

Croft Parish Council

Training and Development Policy

March 2026

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1. Introduction and Declaration of Commitments

Croft Parish Council is committed to training its staff and elected members and recognises that well trained and informed staff promote good practice within its organisation.

The Council is working towards accreditation in Local Council Awards to demonstrate to its electorate that it meets all requirements of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Awards and has additional documentation and information in place for good governance, effective community engagement and Council improvement. The Parish Council is also working towards the eligibility criteria for the General Power of Competence by having at least two thirds of its members elected at the last ordinary election and a CiLCA qualified Town Clerk.

The Parish Council values the time and commitment given by its members to their community and this policy is aimed at maximising the rewards from that time by ensuring that its Elected Members understand and enjoy the role they undertake in their community and are able to discharge that role effectively.

Croft Parish Council will identify training needs in the light of the overall objectives of the Parish Council and the requirements of each individual.

This will be done for staff by means of staff appraisal and supervision processes (where appropriate). All Councillors are encouraged to participate in introductory and advanced training offered by the Lincolnshire Association of Local Council's (LALC) and /or the National Association of Local Council's (NALC) and other courses relevant to their council and committee roles. Notice of relevant training opportunities will be circulated to all as they are received in the office.

Croft Parish Council recognises that it must also be responsive to certain situations such as:

- Changes in legislation
- Changes in Quality Assurance Systems / Schemes
- New and revised qualifications (CiLCA 2015 or later revision(s))
- Accidents and Incidents
- Professional errors and mistakes
- New equipment and software systems
- New working methods
- Complaints to the Council
- Requests from staff and Councillors

Croft Parish Council will encourage its staff and all of its members to participate in relevant training and pay expenses arising from such training provided it has been approved in advance by resolution of the Parish Council or the Parish Clerk (where appropriate).

The training offered to both staff and elected members will be no less than the minimum standard.

Croft Parish Council will ensure that all of its new members receive adequate training at the earliest opportunity in their term of office.

Training will be provided for staff and members (where appropriate) in matters relating to Audit and Financial management as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2013 (or as amended).

Contracts of employment and job descriptions given to staff members will include details of the Council's commitment to training.

Croft Parish Council has a commitment to membership of the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) recognising that it is a lead provider in training for Councillors and staff.

Croft Parish Council has a commitment for its Clerks to be a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks recognising that it is a lead provider in training for officers.

Croft Parish Council will ensure that training for both officers and members is adequately covered as a training item in the annual budget and that it will be reviewed annually.

Croft Parish Council will ensure that there is adequate budget provision for membership of the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC), and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

2. Scope and Purpose

It is the Parish Council's policy to ensure that all employees (whether full or part time, temporary or fixed term) and Councillors will be trained to a high standard, to ensure that the Parish Council's aims and objectives can be delivered as efficiently as possible.

Members of staff and Councillors are expected to embrace the ethos of training and the merits of a well-run and pro-active council structure.

3. Identifying, Meeting and Evaluating Training and Development Needs

Training and development needs will be identified from a variety of sources:

- Induction and probationary periods
- One-to-ones
- Appraisal
- Workforce planning
- Team meetings
- Annual plan
- Change processes

In addition, the Parish Council will encourage staff to identify their own learning styles and will seek to provide a wide variety of learning and training methods, including:

- Attendance at conferences, seminars and short courses
- Online training
- Internal coaching
- Shared in-house learning resources (books, journals, DVDs etc.)
- In-house training
- Work shadowing
- Time for self-directed research and learning

4. Consideration

A number of factors will be taken into account when assessing a request from an individual. This policy provides one element of the decision-making process. Other factors will include availability of finance and the individual's employment record.

In order to ensure that the Parish Council is able to consistently evaluate requests, training and development opportunities have been organised into three categories according to the degree of importance each intervention has for different roles.

5. Categorising training and personal development

The three categories are as follows:

a. Mandatory

Mandatory training is legally required for the post-holder, or a qualification deemed to be so fundamental to the role that the Parish Council makes it a mandatory requirement. Any mandatory training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description. For mandatory qualifications, it is unlikely that an applicant would be recruited without having previously attained the qualification. Where a qualification becomes mandatory for the role, the Parish Council will provide reasonable assistance for the employee to attain the qualification (see the section on Guidance for Support below).

