LRALC   Monthly training bulletin

June 2023

Here is our second monthly training bulletin with reminders, information about new courses and other hints to help your council and councillors.

Training policy

Last month we offered a draft training record for you to adapt for your own use. This month we provide a draft model training policy for staff and councillors. If you already have a policy, check through ours. Feel free to take any parts that will add to what you have.

If you don't have a training policy yet, why not? You'd expect any employer to have a training policy for employees. And you'd also expect the management board of a company, charity or school governing board to attend regular training. So why should your council be any different? Our model policy may not cover exactly what you want or need, but adapt it as required for your council. Training is not a one-off event, it should be an essential journey for us all, whatever stage we have reached. Don't look at the initial training and assume that there is no more development needed for you. Think about where you want to get to next and what your council actually needs.

Appraisal

The model policy mentions appraisal several times. Who is responsible for this in your council? And have the people responsible been trained how to do it properly? You owe it to your employees to make sure you provide the right conditions for them to do their work. Appraisal is a key part of making sure that their needs are identified. Appraisal needs planning for properly, needs building into the council calendar, and needs the involvement of staff and councillors who know what they are doing. We can help with this.

Appraisal skills, 12th September. Book through our website.

°CiLCA

Draft policy 5.3 refers to the clerk holding the CiLCA qualification. We see advertisements for clerks with the expectation that CiLCA is achieved within the first 12 months. This is not realistic. We'd suggest that a clerk who is new to the parish council sector should have at least 1 year under their belt before they even begin to think about starting the qualification. And having signed up for CiLCA, it will often take at least 12 - 18 months to complete, if not more.

We strongly recommend that councils support employees to achieve this qualification. However, be aware that it will take time for staff to be familiar with the full cycle of council activities, and then to complete the course in addition to their normal duties.

CiLCA is taught on our behalf through Northamptonshire Association of Local Councils with courses starting in March. If you are interested in taking this on, let us know and we can put you on a waiting list. We'll contact you towards the end of the calendar year to see if you are ready to start.

Clerks employed by LRALC member councils may book directly for courses at £30 per participant.

All sessions are 90 minutes. Zoom links will be sent directly to participants as part of the confirmation email from the Parkinson Partnership. Your council will receive an invoice from the LRALC office after the session and will make your payment to us.

Training dates are live on www.bookwhen.com/parkinson

Courses currently available:

- Finance for councillors
- Internal controls
- Procurement
- The role of internal audit
- VAT for unregistered councils (VAT 126)
- VAT for VAT registered councils
- VAT – partial exemption

You can also book Parkinson courses for your whole council. Contact our office for more details.

Direct booking

Course details are on the next two pages of this bulletin with booking links, dates and times at https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/calc-training-events

Each course has a dedicated link where you can make your booking. Confirmation emails and links will be sent directly to participants by Breakthrough Communications. Each course will cost your council £35 per person. Sessions run through Zoom and usually last 2 hours with a range of times available during the day and evenings.

Choose Leicestershire and Rutland Association as the county association when you book. Your council will receive an invoice from the LRALC office after the session and will pay us. Cancellation without charge is possible up to one week before the course. Any queries about bookings should be made directly to Breakthrough Communications rather than our office.

If you would like to arrange a whole-council session with Breakthrough Communications, get in touch with us at the LRALC office as we can arrange dates to suit and a better total price for you.

