

Croft Parish Council

Recruitment Policy

November 2025

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1. Analysing the Vacancy

When a post becomes vacant or the establishment of a new post is agreed, care should be taken to define the purpose and objectives of the post and to decide if a new appointment is the appropriate solution to a vacancy. The following should be considered:

- Is the job content entirely appropriate?
- Can the work be allocated to other staff with a view to job enlargement, job enrichment, motivation of staff and streamlining the establishment?
- Are the qualifications required necessary?
- Is there a need for different skills or experience for future needs? and
- Are there any justifiable reasons why the job is not suitable for job sharing?

Consideration needs to be given to whether the actual tasks performed have changed or developed over the years in line with the skills and experience of the present jobholder.

Consultation with the outgoing jobholder and colleagues may produce good ideas for usefully changing the job.

Information from the exit interview may provide a useful assessment of the current role. An exit interview should have been conducted wherever possible before the vacancy is advertised. The interview should be conducted by an 'impartial person', normally on a higher level (but not the immediate supervisor), who, with the interviewee's consent, will pass a report of the interview to the Clerk/RFO.

The Clerk/RFO should review the job profile and person specification to include any significant amendments in job content and duties in consultation with the Personnel Working Group.

If the Personnel Committee considers any post unsuitable for job sharing, written reasons must be provided.

Consideration needs to be given to whether the vacancy is appropriate for permanent, fixed term, temporary or casual appointment.

2. Recruitment Authorisation

The Clerk/RFO, in consultation with the Personnel Committee, is authorised to approve the establishment of temporary posts of less than 3 months duration or specifically for maternity/paternity cover, where they can be financed within approved budgets.

3. Post Specification

Every post, without exception, must have a written post specification (job profile) outlining the main duties and responsibilities and specifying the key tasks.

4. Person Specification

A person specification specifies the attributes required by the applicant to fulfil the duties of the job. It outlines the criteria against which applicants are assessed at the short listing and interview stage.

The requirements should not be unnecessarily restrictive to unjustifiably exclude any particular group of people or individuals.

Those with responsibility for writing the job profile must ensure that the duties and responsibilities specified are based solely on the genuine requirements of the job. Failure to do this may result in discrimination.

Education and other qualifications should only be specified where it is clearly shown to be a requirement of the job. There must be no distinction between qualifications obtained in the United Kingdom (UK) and those that are fully comparable and recognised but gained outside the UK.

5. Pay and Conditions

At this stage, when the job profile and person specification have been defined, the question of Pay and Conditions should be considered.

6. Rehabilitation of Offenders

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 specifies time periods after which specific criminal convictions are considered spent. However, some posts are exempt from the Act as follows:

- Accountants;
- Solicitors/Barristers;
- All employees with substantial unsupervised access to children; and
- All employees involved in the provision of service to vulnerable clients.

Additionally, the Council is empowered under Home Office Regulations to check, both with the Police and the Department of Health, posts involving substantial access to children or vulnerable adults. As part of the recruitment process, shortlisted candidates are required to complete a form concerning criminal conviction and, if selected as the successful candidate, a Police check is carried out on the individual concerned. After completion of the recruitment procedure, all forms are destroyed.

All candidates for posts falling within the above categories will be asked at interview to declare any spent or unspent convictions.

Any false declaration may lead to employment being terminated without notice.

The disclosure of a criminal record, or other information, does not debar the candidate unless the selection panel considers that the conviction renders the candidate unsuitable for appointment. In making the decision, the Council should consider the nature of the offence, how long ago and the age of the candidate when it was committed and any other factors which may be relevant, including appropriate considerations in relation to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Failure to declare a conviction, caution or bind-over may, however, disqualify the candidate from appointment, or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light.

7. Options for Filling Vacant Posts

Job Share

Job sharing is a form of employment in which the duties of one position are shared, usually by two people, and the salary and fringe benefits are divided between each employee according to the hours worked. It is different to part time working as a high degree of co-operation is required between the job share partners.

A job-sharing situation can arise if:

- An individual employee comes to an agreement with their Manager which allows them to reduce their contracted working hours and their Manager to appoint an additional employee; and
- A candidate/candidates apply for a job on a job share basis.

Temporary Upgrades

Where an employee is required to cover all the duties of a post at a higher grade, they may be temporarily regraded for a fixed period, with the authorisation of the Personnel Committee.