Some mandatory training may be specific to a particular job role whilst other training may be a generic requirement. Examples of generic mandatory training include:

- Health and Safety (Personal Safety, Display Screen equipment)
- Data Protection

b. Desirable

Desirable training is not legally required for the post, but it is directly relevant to the individual's job. Any desirable training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description.

For desirable qualifications or training, an individual may be recruited without having previously attained the qualification or undergone the training but may be expected to attain the qualification within a defined period of time. The need for training may also be identified through one-to-one meetings or annual appraisals. A desirable qualification is likely to enhance the skills and reputation of the Parish Council. Examples may include:

Job specific

- Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)
- Cemetery Legal Compliance
- Microsoft Excel

c. Optional

An optional qualification or optional training may not be directly linked to the individual's current job. Optional training or development is generally more beneficial to the individual's career than it is for the Parish Council.

Personal development aimed at developing the skills or knowledge of an individual in order to provide a successor for an existing job is deemed to be optional. However, depending on the circumstances, training for succession may be 'desirable'.

Job specific

- Community Governance
- Town Planning Technical Support - Level 3 Diploma

6. Guidance for support

Support for qualifications, training and personal development can include financial assistance towards the cost of tuition, examinations and resource materials in addition to half/day release and time off for study leave and taking the examination. Any financial and non-financial support to training and development is entirely at the discretion of the Parish Council.

The Parish Council reserves the right to reclaim financial support where the employee:

- Leaves the Parish Council during the duration of the course, or up-to 1 year following completion of the course.
- Fails to complete the training.
- Fails to attend training without good reason.

7. Study leave

Where individuals require study leave to undertake mandatory training, they will be able to take all the leave within normal working hours.

Where individuals require study leave to undertake study which is not mandatory but part of the individual's formal continuous professional development, the Parish Council will contribute up to 3 days study leave per annum for courses which are directly related to the individual's role.

Where individuals require study leave to undertake training which is not mandatory but part of the individual's desire for career development, the Parish Council will contribute up to 3 days study leave per annum for courses which are directly related to the individual's role.

Time off for study leave must be approved in advance. To make a request the individual is asked to write to the Clerk (or Chair of the Council), setting out the details of the course of study, how it relates to their work, and the time being requested.

No study leave will be granted where individuals undertake study, which is not required for their role, or not directly related to their role. However, the Clerk (or Chair of the Council) will consider requests for flexible working to allow the study to take place, as long as the needs of the Parish Council can be met.

Staff attending or undertaking required training are entitled to payment of normal earnings; all prescribed fees and other relevant expenses arising. Employees are also entitled to paid leave for the purpose of sitting for required examinations. When attending training courses outside contracted daily hours, part-time employees should be paid on the same basis as full-time employees.

8. Staff Training

- The Council's employees are seen as 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.
- Each member of staff will receive a staff appraisal (once a year) and this will be an opportunity to discuss any training needs.
- In addition, members of staff are 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. Any requests should be submitted to the Chair of the Personnel Committee for evaluation.

- 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.
- Full support will be given to all employees undertaking training of any kind in furtherance of the Council's activities.
- It is an aim that the Clerk should be either CiLCA or University of Gloucester Level 4 qualified or be working towards one of these qualifications.
- The Council will support the Clerk in their work by encouraging their membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks.
- The Parish Clerk will maintain a record of training undertaken and present this record to the Personnel Committee annually.

9. Councillor Training

- The Council will encourage all members to attend training in relation to the corporate activities of the Council, and its administrative procedures.
- Councillors will also be expected to undertake specialist courses as need arises, and dependent on any specific responsibilities that are allocated.
- All Council policies will reflect the requirement for member training and updating on key elements of council procedure and policy.
- The Council is a member of the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils and has full access to its training programme.
- If additional, specialist training is required on any matter, the Clerk will source the appropriate qualified person to delivery that training in-house to members.
- A record of all training attended by members will be kept and publicised via the Council's Publication Scheme, and the Council's website.

10. General

- The Council will set aside an adequate training budget each year to meet training needs for staff and councillors.
- Anyone attending training is required to report back to the Council - either verbally or in writing - informing others of the value of the training, and how appropriate it was to the particular issues concerned.
- Any useful training material should be shared between staff and members, either in hard copy or via e-mail, to ensure everyone is made fully aware of important updates relating to law and administration.
- The Council will take note of any matters which should be pursued as a result of training attended, and where best practice procedures should be implemented or updated as a result.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Council and subsequently linked into the budget-setting to allow for all contingencies with regard to training needs.