



Dartmoor Forest Parish Council

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE PARISH CLERK

Summary of Responsibilities

The Clerk to the Council is the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is under a statutory duty to carry out all the functions, and in particular, to serve or issue all the notifications required by law of a local authority's Proper Officer.

- The Clerk has complete responsibility for ensuring that the instructions of the Council in connection with its function as a Local Authority are carried out.
- The Clerk is expected to advise the Council on, and assist in the formation of, overall policies to be followed in respect of the Authority's activities and in particular to produce all the information required for making effective decisions and to implement all decisions constructively.
- The Clerk is accountable to the Council for the effective management of all its resources and will report to the Council as and when required.
- As Responsible Financial Officer the Clerk is responsible for all the financial records of the Council and the diligent administration of its finances.
- The Clerk also acts as Burial Clerk for Postbridge Cemetery, with responsibility for recording details of burials and the sale of plots for future burials.

Detailed Responsibilities

Council Meetings

1. The Clerk is responsible for arranging all Council meetings. Notice of such meetings are to be displayed on Parish notice board (Princetown) and website, and notified in writing (by email) to Parish Councillors in accordance with statutory requirements.
2. The Clerk is responsible for preparing the agenda for Council meetings and for distributing the agenda with the statutory summons to Councillors with three clear working days to the date of the meeting.
3. The Clerk is responsible for posting agendas on the Parish Council's notice boards (Princetown) and with publishing the agenda on the Council's website with three clear working days to the meeting.
4. The Clerk attends monthly meetings of the Parish Council, and also attends the Annual Parish meeting as arranged.
5. The Clerk will ensure that the operation of the Council conforms with legal requirements in respect of standing orders, declarations of interest, etc.
6. The Clerk is responsible for recording the Minutes of the Parish Council meetings. The draft minutes must be prepared and circulated to Councillors within ten working days of the date of the meeting. Within the same timeframe, the draft minutes must be posted on the Council's website. Minutes will also be circulated to other bodies, as agreed by the Council.
7. The Clerk will ensure that decisions made and minuted at Council meetings are carried out.

Responsible Financial Officer

8. The Clerk must perform all duties of the Responsible Financial Officer including preparation of the Parish Council's annual accounts, arranging the internal audit and submitting papers to the External Auditor within the prescribed schedule. The Clerk is also responsible for posting the legal notices pertaining to residents' right to view financial documents, and for arranging for residents to view papers, as requested.
9. The Clerk will be responsible for maintaining the financial books and accounting records of the Parish Council including providing a monthly report to the Parish Council meetings.
10. The Clerk will be responsible for posting financial information on the Parish Council's website to meet the requirements of the Transparency Code.
11. The Clerk will be responsible for receiving all income and other receipts on behalf of the Parish Council and depositing all cash and cheques in the Parish Council's bank account.
12. The Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that all cheques are presented to the Parish Council for payment within the due date.
13. The Clerk will arrange the Council's insurance cover in accordance with legal requirements.
14. The Clerk will ensure that VAT records are maintained in accordance with the requirements of H.M. Revenue and Customs (HMRC). The Clerk will claim for a refund of VAT at least annually, or more often if required.
15. The Clerk is responsible for the tendering, letting and the management of all Council contracts in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders or as otherwise directed by the Council.
16. The Clerk is responsible for ensuring the Council fulfils all its obligations required by the conditions of financial grants and contracts to provide services to or on behalf of third parties.

Administration

17. The Clerk will operate at all times within the Council's Scheme of Delegation.
18. The Clerk will receive all correspondence addressed to the Council and write replies on the Council's behalf. Copies of relevant communications must be posted on the Council's website at least two days prior to each monthly meeting.
19. The Clerk will prepare briefing notes for Councillors prior to each monthly meeting with sufficient detail to enable informed, quality decisions. These notes are to be posted on the Council's website at least two days prior to each monthly meeting.
20. The Clerk is responsible for displaying public notices on the Council's notice boards in accordance with statutory regulations and as directed by the Parish Council.
21. The Clerk is responsible for ensuring appropriate project management of all projects approved by the Council either directly or by monitoring the Lead Councillor or other person appointed by the Council to that role.
22. The Clerk will maintain an efficient filing system (both paper and electronic copies as necessary) to facilitate rapid access, if required. The Clerk will keep safely and conveniently in secure custody, all records and documents of, or concerning, the Council, which come in to the Clerk's possession. The Clerk will ensure that residents' requests to view papers are met.
23. The Clerk will be responsible for keeping safely and in good order all the Council's equipment.
24. The Clerk will be registered as a Data Controller, and ensure that Council abides by the relevant Data Protection and GDPR regulations in all undertakings but with particular regard to the management of the Princetown CCTV system, alongside two nominated Councillors.