Fixed Term (Temporary) Contracts

All temporary contracts should have defined or estimated end dates; where appropriate, these will be issued as Fixed Term Contracts.

Fixed Term Contracts, when used properly, can provide Managers with the flexibility to meet short term staffing needs without entering into long term commitments. However, the use of Fixed Term Contracts can only be justified in the following situations:

- Cover for Maternity Leave;
- Cover for long-term sick leave;
- Cover for a vacancy while the recruitment process takes place; and
- Short term projects of a definable length (which may be externally funded).

Secondments

Opportunities for secondment arrangements will normally be advertised. At the end of a period of secondment, an individual will have the right to return to the substantive post on terms no less favourable than those which would have been applicable if the secondment had not taken place. The period of secondment will count for the purposes of continuity of employment and all statutory and contractual rights will be unaffected by the secondment.

Renewal of Fixed Term Contracts

At any stage during the contract, the Council can decide and offer to renew it, provided the need is genuine. This must be done in agreement with the employee and all details of the offer, including the reason, must be clearly communicated and accepted in writing.

Termination Before Expected End Date

A fixed term contract can be terminated at any stage before its natural expiry date. Such a termination would be regarded as dismissal, so the normal dismissal procedure and legislation would apply. The fair reasons for termination of a contract are on the grounds of competence, conduct or redundancy and the individual would have the same right as a permanent member of staff to the relevant procedures, including hearings and appeals.

Non-Renewal of Fixed Term Contract

Non-renewal of a Fixed Term Contract is regarded as dismissal. It must be for a fair and substantial reason and the process must be carried out fairly, including use of the redundancy procedure where appropriate. The employee should be warned of any shortfall in competence or conduct and given the opportunity to improve.

Under the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993, dismissal for reasons other than those relating to the individual (e.g. conduct, competence) is regarded as redundancy and there is a requirement to consult with the appropriate recognised trades union. This requirement exists even if the employee concerned is not a member of these unions and regardless of their length of service.

The individual should receive as much warning of the non-renewal as possible. The details of the non-renewal should be set out in writing to the employee, including the reason why the contract is not being renewed. If the employee has been continuously employed for more than two years this becomes a legal entitlement.

If the employee has accrued employment rights, there is a need to instigate a search for suitable alternative employment.

8. Methods of Recruitment

The best medium for recruitment is the one which effectively reaches the target group at the best rate.

The number and quality of replies to each source should be monitored so that their relative success can be judged. Whether handling the whole process in-house or handing over part of the job to an agency, certain other decisions must be made before the advertisement is placed.

These include:

- The design of the advert;
- The information pack for candidates and contact person for further details;
- How applicants should respond, e.g., by telephone, by letter, or by application form;
- Who will make up the shortlisting panel and interviewing panel; and
- The dates for interviews and the accommodation if required.

What the full selection process may consist of:

- Will work related exercises be used?
- Will selection tests be used? Are they approved and relevant and will they be administered and interpreted by an appropriately qualified person?
- Have candidates been notified of their use within the process? and
- Who will record the reason for non-selection at all stages in the process?

9. Advertising the Vacancy

In drafting the advertisement, account should be taken of the following factors:

- The Council's corporate identity logo, which would add to the effect of the advertisement;
- The text which should be genuinely informative, but not too full to cramp the overall effect;
- The heading, which should be large and eye-catching, including the Council's name and the job title;
- What will have primary importance in the text (job interest, pay, career opportunities, location);
- Specific details such as pay (range and pro-rata salary where appropriate) and any qualifications required, which will help to reduce the number of unsuitable applications;
- Reference to Rehabilitation of Offenders and Politically Restricted posts, where appropriate; and

- What form of reply is required and the closing date for applications.

Any vacancy will be advertised in the public domain using one or more of the following:

- Parish Council Website;
- Parish Council Noticeboard;
- LALC Website;
- Local Newspapers; and
- Any other appropriate publication or location.

All advertisements must be approved by the Clerk in consultation with the Personnel Committee.

10. Information for Candidates

The total package will vary according to the position applied for. However, it is recommended that all applicants receive:

- A copy of the Job Profile;
- A copy of the Person Specification;
- The relevant application form/monitoring form; and
- The process involved in selection, i.e. notifying candidates, where appropriate, of testing or work-related exercises.

