



Rochford Parish Council

JOB DESCRIPTION

PARISH CLERK including RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

Overall Responsibilities

The Clerk to the Council serves as the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer of Rochford Parish Council, entrusted with managing the Council's affairs to the highest standards of statutory compliance and professional excellence. This role demands strong leadership to foster a culture of accountability, continuous improvement, and efficient service delivery. The Clerk will play a pivotal role in driving the Council's strategic initiatives, overseeing the effective management of staff and resources, and ensuring the seamless execution of all Council objectives. The Clerk will also act as a key advisor to the Council, providing impartial, accurate, and timely information to support informed decision-making

Accountable to: The Council, as a Corporate Body

Line Management: The Clerk will report to the Staffing Committee for day-to-day management, with the Chair of the Staffing Committee acting as the designated line manager on behalf of the Council.

Line management responsibility: All Council Staff

Hours of work: 25 per week within variable hours contract.

Duties

1. Legal and Statutory Responsibilities

- 1.1. Act as the Proper Officer of the Council, taking all necessary actions required by this role, including serving statutory notices and ensuring the Council meets its legal obligations.
- 1.2. Ensure compliance with all statutory duties while proactively identifying opportunities to improve Council processes, enhance efficiency, and deliver greater value to the community. Provide innovative, constructive solutions to help the Council achieve its objectives without infringing any legal or regulatory requirements.

- 1.3. Provide clear, impartial, and well-informed advice to the Council, ensuring that decisions are both legally sound and aligned with the Council's strategic priorities. Where potential risks or deficiencies arise, propose practical actions to address them.
- 1.4. Maintain up-to-date knowledge of relevant legislation, case law, and regulatory changes. Implement necessary actions to keep the Council compliant while fostering a culture of continuous improvement and forward-thinking governance.
- 1.5. Ensure that all Council decisions, policies, and actions are fully aligned with its adopted Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and other governing frameworks, while seeking opportunities to streamline and modernise these processes where appropriate.
- 1.6. Safeguard confidentiality at all times, adhering to data protection principles and ensuring sensitive matters are handled with professionalism and discretion in line with Council policies and legal requirements.

2. Administration of Meetings

- 2.1. Organise and convene meetings of the Council, committees, and other relevant gatherings, ensuring agendas are accurately prepared, distributed promptly, and reflect the Council's priorities. Engage with stakeholders as necessary to ensure comprehensive preparation.
- 2.2. Attend all required meetings, ensuring accurate recording, timely approval, and efficient circulation of minutes that clearly outline decisions, actions, and responsibilities.
- 2.3. Proactively identify and present key issues, opportunities, and matters requiring consideration to Council members, ensuring that all relevant facts and information are provided impartially and comprehensively, without personal bias or influence.
- 2.4. Prepare and deliver concise, well-informed reports to meetings, presenting factual information and balanced advice to support councillors in making informed decisions. Explicitly delineate between providing advice and making decisions, ensuring the Clerk's role remains advisory.
- 2.5. Implement Council decisions and policies diligently, ensuring actions are completed effectively and in alignment with agreed priorities.
- 2.6. Coordinate all aspects of the Annual Parish Meeting, ensuring it is conducted in compliance with statutory requirements and supported by well-organised documentation. Attend the meeting and manage associated follow-up actions efficiently.

3. Administrative Functions and Responsibilities

- 3.1. Oversee and manage all administrative functions of the Council to ensure they are carried out with precision, efficiency, and in alignment with the Council's strategic priorities. Establish and uphold high standards of professionalism in all office activities.
- 3.2. Manage all correspondence, documents, and reports received by the Council, ensuring they are reviewed promptly, responded to appropriately, and escalated to the Council where policy decisions are required.

- 3.3. Take full responsibility for the implementation of Council-approved functions and services, ensuring that they are delivered to agreed timelines and standards. Address issues as they arise and provide clear updates to the Council on progress, challenges, and resolutions.
- 3.4. Introduce and maintain key performance indicators (KPIs) for Council deliverables, including service efficiency, staff productivity, and community impact. Regularly monitor and report progress against these KPIs, recommending and implementing improvements as needed to meet Council objectives.

4. Financial Responsibilities

- 4.1. Act as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) as defined by the Accounts and Audit Regulations, with full responsibility for maintaining accurate and compliant financial records and ensuring the careful, transparent administration of the Council's finances.
- 4.2. Monitor and balance the Council's accounts, ensuring all financial transactions are accurate, traceable, and comply with statutory and regulatory requirements. Prepare all necessary records for Audit, HMRC, and VAT submissions, meeting all deadlines.
- 4.3. Review and process invoices for goods and services received by the Council, ensuring they are verified for accuracy before authorisation. Ensure timely payment of accounts and issue invoices for services provided by the Council, ensuring prompt and accurate receipt of payments.
- 4.4. Implement robust financial controls and checks to prevent errors and ensure financial integrity. Regularly review and update financial procedures, providing the Council with assurances on their effectiveness.
- 4.5. Prepare detailed, accurate financial reports and forecasts for the Council, ensuring members have a clear understanding of the Council's financial position. Highlight risks, discrepancies, or significant changes, proactively offering solutions to mitigate financial risks.
- 4.6. Maintain a high standard of accuracy in all financial operations, ensuring meticulous attention to detail to prevent errors or oversights that could impact the Council's financial health or reputation.

