

Hopton cum Knettishall Parish Council Recruitment Policy

Reviewed & approved October 2020

Parish Councillor

Role -

Representing the views of all residents within your parish.

Regular liaison with other councillors, local authorities and residents.

Period of service four years.

Remuneration: This is a voluntary position with some pre-approved expenses able to be paid in certain cases.

Responsibilities -

- As part of the Parish Council you will share responsibility for running local services which may include items such as: open spaces, play areas, village halls, community car schemes.
- Deciding on how much to raise through the council tax in order to deliver your council's services.
- Influencing and shaping the long-term development policy for the parish, and as part of the planning process, comment on planning applications in the parish.
- Helping to improve the quality of life and the environment in your local area.
- Working to identify issues which are important to the residents you represent.
- Working to bring about improvements through local projects, lobbying other service providers and working in partnership with other parishes and agencies.

Requirements -

See more details on what it means to be a Councillor here.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership/councillors-guide>

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/media/1950>

Joining the Council

There are 2 ways to Join the Council

- By Election
<https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/elections/howtobecomeacouncillor.cfm>
- Through co-option/advertisement and expression of Interest

In the run up to an election notices will be posted to advise you of the process of showing your interest in joining the Council. You will need to complete a form in order to become a candidate.

If there is still a vacancy on the Parish Council after an election then a person can be co-opted. The vacancy will normally be advertised and expression of interest to the Parish council can be made outlining the following -

Why you want to become a Councillor

Your involvement in the village

What you currently do within the village

What you can offer as a Councillor

A brief background about yourself, family and work as appropriate.

Please note where more candidates apply than positions exist the remaining councillors will review the applications and may ask for further information to support their decision.

Notice of Vacancy Process

See Appendix One for a draft notice.

a. If, following the NOTICE OF VACANCY, more than one candidate applies, the selection process will be as detailed xxxxxx.

b. VOTING: A successful candidate must have received an absolute majority vote of those present and voting (Local Government Act 1972, Sch. 12, para 39). It follows that if there are more than two candidates for one vacancy, the first vote may not give one candidate a majority of all votes cast. In this case the candidate(s) with the lowest number of votes should be eliminated and a vote taken again until one candidate has a majority of all votes cast. This will mostly be a satisfactory procedure unless a number of candidates have obtained the same number of least votes, leaving only one candidate, but without an absolute majority. In such cases an alternative method of striking off candidate(s), such as negotiation is necessary. At the point where the Council has to decide between two candidates, the person presiding at the meeting has a casting vote if needed to decide the process.

Declaration: The Parish Council will declare the result and notify the successful candidate as soon as practicable. In the event of the successful candidate not taking up the post the Council may, (but is not obliged to) select the candidate with the next highest number of votes and so on. The Parish Council generally has no reason to exclude the public and press from the co-option procedure and should not do so without justification.

Further guidance: *The Council is free to elect whomsoever is considered suitable, provided of course that person is eligible for election. The Parish Council is not obliged to consider the claims of candidates who were unsuccessful at a previous election. The Parish Council can choose not to co-opt candidates who put themselves forward, but must bear in mind the duty to co-opt as soon as is practicable and should be mindful of the need to be lawful, fair and transparent in decision making.*

The following letter will be sent to applicants after the closing date and before the meeting

Thank you for your interest in the advertised vacancy for a Parish Councillor. The selection process will occur at a Parish Council meeting to be held in the village hall on xxxxxx.

A copy of the standing order is enclosed for your information so that you can be aware of the process for selecting one candidate from two or more applicants to be considered.

You are free to attend if you wish, however, your absence will not prejudice you in any way as councillors will base their decision on the written submissions already received.

There will be absolutely no input required from candidates once the meeting moves to discussion, nor will they be cross examined or asked to speak until the voting process is completed and a result declared.

If present and there are further agenda items, the successful candidate will be invited to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and join the meeting.

Parish Council Clerk and RFO

This should be advertised externally for 30 days and the job description available.

The job should be advertised locally and with SALC

All items within the job description and overview of responsibilities should be reviewed by the council before commencement of the recruitment process to ensure they remain relevant and to incorporate any additions. As such below is a guide, based on the situation at drafting.

Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) required

Salary: Negotiable in accordance with NJC scales 18 - 22 and depending on skills and experience

Hours: 4 hours per week

Must be able to attend 6/10 evening meetings per year held on first Thursday of month

Interested candidates should in the first instance forward CV and covering letter to:

Chairman by date

Parish Clerk / RFO Job Description see appendix two

Interviews will be held at the village hall with the Chairman and one or two councillors, and if the appropriate candidate is found a job offer will be made subject to references.

Equality and Diversity

Every councillor and employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity, equality and respect for all. The Parish Council will not tolerate any acts of unlawful or unfair discrimination (including harassment) committed against an employee, councillor, contractor, job applicant or visitor because of a protected characteristic:

- sex;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race (including ethnic origin, colour, nationality and national origin);
- disability;
- sexual orientation;
- religion and or belief; and
- age.

Discrimination on the basis of work pattern (part-time working, fixed term contract, flexible working) which is unjustifiable will also not be tolerated.

All councillors and employees will be encouraged to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and to take advantage of training, development and progression opportunities. Selection for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability.

