



Festival of Britain Village 1951
Motto: "Independence and Self Help"

TROWELL PARISH COUNCIL

Staff Recruitment Policy and Procedures.

Introduction.

This procedure is designed to help and encourage the employment of staff. And to ensure that the Council complies with all legislative requirements relating to the employment of staff.

Recruitment of Staff.

1.1 Although there is no requirement to do so, the Parish Council will normally advertise staff vacancies. Such vacancies as may arise may be filled by whatever method the Parish Council sees fit to use.

1.2 If the Parish Council decides to advertise any staff vacancies, they will be notified by means of advertisements in the local press, and internet, giving details of any qualifications and experience required. The closing date for receipt of applications and the interview date will be included in the advert.

1.3 Application for vacancies will be by means of application forms and/or requests for CV's. Receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by letter or email.

1.4 All received applications will be viewed and scored against a set of criteria relevant to the specific job vacancy. A shortlist will be drawn up for those candidates selected for interview.

1.5 Candidates will be selected taking full account of the provisions of any anti-discriminatory legislation in force at the time.

1.6 Interviews will normally be conducted either on the same day or over two consecutive days. Interviewing officer will usually be the Parish Clerk and two members from the HR Committee.

1.7 Offers of employment following the interview process described above will normally be made initially by telephone and followed up by a letter within 48 hours.

1.8 All offers of employment are made subject to satisfactory references being received and a successful probationary period.

1.9 All staff employed by the Parish Council are expected to sign the Parish Council's formal Contract.

1.10 All staff employed by the Parish Council are paid in accordance with national living wage or nationally negotiated local government pay scales in force at the time.

1.11 All Staff employed by the Parish Council are entitled to join the Pension Scheme under Regulations at the time of appointment or decision to join the Pension Scheme.

Retention and Training of Staff

2.1 All staff employed by the Parish Council will be subject to the Parish Councils adopted appraisal scheme.

2.2 The appraisal scheme has been formulated to provide a method of identifying any further training needs as well as monitoring staff performance and aiding in the retention of valuable members of staff.

2.3 The Parish Council sees the provision of training as enhancing individual employees' opportunities for personal advancement, primarily within the organisation, where those opportunities exist. Staff training will also enhance the aim of high-quality service provision by the Parish Council.

2.4 When staff vacancies arise, those employees already employed by the Parish Council will be considered to fill a vacancy before it is advertised as detailed at paragraph 1.2. Although the number of employees is small this will give opportunities for advancement within the organisation. Any 'promotion' will be considered on merit. Length of service with the Parish Council, and the loyalty that this implies will be considered but will not be an over-riding issue for consideration.

2.5 Where appropriate, the Parish Council will meet the cost of training, with the proviso that such costs will be refunded if the employee leaves the Parish Council's employment within a period of two years of completion of such training. This will ensure that the full benefit of the training funded by the Parish Council is retained.

2.6 Where appropriate, and provided it meets the current business requirements of the Parish Council, it will seek to provide opportunities whereby staff can extend their personal and career development prospects by assuming additional responsibilities on a temporary limited basis. A system to encourage innovative thinking may be used to further this aspiration.

Employment Legislation

3.1 All staff employed by the Parish Council will be treated in accordance with prevailing employment legislation. Such legislation will include, but is not restricted to, the following:

Equality Act 2010

Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended.

Advice Note – This advice note sets out the steps to be followed by the Council as an employer when employing staff.

Who/what post are recruiting?

When recruiting a new or existing post, you need to take account of the following questions:

- Who are you recruiting and to what post?
- Is this a new post or an existing one?
- Draw up a job description of what the main tasks and duties are to be performed by the post.
- Draw up a person specification of the personal aptitudes that are required of the candidate and which are desirable.
- How and where will the post be advertised?
- Who will be shortlisted to attend interviews and how do they fit with the Job Description and Person Specification?
- Consider who should form the appointment panel.
- Consider what questions the panel will ask and agree the same set of questions of all candidates.
- What terms and conditions are you offering i.e. green book or other terms?
- When these have been completed satisfactorily go on to job offers.

Job Offers

If a job applicant is successful at interview and the employer wants to offer them employment, then it is very important that the offer is made subject to those terms set out in your standard contract of employment. In addition, a Council should bear in mind that under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, a Council is required to appoint upon merit, subject to certain qualifications.

Remember that a contract of employment does not have to be in writing. It could be agreed orally, for example over the telephone or face-to-face, so an employer needs to be careful what is said, as terms of employment could be established by oral discussions.

If an employee starts working for the Council with nothing agreed in writing, then certain terms and conditions are implied at law. This is a dangerous position for the Council because the implied terms do not give it much protection. So, the Council should ensure that formal, written contracts of employment and statements of terms and conditions are issued to the employee as a matter of urgency.

A failure to provide a written statement of particulars on the first day of the employment commencing could lead to employees bringing a successful Employment Tribunal Claim. For those staff who commenced work prior to April 2020, the employee can request a copy of the written terms that apply to them and the Council has one month in which to supply this information.

Once the employee has stated working for the Council and terms have been agreed, it is not possible to change those terms and conditions of employment unilaterally. In other words, any change must be by agreement. This means that if an employee starts working for the Council and it subsequently sends the employee a written contract of employment (which effectively imposes new terms and conditions) the employee can refuse to sign it.