 Courses available

Local council communications and community engagement training courses

Communicating with your community Part 1: creating a communications strategy	It's important for councils of all shapes and sizes to create a public communications strategy that supports the delivery of your council's priorities, aims and objectives. In this session we explore latest best practice for creating an effective, sustainable and resource-appropriate communications strategy that fits with the needs and aspirations of your council.
Communicating with your community Part 2: implementing effective community engagement and building sustainable conversations	This session will help you consider how to implement your communications strategy and engage with your community. We explore how councils can communicate and engage, as well as building sustainable conversations. Discover the tools, strategies and techniques needed to better promote your own messages but also to better respond to the voices within your local community.
How councils can engage effectively with young people in their communities	Young people are often a hard-to-reach demographic for councils to engage with. In this session we explore what we actually mean by the term 'young people', what issues matter to different groups of younger people, how to effectively reach and engage them, both online and offline, and how to build partnerships with youth-focused organisations in your area.
How councils can recruit a more diverse pool of local councillors	It is increasingly challenging to find people who are willing to put their names forward either at election time or to be co-opted. We explore effective ways councils and councillors can engage people over time, building up their awareness and interest in the work of the council, in order to better promote and demystify the role of a councillor.
Getting the most from local and regional media	From local newspapers and magazines to regional TV and radio, traditional media provides councils a platform to communicate with residents, but engaging with journalists can be daunting. We explore how you can build effective two-way relationships with journalists, how to write effective press releases and how to get regular coverage in your local and regional media.
Crisis communications for local councils	We never know when a crisis could strike. From local flooding to a council meeting going viral there are many ways in which councils can find themselves in the eye of the media storm. This session takes participants through the detail of preparing for a crisis no matter what form it may take. Passing on expert tips and guidance on being as prepared as you can be should the worst happen.

Local council social media and digital communications training courses

Canva Part 1: Getting started	This training session is designed to help councils get started with Canva and to get to grips with its essential features. Participants will discover how councils can use Canva to create content for a variety of community engagement purposes, including printed material as well as for websites and social media. We will work through how to create new designs and how to make use of templates, how to add text and images, and customise their designs.
Canva Part 2: Advanced	This training session is designed for councils who already have experience with Canva and want to learn its more advanced features and techniques. Participants will learn how to use advanced tools to create complex designs and layouts as well as how to set up your council's brand. We will also explore how to integrate Canva with your social media, how to make use of its scheduling features and using Canva to create and edit video content.
Social Media Part 1: Getting started with social media for local councils	Social media provides councils with an opportunity to significantly enhance their communications. Discover how to get started on social media and how to get the fundamentals right. In this session we explore how to create a social media strategy, how to get the most out of Facebook in particular, and how to make use of time-saving tools and techniques save councils time and effort.
Social media	Many councils look to use a range of social media platforms in order to increase their digital reach into the community. In this session we explore how to get the most

Part 2: Advanced social media strategies & tactics for local councils	from each of the key social media platforms and how to ensure your social media content is delivering on your council's communications objectives. We also introduce social media advertising and how this can benefit councils.
Social media skills for parish and town councillors	Social media provides councillors an opportunity to engage and communicate with their residents. Building up two-way conversations through the power of digital platforms has never been easier, but it can be tricky to get started and to know where to focus your time and effort. We walk you through the essential ways to get the most out of key social media platforms as a local councillor, what issues to be mindful of, and we provide top tips to engage with your residents.

Local council interpersonal skills and communication skills training courses

Dealing with difficult people and conversations in our local councils	Managing our professional relationships within our local councils is important, yet it can still be a challenge to deal with people who are 'difficult' and to face challenging situations. In this session we explore practical techniques to manage difficult conversations and situations in a council environment. Suitable for Clerks, council officers and councillors.
Councillors training: chairing council and public meetings effectively	This session is designed for councillors, regardless of whether you are an experienced chairperson or whether you are new to the role. We explore how to effectively prepare for meetings, how to get the most out of the meetings you chair and from other councillors, and how to deal with tricky situations.