Appendix One

Hopton cum Knettishall Parish Council

NOTICE OF VACANCY

Notice is hereby given that there is a vacancy on Hopton cum Knettishall Parish Council.

The vacancy has previously been advertised, and no election has been requested. The Council is now able to fill the vacancy by co-option.

APPLICATION SHOULD BE MADE IN WRITING TO THE CLERK OF THE COUNCIL AND DELIVERED OR POSTED TO: xxxx, Email: hoptonpc@outlook.com

Applicants are asked to give brief reasons for offering their services to the Council.

Any elector interested in applying is welcome to contact the Clerk for further details. The successful applicant will be chosen following consideration by the Parish Council.

Applicants should note that Councillors are expected to attend regular bi-monthly meetings on the first Thursday of the month and additional meetings as may be called from time to time; and to represent the electors of Hopton cum Knettishall in raising and discussing those issues of interest and concern on which the Parish Council is empowered to act. Applicants should also note that membership of the Council is open to electors who are UK citizens *and*

- Whose residence is in Hopton cum Knettishall or within three miles of Hopton cum Knettishall, *or*
- Whose principal place of work is in Hopton cum Knettishall, *and*
- Who are not disqualified (by reason of a criminal record, bankruptcy or involvement in corrupt practices). For further information, please contact the Clerk to the Council.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS:- Midnight on xxxx

Rowena Salter

Clerk to the Parish Council

Appendix Two

Parish Clerk / RFO Job Description

GENERAL TASKS

- Logging and distributing all correspondence received via mail, e-mail and telephone
- Writing letters, responding to mails and keeping a copy of all outgoing as required by the Parish Council (PC)
- Acknowledging and distributing any planning application submitted to the PC for comment to councillors. Organising an additional PC meeting (if deadline for comment not coinciding with meeting cycle) to discuss and comment on applications received.
- Logging invoices received
- Logging payments received and paying them into the bank account promptly
- Billing for any services provided by PC i.e. Village hall car park rent
- Preparing meeting agendas in consultation with the chair and councillors
- Preparing cheques/online payments for approval/signing at meetings and sending them to payees
- Attending monthly PC meeting to take notes and produce minutes
- Distributing information to chairman, councillors, public, parish magazine and keep PC diary as necessary
- Keeping notice boards in Hopton cum Knettishall up-to-date with agendas, minutes, and ad hoc meeting notices etc as per legal requirements plus other notices as necessary
- Sending information to the Hopton cum Knettishall PC website to include agenda, minutes, meeting dates, policies etc.
- Sending a summary of the minutes for publication in the Parish magazine
- Keeping PC information up-to-date (e.g. asset register, councillors contact details etc) and paper and electronic filing systems well organised
- Managing bank accounts to maximise interest, while ensuring enough in current account, and organising signatory changes when necessary
- Managing any direct debits
- Installing software updates
- Purchasing office supplies including paper, ink cartridges, stamps envelopes etc as required
- Keeping a record of all expenses incurred including receipts for the preparation of monthly expense claims and prepare a summary for approval at PC meetings
- Checking and processing any councillor expense claims that might be submitted and prepare a summary for approval at PC meetings
- Liaising with Electoral services when councillor vacancy arises and carrying out associated legal and administrative Processes
- Providing general and specific advice on legal procedures, powers and duties
- Keeping the PC fully informed of any legislative changes that affect the council and advising on policy issues such as GDPR
- Advise on reviewing PC policy and procedures as appropriate in line with current regulatory and legislative framework
- Advise councillors of opportunities for training and development for both clerk and councillors and organise booking of appropriate sessions approved by PC
- Carrying out any other duties appropriate to role at the request of the PC

MONTHLY TASKS

- In-putting all financial transactions into cash book/accounts spreadsheet
- Reconciling bank statements against accounts and producing a reconciliation for report at each PC meeting
- Maintain an accurate time sheet keeping account of core hours and any additional hours worked and produce a summary for approval at PC meeting
- Send hours bi-monthly to SALC payroll

QUARTERLY TASKS

- Producing budget versus actual income and expenditure report for the year-to-date and preparing a report for PC Meeting
- Assisting in putting the Speed activated device data into an excel spreadsheet and produce a quarterly report for PC and for publication on the Website.

ANNUAL TASKS

- Submitting VAT return to HMRC
- Producing annual accounts, and submitting them to internal and external auditors
- Organise selection of internal auditor and present name of person to Councillors for approval
- Displaying account information pre- and post-external audit on PC notice boards and website as legally required
- Initiating any grant applications and dealing with subsequent correspondence
- Getting quotes for grass-cutting and Insurance and other services/purchases as required
- Producing documentation to support annual budget planning process
- Initiating reviews of Standing Orders and Risk Assessment
- Culling paper and electronic filing systems, in line with legal and practical requirements and the requirements of the GDPR
- Organising annual election of chair and vice-chair at AGM and updating councillors and any working group lists accordingly
- Assisting in the organisation of the annual village meeting and inviting relevant village groups to attend.
- Booking Hopton cum Knettishall Village Hall for following years scheduled PC meetings.

EVERY 4 YEARS

- Distribution of information regarding election
- Organising signing of acceptance of office and forms and registration of interest's process