11. Application Forms

If applications are not to be acknowledged, applicants should be advised at the outset.

Where the ability to complete an application form is not of direct relevance to the job, the candidate's inability to complete the form should not exclude them from further consideration.

12. Short-Listing

The purpose of short-listing is to limit the number of applicants to those who meet the essential criteria defined in the Person Specification. If at this stage there are more applicants than are appropriate to interview, the desirable criteria should also be used.

It is important that the Clerk/RFO is involved and can express a view before a final decision is made. The likelihood of the new employee settling into the Council depends mostly on the Clerk/RFO who is responsible for seeing that the recruit is properly trained and helped to feel welcome. The Clerk/RFO who has been involved in short-listing and selection will be more committed to the recruits.

Similarly, it is much better for the candidate to meet the Clerk/RFO and to visit the prospective work location before deciding whether to accept the job.

13. Interview Arrangements

Candidates are recruited following interview. Therefore, it is essential that the interview is structured, and questions are aimed at obtaining information about the candidate, relevant to the Person Specification.

The Interview Panel shall comprise at least two people. It is good practice for those involved in the interview process also to have been involved at the short-listing stage. Councillors will be involved in interviewing for all posts in the Council.

Selected candidates should receive clear instructions in respect of the time, date, location and be advised on the composition of the Panel and any contact name for arrival. Where necessary, advance notice must be given for additional selection methods, e.g. tests or presentations.

Candidates should be asked if they have any special needs and assistance offered where these are advised.

Arrangements should be made to ensure that appropriate accommodation is booked, internally and externally, attention being given to minimising distractions, providing a relaxing atmosphere for candidates particularly where they need to wait, for example, between testing and interview.

If at the time of interview, additional requirements are identified to overcome any disability not previously notified, the Council is under a duty to make reasonable adjustments accordingly.

14. Preparation for Interviews

The following principles shall apply:

Short-listing should be undertaken by all members of the Personnel Committee, the Mayor and the Clerk/RFO.

At least two members of the short-listing panel should also be involved in the interviewing process; and

The Clerk/RFO will, where possible, be part of the Panel.

All Panel Members will receive adequate notice of the short-listing and supporting paperwork, to include:

- The job profile;
- The advertisement;
- The Person Specification;
- The application forms; and
- Selection and Interview Assessment form.

Panel Members must use the job profile and Person Specification in measuring the suitability of each candidate.

The reasons unsuccessful applicants have not been short-listed will be recorded:

- Lack of relevant skills;
- Lack of relevant previous experience;
- Lack of relevant qualifications; and
- Lack of work experience at appropriate level.

All applicants (external and internal) may request feedback from a member of the panel as to the reason why they were not short-listed.

15. Selection Methods

The selection method used must be pitched at the appropriate level for the potential applicants and based on the content of the post as stated in the Person Specification and Job Profile.

A range of selection methods may be considered, including ability tests, personality questionnaire, presentations, group exercises, in-tray exercises, written papers and interviews (first and second stage).

Where the job involves practical skills, it makes sense to confirm or test these at the time of interview, for example, manual or keyboard skills. If a large part of the job requires a practical skill which can be tested readily, and if there are several people who may be suitable for the job, it is worth considering how a practical work-related test could be organised.

Drafting and letter writing skills, for example, can be easily tested by asking applicants to draft a letter from information provided. Candidates who need to be able to express themselves clearly to others, or to work well in group situations, can be asked to deliver a prepared presentation, or to take part in a group discussion exercise with the selectors acting as observers.

Selection criteria and tests should be examined to ensure that they are related to job requirements and are free from any unjustifiable bias. Tests should be assessed against agreed criteria and the weighting to be given to the tests decided before the interview/testing takes place.

Where selection tests are used in the recruitment process, their validity and reliability as tests of suitability for the job must be established.

Where tests requiring demonstration of skill are used, they must be related to the job and be capable of being assessed and applied equally to all candidates. They should measure the individual's ability to carry out or train for the duties appropriate to the job in question.

Psychometric selection tests will not be used by Croft Parish Council.

Candidates should be informed in advance that they will be sitting a test. Candidates should be provided with adequate seating, lighting and an environment free from interference.