25. The Clerk will be responsible for personally communicating with other authorities, and members of the public on behalf of the Council. Regular communication must be maintained with significant external bodies such as the Dartmoor National Park Authority and the Duchy of Cornwall.
26. The Clerk will prepare and release press briefings as tasked by the Council. The Clerk will arrange media interviews with the Chair or Lead Councillors as required and may conduct media interviews if agreed with the Chair.
27. The Clerk will be responsible for maintaining the Council website and any social media presence (currently Facebook page only)
28. The Clerk will ensure that all Councils Policies, procedures and risk assessments are kept up to date and reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, best practice and reflect actual practice.
29. The Clerk will work from home and is required to have a telephone and appropriate home office facilities.

Planning Applications

30. The Clerk will receive planning applications and information on behalf of the Parish Council. Applications received will be forwarded to the Councillor(s) with a comments sheet specifying the deadline date for the comments to be returned to the Clerk.
31. The Clerk will include on the next meeting agenda an item for Council to discuss and vote on its decision to recommend approval, make no comment, or object to the planning application.
32. The Clerk is responsible for recording the Parish Council's comments and observations and submitting them to Dartmoor National Park Authority (the Planning Authority) within the time limit specified on the application. The Clerk will record information regarding applications in the minutes of Council meetings.

Burials Clerk

33. The Clerk is responsible for acting as Burial Clerk to Postbridge Cemetery in accordance with the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.
34. The Clerk will administer the sale of exclusive right of burials; and memorial rights according to the list of charges approved by the Council.
35. The Clerk will ensure all certificates are correctly completed for internments and collect all fees due according to the list of charges approved by the Council.
36. The Clerk will maintain an accurate and tidy record of all internments in the Register of Burials and the Record of Public Graves.
37. The Clerk will maintain an accurate and tidy plan of the cemetery showing all internments and plots with exclusive right of burials.

Staff management

38. The Clerk will be the Line Manager of the Parish Lengthsman and any other Council employee appointed and ensure the Council's legal and contractual obligations regarding employment are met.
39. The Clerk will assess timesheets and expenses receipts submitted by staff and arrange for the calculation of the correct take-home pay, income tax, national insurance and other deductions as appropriate.

Qualifications

40. The Clerk will attend any training course deemed as necessary by the Council to enable him/her to be fully conversant with his/her duties. The Clerk will attend all such meetings and conferences as are reasonably necessary for the proper discharge of Clerks' duties.

PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR THE PARISH CLERK

ESSENTIAL - Qualifications, Knowledge, Skills and Experience	Application	Interview
Recognised numeracy and literacy qualification	x	x
Certificate in Local Council Administration or readiness to undertake training to attain qualification	x	
Experience of office and financial administration	x	
Sound book-keeping skills	x	
Highly organised with excellent planning skills and ability to prioritise tasks and meet tight deadlines	x	x
IT literate with intermediate level MS office skills including Outlook, Word and Exel and ability to edit website and social media pages.	x	
Ability to work unsupervised and use own initiative and work as part of a team	x	x
Willingness to complete further personal and professional development	x	x
Use of own car and current driving license (ability to attend meetings within rural parish)	x	x
DESIRABLE - Qualifications, Knowledge, Skills and Experience	Application	Interview
Local Government experience	x	x
Experience of communication with elected members	x	x
Working knowledge of Parish Council	x	x
Experience of customer complaints and FOI handling	x	
Electronic bookkeeping or financial system experience	x	
Knowledge of local government accounts and audit requirements	x	
VAT knowledge and experience	x	
Experience of homeworking	x	x
Website development and administration, social media	x	
Project management experience, particularly with external funding bodies	x	
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES - Qualifications, Knowledge, Skills and Experience	Application	Interview
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills		x
Friendly, approachable and diplomatic		x
A flexible, pro-active and collaborative, 'can-do' approach		x
Honesty, transparency and a willingness to improve practice		x
Treat people with equity and inclusively with respect for diversity		x
Willingness to work evenings for attendance at meetings		x
Flexible attitude to working arrangements to meet the Council's needs		x