So, it is very important that job offers are clearly stated as being subject to the Council's standard terms and it is important that employees sign the contract **before** starting work.

References

It is strongly recommended that that the Council take up references for every new employee before employment starts. However, if it is not possible to take up references prior to employment commencing then it should be done once the employee has started.

The job offer letter should state that the appointment is subject to satisfactory references. If satisfactory references are not obtained, then employment can be terminated. However, before terminating any employment, please always seek advice.

If the Council is ever asked to give a reference, be very careful. If the Council says something that is inaccurate or false, then the employee or the recipient could then sue the Council for damages. On the other hand, if the Council holds back information, it could be liable to the person to whom you give the information. The safest bet is to have a policy that the Council does not give references or give only factual references.

Probationary Periods

It is sensible to make an offer of employment subject to an initial probationary period. In effect, the first two years of employment can often be treated as a probationary period because an employee cannot make a claim for unfair dismissal (in normal cases) until he/she has two years' continuous employment. However, it is normal to specify a shorter probationary period (for example 3 months) during which time the employee's employment will be actively monitored and reviewed at regular periods.

It makes sense also to have a short notice period during the probationary period. For example, many employers state that they can terminate employment by giving 1 weeks' notice at any time during the probationary period but that after successful completion of that period, the notice of termination to given by the employer increases.

It is important that every new employee's employment is diarised for review at least 1 month before the second anniversary of their employment, although of course there would have been regular meetings during, **once** an employee achieves 24 month's employment, he/she acquires a right not to be unfairly dismissed, and it is than more difficult to terminate employment. Terminating employment without notice because the employee's second anniversary is approaching is risky because the law adds onto the termination date the statutory minimum notice period (one week prior to the second anniversary). The lesson is therefore to terminate before the end of the 103rd week.

Councils should also be aware of new employees having gained continuity of service of more than one by virtue of having worked for other local authorities.

Recruitment: Conducting Interviews

This advice note is intended for the use of clerks and members of the HR committee.

You have shortlisted successfully and selected the people for interview and now you are inviting them to attend.

1. You should ask all applicants invited for an interview if they need any reasonable adjustments so they can attend – for example by making your office accessible for an applicant who has a disability.
2. It is a good idea to have a small panel to carry out the interview, rather than one person. It is also a good idea not to have the full council, where this is a large body. It is further recommended that the Clerk be a member of the panel and able to contribute to it.
3. Tell the applicants what to expect at the interview. For example, you Council may want a presentation about a certain subject or an in-tray exercise, or some other tasks to undertake. If this is the case, give adequate notice of this beforehand for time for them to prepare. Have pens and papers to hand and ensure the technology works for any presentation they may have.
4. Tell them who will be carrying out the interview and what each person's role is.
5. On their arrival make them at their ease as far as possible and offer a cup of coffee or tea or have water available during the interview.
6. The interview should be confidential with no interruptions allowed. The room should be private and quiet and suitable for all attending.
7. Prepare a set of questions that will be asked, and the interview structure and format agreed.
8. Have matrix against which each applicants' answers can be rated for each person carrying out the interviews.
9. You must not discriminate in the questions asked and should avoid any personal questions. For instance, you cannot ask whether they intend to have children soon.
10. Ask the same questions of each candidate. Ensure these are open questions designed to have the candidate talking about themselves and their experience. An example of some of the questions are set out below. Please note this is not an exhaustive list and can be adapted.
 - a) How did they hear about the role?
 - b) Why do they want this job?
 - c) What skills can they bring to the role?
 - d) Are they applying for other jobs?
 - e) Tell us about their previous experience and how they think this will help them in the post?
 - f) Tell us about a particular stressful or pressurized situation they had and how they dealt with it?
 - g) When you are balancing multiple projects how do you keep yourself organised?
 - h) What are your strong points and what do you not do so well?
 - i) Why are you leaving/have left your current job?
 - j) Why is there a gap in your employment (if there is one)
 - k) Can you explain why you want to/did change careers paths?
 - l) Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?
 - m) What do you think we (the Council) can do better or differently?
11. Supplementary questions are difficult and potentially an area where you could leave yourself open to discrimination. Any such questions asked should only be based on the facts presented at the interview and on the job description and person specification.
12. There is a school of thought that the interview questions be sent all applicants before the interview to prepare them and to have responses ready. The counter argument to this is that

you may want to see how the people answer these questions on the spot and how well they have thought about the post and your organisation beforehand.

13. Leave enough time for the applicants to ask any questions they may have.
14. Once all the applicants you have been interviewed you need to decide upon the question of which one is to be appointed. First, you should consider whether there is any suitable applicant.
15. In making the decision the panel will need to check how they scored each applicant against the job description and person specification. There may need to be some time for discussion about merits of each prospective candidate so there should be sufficient time set aside for this purpose.
16. Once you have decided on a suitable applicant for the post, you will need to contact them. You can, by all means phone the applicant chosen to tell them the decision of the panel, but it is advisable to confirm this offer in writing as soon as possible.
17. If you require references, which is recommended, you should follow up on these.
18. Out of courtesy you should also call the other applicant(s) to let them know their application had been unsuccessful.