Good interviews are well prepared and conducted in an orderly and thorough manner. In preparation, the Personnel Committee should:

- Compare the Person Specification with what is already known about the candidate, areas of experience and qualifications etc;
- Ensure preliminary communication between members of the panel to facilitate a balanced and controlled approach to interviews;
- Plan the questions. They should be designed to probe the candidate's knowledge, ability, disposition and attitudes;
- Allocate the subjects. If there is more than one interviewer, decide who will cover the different areas, e.g. job knowledge, training and qualifications;
- Highlight areas on the application form that need to be followed up;
- Be ready for the candidates' questions. Give candidates an opportunity to ask questions and anticipate the information needed to meet the more likely ones;
- Allow sufficient time for the interviewers both to record an individual assessment of the previous candidate and to review the plan for the next candidate. Do not cut an interview short. Allow for introductions, questions from all panel members, questions from the candidate and a short discussion time for interviewers between each interview;
- Be properly organised. Make sure there will be no interruptions, e.g., divert telephone calls. Have someone available to show candidates where the toilet is; and
- Inform staff of interview details to ensure applicants can be welcomed courteously and efficiently.

The letter inviting candidates to the test should ask if any special facilities are required. However, consideration will need to be given on an individual basis, have regard to the nature of the disability and the candidate's ability.

16. References

References can be helpful but should be used with care. They are perhaps most useful for checking information such as job title, length of service and attendance record.

Interviewers can obtain this information most efficiently by asking specific questions or using a standard form.

Where the interview panel requests an opinion as to suitability for a specific job, a brief outline of duties should be included, and a telephone discussion may be helpful.

References may be taken up after short-listing or after interview and whether an offer of appointment will be made subject to receipt of references satisfactory to the Council.

If a reference is given by telephone, the following details should be recorded, ideally using a standard form to ensure appropriate questions are asked:

- The date of the conversation;
- The individual giving the reference; and
- The content of the conversation.

In all cases, reference should be taken up in writing and, if possible, confirmed before an employee commences employment with the Council.

17. Interviewing

The following principles shall apply:

- The interview panel shall comprise at least two people;
- Members of the interviewing panel should also have been involved in the short-listing process;
- The Clerk/RFO will, where possible, be part of the panel.
- Ample and equal time shall be allowed for each interview in order to ensure fair treatment; and
- The interview will follow the agreed plan.

The interviewer's role is to listen, probe, assess and above all be objective and fair. Open-ended questions will be the most helpful in giving the candidates a fair opportunity to present information about themselves. Questions must not be asked which go against the letter or the spirit of the Law or the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy.

Interviews should be concluded by:

- Checking that the candidate has no further questions or points to make;
- Advising the candidate that all appointments are subject to satisfactory police and qualification checks (where appropriate), the receipt of references satisfactory to the Council, and the relevant document in accordance with the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996; and

- Advising the candidate what will happen next and when, and whom to contact if they have any queries or wish to receive feedback.

Selection decisions must be based on the suitability of the candidates to do the job considering the overall requirements of the Authority.

18. Interview Assessment and Record

When a decision has been made, a member of the interview panel should inform each candidate of the outcome, whether successful or unsuccessful.

19. Qualification Checks

Proof of qualifications is required where these are essential to the job, before the selected candidate is offered a post. It may be necessary to offer a post subject to the receipt of certificates etc.

References should be made where necessary to the appropriate professional body in respect of the compatibility of certain qualifications and the validity of qualifications obtained outside the UK.

20. Prevention of Illegal Working

In accordance with Section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, as amended on 1 May 2004, it is a criminal offence to employ a person who is not entitled to live or work in the United Kingdom.

An offer of appointment made by the Council will be subject to the prospective employee producing one document from List 1 (attached) or two documents from List 2 (attached).

- All documents shown must be originals;
- Any photographs should be checked to ensure they are consistent with the appearance of the potential employee;
- The date of birth listed should be checked that it is consistent with the appearance of the potential employee;
- Any expiry dates should be checked that they have not passed; and
- Any United Kingdom Government stamps or endorsements are checked to see if the potential employee is able to do the type of work offered.

If the potential employee gives two documents from List 2 which has different names, a third document is required to explain the reason for this. This third document could be a marriage certificate, divorce document, deed poll, adoption certificate or statutory declaration.