Local council Data Protection and Freedom of Information training courses

Data Protection for councils Part 1: Foundations & theory	In an ever-evolving legislative landscape, it is vital that councils ensure they have the most up-to-date understanding of their data protection obligations. This introductory session walks councils through the theory and core principles of GDPR and related data protection legislation, and we explain what policies, practices and processes councils need to have in place.
Data Protection for councils Part 2: Accountability & lawfulness	Our second data protection session deep dives into how councils are required to demonstrate accountability with UK GDPR. We consider the different lawful bases for how councils process personal data and we how to get started with creating the different policies and documents required, including your Privacy Notice, Legitimate Interest and Data Protection Impact Assessments.
Data Protection for councils Part 3: Dealing with data subject rights and information security	Our third data protection session considers how to deal with data subject rights requests, including Subject Access Requests. We explore specific steps to take to ensure you are compliant with the legislation, and we consider what exemptions may apply, and when. We also explore the importance of Information Security for local councils and what this means in practice.
Data protection training for parish and town councillors	Whether you are an experienced councillor or have only recently been elected, it is vital that you understand how data protection legislation sits with your role as an elected member. This session will help you understand your legal obligations to yourself and to your council and how to get things right. We also introduce the Freedom of Information legislation and what this means as a councillor.
Freedom of Information for local councils: obligations, procedures and exemption	This course looks at what requirements and obligations local councils have when it comes to Freedom of Information. We look at what policies and procedures councils should have in place, how to ensure officers and councillors are aware of their obligations and what steps to take when you get an FOI request, and what exemptions may potentially apply and when.

Course dates June - October

We'll give you booking dates for the next few months. More details about times and dates for later in the year are on our website.

Key to courses:

LRALC	Courses may be Zoom or face to face. Cost varies- see our website. Book through LRALC https://www.leicestershireandrutlandalc.gov.uk/training-reservations.html May be taught by LRALC officers or specialists on our behalf.
Breakthrough Communications	All courses via Zoom. All £35 per person. Book via https://breakthroughcomms.co.uk/calc-training-events
Parkinson Partnership	All courses via Zoom. All £30 per person. Book via https://bookwhen.com/parkinson#focus=ev-smrf-20210630100000

For all courses, councils will be invoiced by and payment should be made to LRALC

Please check the respective websites for availability, cancellations or changes to dates at the time you wish to book.

June

1st	Communicating with your community part 1
1st	Code of Conduct
2nd	Councillors: data protection training
5th	Data Protection & GDPR for Clerks & Officers part 1
6th	Communicating with your community part 2
6th	Finance for councillors
6th	Planning Nuts & Bolts
7th	Engage more effectively with young people
7th	Chairman
8th	New clerk's finance
8th	Dealing with local and regional media
9th	Data Protection & GDPR for Clerks & Officers part 2
13th	Data Protection & GDPR for Clerks & Officers part 3
13th	The essentials of being a good employer (CANCELLED)
14th	Social media for councils: getting started
14th	Councillor
15th	Social media for councils: advanced strategies
15th	VAT for unregistered councils (VAT126)
16th	Freedom of Information for councils
20th	Finance for councillors
20th	Recruiting and retaining a more diverse pool of councillors
21st	Playground inspection
21st	Managing difficult people and conversations
21st	Planning Nuts & Bolts
22nd	Councillors: social media skills
22nd	Procurement
22nd	Chairman
27th	LCAS briefing
27th	VAT – Partial Exemption
28th	Councillor

July

3rd	Councillors: data protection training
3rd	Charitable Trusts part 1
4th	Finance for councillors
5th	Internal controls
5th	Councillor (NEW DATE ADDED)
4th	Communicating with your community part 1
5th	Communicating with your community part 2
6th	Engage more effectively with young people
6th	VAT for registered councils
6th	Agendas and Minutes
7th	Data Protection & GDPR for Clerks & Officers part 1
10th	Data Protection & GDPR for Clerks & Officers part 2
10th	Charitable Trusts part 2
11th	Social media for councils: getting started
11th	Procurement
12th	Social media for councils: advanced strategies
13th	Councillors: social media skills
13th	Finance for councillors
13th	Recruiting and retaining a more diverse pool of councillors
14th	Data Protection & GDPR for Clerks & Officers part 3
18th	Councillors: chairing meetings effectively
18th	VAT for unregistered councils (VAT126)
24th	Councillor training – for clerks

August

1st	Social media part 1
2nd	Communicating with your community part 1
3rd	Communicating with your community part 2
7th	Data protection for councils part 1
11th	Data protection for councils part 2
15th	Data protection for councils part 3
16th	Social media part 2
17th	Social media skills for parish and town councillors
21st	Data protection training for parish and town councillors
22nd	Dealing with difficult people and conversations in our local councils