5. Responsibility for Employees

- 5.1. **Line Management and Staff Leadership:** Lead and manage all Council employees, ensuring that staff are motivated, supported, and held accountable for their roles. Set clear objectives aligned with the Council's strategic goals, and ensure that all team members understand their responsibilities and performance expectations.
- 5.2. **Performance Management and Professional Development:** Conduct regular performance reviews and appraisals for all staff, providing constructive feedback, setting measurable goals, and supporting continuous professional development. Foster a culture of learning and growth, ensuring staff have the resources and opportunities to enhance their skills and capabilities.

- 5.3. **Equitable Treatment and Collaborative Work Environment:** Ensure fair and consistent treatment of all employees, promoting an inclusive and positive working environment. Lead by example, encouraging teamwork, open communication, and mutual respect across all levels of the office team.
- 5.4. **Policy and Procedure Implementation:** Ensure that all personnel-related matters, including Health and Safety, payroll, and welfare policies, are handled in compliance with legal requirements and best practice. Regularly review and update policies to meet evolving needs, ensuring that staff are well-informed of their rights and responsibilities.
- 5.5. **Conflict Resolution and Support:** Take a proactive role in managing conflicts and addressing any issues that may arise within the team. Provide guidance and support to staff to ensure a harmonious working environment and resolution of any concerns in a fair and timely manner.
- 5.6. **Escalation of Unresolvable Issues:** While taking full responsibility for day-to-day staff management, promptly escalate any issues or conflicts that cannot be resolved at the line management level to the Council. Ensure that such issues are communicated clearly, with suggested solutions, to enable the Council to make informed decisions on next steps.

6. Liaison, Communication and Relationship Management

- 6.1. Build and maintain effective working relationships with key external stakeholders, such as Essex County Council, Rochford District Council, the Essex Association of Local Councils, and other relevant agencies or organisations. Ensure that all communications represent the collective views of the Council, with the aim of achieving the best possible outcomes for the Parish and its community.
- 6.2. Act as the Council's primary point of contact for public relations, ensuring clear, accurate, and consistent communication with the media. Always convey the Council's views and policies, refraining from personal opinions, and reinforcing the Council's commitment to serving the community's best interests.
- 6.3. Represent the Council in discussions, negotiations, and public events, acting as a professional and impartial spokesperson. Ensure that all representation reflects the decisions and policies set by the Council, not individual perspectives.
- 6.4. Attend relevant training courses, seminars, and conferences as required by the Council, maintaining up-to-date knowledge of best practices, local government developments, and community engagement strategies.
- 6.5. **Community Engagement:** Engage with the local community regularly, seeking feedback, addressing concerns, and ensuring that the views and needs of the public are accurately conveyed to the Council. Facilitate open communication channels with the community to promote transparency, inclusivity, and the effective delivery of services.

7. Specific Responsibilities

- 7.1. Attend all Council meetings, including evening meetings, ensuring active participation, accurate record-keeping, and effective communication of the Council's decisions and policies to relevant parties.
- 7.2. Ensure the Parish Council Allotments and Wildlife Area are maintained to a high standard, keeping accurate and up-to-date records of allotment plot holders, rents, and other associated matters. Actively seek improvements where necessary to enhance the public use and benefit of these areas.
- 7.3. Maintain accurate and up-to-date records for the Parish Council's Cemetery, ensuring the site is kept to a respectful standard. Ensure that the booking of funerals and the burial of ashes is carried out efficiently, sensitively, and in accordance with Council policies, with a focus on the needs of the community.
- 7.4. Oversee the maintenance and proper functioning of the Council's streetlighting and street furniture, ensuring these assets meet safety and aesthetic standards, and contribute positively to the community's environment.
- 7.5. Organise, coordinate, and attend the Council's public events, such as Christmas celebrations and other events defined by the Community Projects Committee, ensuring all logistical, operational, and community engagement aspects are handled effectively to provide a positive experience for the public.
- 7.6. Draft, review, and manage contracts for the Council, ensuring that services and works provided by contractors meet required standards and are delivered efficiently. Supervise contractors to ensure compliance with agreed terms, maintaining value for money and adherence to Council policies.

8. Other Duties

- 8.1. Undertake any other duties as required by the Council to support its operations, priorities, and service to the community. Always ensure that tasks are carried out in a professional, transparent, and accountable manner, reflecting the best interests of the Parish and its residents.