The following parts of the documents presented should be photocopied:

- The front cover and all pages which give the potential employee's personal details, in particular the page with the photograph and the page with signature; and
- Any page containing a UK Government stamp or endorsement which allows the potential employee to do the type of work offered.

Records of every document copied should be kept in the potential employee's Personnel file. Should these checks reveal that a potential employee is not permitted to work, the Council should refuse employment to that person.

The Employers Helpline (0845 010 6677) can help with specific queries.

21. Offer of Employment

One member of the interviewing panel, usually the Clerk/RFO, will contact the successful candidate and offer the candidate the position. This may be done by telephone, but a letter of offer must be sent promptly. A verbal offer forms the start of a legally binding contract of employment with the prospective employee. It should be made in consultation with the whole interview panel.

The offer letter should include:

- Reference to the interview;
- The appointment;
- Place of work;
- Annual salary provision with regard to overtime and the periods and form of payment;
- Notice period;
- What is required to confirm acceptance;
- Confirmation of start date, if known; and
- Pension details so that the individual may opt out if wished.

The statement of particulars of employment will normally be contained in the offer letter. However, if it is not included, it must be sent to the employee within 2 months of commencing employment with the Council.

The statement of particulars will include:

- Identity of the parties;
- Date on which the employee's period of continuous employment began;
- Scale or rate of remuneration and the intervals at which remuneration is paid;
- Any terms and conditions relating to hours of work and normal working hours;
- Any terms and conditions relating to holidays and holiday pay;
- Any terms and conditions relating to incapacity for work due to sickness or injury, including any provision for sick pay;
- Any terms and conditions relating to pensions schemes;
- The length of notice which the employee is entitled to receive and obliged to give;
- Job title;
- Where the employment is temporary, the period for which it is expected to continue or, if it is for a fixed term, the date when it is to end;
- The place of work;
- Any collective agreements which directly affect the terms and conditions of employment; and
- The name and description of the person to whom employees can apply if they are dissatisfied with any disciplinary decision or seek to redress a grievance, and the procedural steps to follow.

22. Making a Complaint

Any complaint regarding recruitment and selection should be communicated to the Clerk/RFO within 13 weeks of the act complained of. Any investigation will be carried out and must be made in writing to the Council via the Clerk/RFO where appropriate and a written response forwarded to the complainant within 21 days.

If a member of the general public or an employee has a complaint concerning unlawful discrimination in respect of the recruitment, selection, appointment or promotion process, then they have the right of reference to the civil courts and employment tribunals. This does not preclude them from following the process operated by the Council or raising the matter with their Councillor or Member of Parliament.

23. Employment Tribunals

When making a complaint to an employment tribunal, there is a strict timetable that must be followed. A complaint can be made within 3 months of the alleged offence, but employment tribunals have discretion to accept complaints made after the 3-month period if they consider that it was not reasonably practicable for the individual to make their complaint earlier.

24. Victimisation

Victimisation occurs where an individual, whether or not an employee, is treated less favourably than someone else in the same circumstances as a consequence of their previous actions. This can include the individual submitting a grievance, making a complaint, or any other action during their work.

The Council will regard any action(s) by its employees which involve victimisation of other person(s) or employee(s) extremely seriously. Investigation of any allegations will be undertaken and may result in action being taken within the Council's Disciplinary Procedures.

25. Induction

The next step is to make plans for the new employee's arrival. Colleagues could be briefed and involved in preparations for the new employee to ensure they become effective in the minimum period. Even if there will be a delay in taking up the post, these arrangements should be put in place. The induction checklist enables an effective programme of induction to be planned.

26. Probation

New employees without 6 months continuous service will be subject to a probationary period of 6 months.

The probationary period enables the employee to assess the job and the Clerk/RFO to assess suitability and potential. The employee may need extensive support and guidance from the Clerk/RFO during this period.

At regular intervals during the first 6 months of employment, the employee meets with the Clerk/RFO to assess employment to date. The meeting will encompass:

- Work performance (including quality of work, accuracy, speed and ability to meet deadlines);
- Personnel related abilities (including relations with staff/public, interest, enthusiasm, reliability, punctuality, initiative);
- Attendance record; and
- Other comments (including remedial action and training).

The assessment will be recorded and discussed with the employee.

Where, at the end of the probationary period, performance is assessed as satisfactory, the employee will be informed that they are established as a permanent member of staff.