September

4th	Data protection for councils part 1
4th	Village greens
5th	Communicating with your community part 1
5th	Parish clerks 1
6th	Communicating with your community part 2
8th	Data protection for councils part 2
11th	Data protection for councils part 3
12th	How councils can engage effectively with your people in their communities
12th	Appraisal skills
13th	Chairman
14th	Social media part 1
19th	Social media part 2
19th	Councillor
20th	Social media skills for parish and town councillors
21st	Chairing council and public meetings effectively
21st	Parish clerks 2
25th	Data protection training for parish and town councillors
27th	Local Council Award Scheme briefing
28th	Agendas and minutes

October

2nd	Data protection training for parish and town councillors
3rd	Communicating with your community part 1
4th	Communicating with your community part 2
4th	Parish clerks 3
5th	Code of conduct
6th	Data protection for councils part 1
9th	Data protection for councils part 2
10th	How councils can engage effectively with your people in their communities
11th	Confidential session
13th	Data protection for councils part 3
18th	Getting the most from local and regional media
19th	Social media part 1
24th	Social media part 2
24th	Report writing
25th	Social media skills for parish and town councillors
26th	Dealing with difficult people and conversations in our local councils

xxx Parish council

Draft Training policy

Contents   **Page**

1   Purpose

1.1   xxx 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;
- 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 Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils. All employees and members are encouraged to attend courses provided through its training programme.

2.3   The council will also encourage participation in courses run by other providers where appropriate.

2.4   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.

2.5   Training material should be shared to ensure all involved with the council are made fully aware of issues and updates relating to law, administration and practical management.

2.6   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 Scheme[1], the following criteria regarding training and development must be met.

3.1   Foundation Award
The council confirms 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 new 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 and development 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, events, online courses, learning on the job and qualifications. Councillors undertake a range of development activities such as attending conferences, undertaking training, or reading about developments in the sector. 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 IDB[2].

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

- a qualified clerk;

- a clerk (and deputy) employed according to nationally or locally agreed terms and conditions;

- 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 may 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 Continuous Professional Development points every year. The CPD guidance on how points are allocated can be downloaded from NALC's or SLCC's websites.

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[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*, NALC, 2021 www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/lcas/1855-lcas-guide/file
[2] https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/1341-cpd-point-scheme-guide/file

3.3   Quality Gold Award

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;
- manages the performance of each individual staff member to achieve its business plan.

What is the accreditation panel looking for?

The statements on performance management explain the processes 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. The statements also include confirming that each member of staff has their own professional development plan and that the majority of councillors participate in a member development programme that is specific to their roles and the needs of the council. It is important to show evidence that the council is a good employer.

4   Staff training

4.1   The clerk to council and all other members of staff are 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   All staff will receive an annual staff appraisal and this will be an opportunity to discuss any training needs.

4.3   In addition, all 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.

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 clerk to council is expected to be a member of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). Other staff are encouraged to be members.

5.2   The council will pay the subscriptions of employees to the SLCC.

5.3   The clerk is expected to hold a Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA). If the clerk 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 Training Strategy for town and parish councils[3]. 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 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 council will consider contributing to the cost of attending regional or national conferences.

5.10 Assistant and deputy clerks are encouraged to follow the training pathway outlined for the clerk as in 5.1 to 5.9 above. Support will be provided by the council as required.

5.11 Employees who are not office-based are encouraged to follow training pathways as identified within their own professions. Support will be provided by the council as required.

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[3] National Training Strategy
https://www.slcc.co.uk/national-training-strategy/

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 Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils 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 the 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 delivery 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, procedures and management;

- the planning system and local councils' role in the planning system;

- community engagement.

7   Review

This policy should be reviewed on a biennial basis or in response to changes in relevant legislation, training procedures or criteria for accreditation.

8   **Version control and amendment history**

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