formal and informal discussions and annual staff appraisals.

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

An allocation will be made in the budget, annually as required, to enable necessary training and development.

Annually the Council will consider an allocation in the budget for the payment of a subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks and Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils 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.

6. 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 into the training identification process stated in section 4 above.

Training will be reviewed in the light of changes to legislation or any applicable regulations relevant to the Council: This will include requirements for new qualifications; new equipment; complaints received; incidents which highlight training needs; requests from the Clerk, Councillors or volunteers.

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

This policy was adopted by Cosgrove Parish Council on 3 July 2024