



**Pontesbury Parish Council**  
**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

**1. COMMITMENT TO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Pontesbury Parish Council is committed to providing the necessary ongoing training and development opportunities for members, employees and volunteers. Effective training and development will ensure:

- The Council can fulfil its duties and responsibilities
- Effective contributions by members/staff and volunteers and the highest quality representation and provision of services
- Members, employees and volunteers understand and enjoy their roles

**2. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Ensure that any mandatory training necessary for staff/the council to meet its legal duties and responsibilities is in place and budgeted for
- Encourage Members, employees and volunteers to undertake appropriate training and development activities
- Allocate training in a fair manner
- Ensure all training is evaluated to assess its value

**3. IDENTIFICATION OF TRAINING NEEDS**

3.1 There are various circumstances in which training needs may arise, such as:

- Legislative requirements e.g. Health & Safety training
- Changes in legislation
- Changes in systems
- New or revised qualifications become available
- Accidents
- Professional error
- Introduction of new equipment
- New working methods and practices
- Organisational goals, plans and strategies e.g included in the Parish Council Strategic Plan
- Identified during recruitment

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- Council resolutions
- Complaints and comments to the Council by members of the parish
- A request from a member of staff, volunteer or councillor
- Devolved services / delivery of new services
- The Clerk will be encouraged to acquire a Cilca qualification (if not already obtained) with a separate budget set up for this purpose
- Following elections/co-options of new councillors the Chair, together with the Clerk, will review any necessary training required. The Induction pack for new councillors lays out any mandatory training for councillors
- Following the election of and new Chair he/she, together with the Clerk, will review any necessary training required to fulfil the role
- The Clerk/Chair will discuss any training requirements for members on an annual basis as part of the budget-setting process

3.2 Employees: The employees of the council are seen as being fundamental in all areas of the council's service delivery and development. It is imperative that they are all fully trained to carry out their duties as efficiently and effectively as possible.

An employee who feels they have a training need should in the first instance discuss this with the Clerk. Similarly, if it is felt that an employee is in need of training, the Clerk will discuss this with the employee.

Training needs should not be left to be identified during the annual appraisal process; they may arise at any point of the year and should be addressed as soon as possible. However, individual training needs will always be considered at the annual appraisal meeting and six-monthly review.

The training need will be reviewed and assessed against the objectives of the Council, the responsibilities of the role and the development of the employee.

3.3 Councillors: If a councillor feels they have a training need they should discuss this in the first instance with the Clerk. The Clerk will be able to assess the request and ascertain whether this is something all councillors may be interested in/benefit from undertaking.

The Council will undertake an annual training needs analysis with councillors soon after each Annual Meeting of the Council in May. This will encourage councillors to look at any personal development areas or knowledge gaps as a councillor that they wish to address and importantly, consider any training needs they feel they may have with regards to Committees they are members of following the Annual Meeting.

On completing the training needs analyses, the results will be collated and reviewed by the Clerk. The Clerk will then take steps, to arrange any training required.

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3.4 Below is a list of the mandatory training for all Pontesbury Parish councillors:

- Code of Conduct
- Fundamentals of being a Councillor
- Chairmanship (for new Chair)
- Finance for Councillors (for Finance & General Purposes Committee members)
- Introduction to Planning (for Planning Committee members)
- Internal Controls (for Internal Checker)

examples of other training councillors may wish to seek:

- Conduct at meetings
- Internal Controls
- Budget setting
- Other training offered through Shropshire Association of Local Councils (see SALC website)
- Internal training offered by staff on specific council projects/policies/services/activities

#### 4. TRAINING METHODS

There are different ways in which training and development can be achieved.

- **Internally** - If training can be given utilising the in-house expertise and knowledge, this possibility will be explored. This often includes general computer training, training on specific work procedures or Council specific practices and legislation.
- **Partnership** - The Council has links with other partners where training can be sourced, such as through Shropshire Association of Local Councils, Society of Local Clerks, Shropshire Council Learning & Development team. Groups of Town & Parish Councils may join together to offer specific themed training
- **Day Workshops/Seminars** - When Council Officers receive information on workshops and seminars this is shared with employees and councillors, where relevant.
- **Conferences** - Details of conferences are shared with employees and councillors, again where relevant.
- **Professional Qualifications** - Training towards a professional qualification will often be sourced through the professional body
- **External Training Providers** - There are numerous training providers available. When sourcing training from an external provider, the Council will always seek to obtain the best price and where possible, from a nearby location. Upon identifying a training need, the employee/councillor and the Clerk should consider the most effective way in which the training can be sourced and whether or not others may benefit from the training

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- **Shadowing** – employees/councillors/volunteers may gain from working/visiting more experienced colleagues/other councils

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Each year as part of the annual budget setting process, the Council will include a training budget for employees, volunteers and councillors. When calculating this, any training needs identified as part of the annual appraisal process and councillors training needs analyses will be taken into consideration. All Council sponsored training must be appropriate to the needs of the Council and is subject to the availability of financial resources.
- 5.2 For approved courses such as CiLCA, the Council will cover the course fee, examination fees, associated membership fees and one payment to re-take a failed examination.
- 5.3 The Council will pay the annual subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks to enable staff and councillors to take advantage of training courses and conferences.
- 5.4 Employees or councillors attending training outside of Pontesbury may submit an expense claim to cover travel costs to and from the venue. Where practical and possible, if there is more than one attendee from the Council, car-pooling or shared travel arrangements should be made.
- 5.5 The Council will grant paid time off work for employees for one-off training courses lasting one day or less, providing these are approved with the clerk. Where a training course or workshop falls on an employee's non-working day, time off in lieu (TOIL) may be accrued for hours in attendance at the training.

An employee undertaking a longer training course or qualification will be required to use TOIL to cover these absences. The only exception here is with NVQ/Cilca qualifications for trainees sponsored by the Council for which paid leave from work will be granted, providing this is approved in advance by the Clerk. Where an employee requires time off work for an exam or study leave prior to an exam, the Council will be flexible to ensure this time off can be granted using either TOIL or annual leave, providing adequate notice is given by the employee.

## **6. RECOUPEING COSTS**

It is standard practice of the Council that where the Council is covering the costs of an employee's training course or qualification (this being a course or qualification, rather than one day course or workshop) a written agreement will be made that if the employee leaves the Council's employ within a set period of time during or having completed the course, the

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employee will be expected to reimburse the Council as per the agreement. This does not apply to employees in apprenticeship positions.

## **7. EVALUATION**

7.1 It is vital that any training undertaken is evaluated for effectiveness. With the exception of internal/on the job training, upon completing a training session, the attendee should report back to Clerk or Council verbally, or by distributing relevant material or both. The report should include an assessment of the relevance and effectiveness in order to assess whether or not the training is suitable for another individual at a future date.

Clerk may ask an individual to provide a written report to ensure that key learning is shared across the organisation to provide value for money and increase training benefits.

7.2 The Clerk will keep a record of training undertaken for employees and councillors. These records will be kept in accordance with the council's Document Retention Policy, after which they will be disposed of as confidential waste.

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