



Recruitment Handout

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for responding to the Council's recent advertisement for this post.

We hope that you find this Recruitment Handout together with the job description, person specification and application form useful in deciding whether to apply.

The information is arranged as follows:-

- The role of a Clerk to the Council
- A history and profile of the Council
 - Council area and environment
 - Council history and background details
 - Council structure
 - Staffing information
- The job advertisement
- Key terms and conditions of employment
- The application and selection process.

This Recruitment Handout will not form part of any subsequent contract of employment.

If you have any questions on the Recruitment Information Pack or the recruitment and selection process, require any further information on the Council or the post or you would like an informal discussion on the role, please call **Councillor Jane Dodson** on **07733 237659** or email clr.dodson@datchworth-pc.gov.uk.

If, as a result of a disability or impairment you would like us to make any special arrangements concerning the completion of your application or attending for interview please let us know.

ROLE OF THE CLERK TO THE COUNCIL

Why become a Clerk?

Becoming a Clerk to a Parish Council is one of the most rewarding jobs in a local community - a competent, enthusiastic Clerk underpins a good Council.

The role of Clerk is to ensure that the Council as a whole conducts its business in accordance with statutory regulations. The Clerk provides professional advice and support. The role of Clerk puts you in the centre of things.

The Parish Council is the first tier of the Local Government structure, which works together with Hertfordshire County Council and East Herts District Council. It is the only local government tier that represents residents at Parish level.

The County Council is responsible for strategic services such as highways, education, libraries, social services, strategic planning and recycling centres.

District Councils are responsible for local services including housing, local planning and refuse collection.

Parish Councils are often viewed as the part of government closest to the community.

Importantly, Parish Councils are responsible for the local “precept” – raising a council tax each year to improve facilities and services for local people.

Their powers and duties cover many things that we take for granted in everyday life. These can include but are not limited to:- the provision and maintenance of leisure plots, burial grounds, trees, playgrounds, public monuments, litter bins, car parks, roadside verges and village greens.

Parish Councils are consulted on and can comment on local planning applications and can be represented at public inquiries.

Most Council meetings are open to the public and are led by the Council’s Chairperson and advised by the Clerk to the Council who is there to see that business is conducted within the law.

What does the Clerk to the Council do?

The job description lists the duties in detail but the main duties of the job can be summarised as to:-

- ensure that the Council conducts its business lawfully
- administer all the Council's paperwork
- ensure that meeting papers are properly prepared and the public is aware of meeting
- communicate the Council's decisions
- line management of staff
- help coordinate and promote the provision of the Council services
- help coordinate the implementation of events/projects
- keep property register and other legal documents
- keep up to date by training/qualification
- providing all aspects of insurance

The key duties and responsibilities to be undertaken are detailed in the job description.

Like everything else in life once you know how to do it then it's a very rewarding role. It is important to understand however that being a Clerk to a Parish Council is a job not a spare time activity! The job is no different from large to small Councils. What is different however is the amount of time needed to deal with the volume of business as most Council meetings are held 'out of hours' so being a Clerk is not just a daytime activity.

Skills and attributes

Clerks usually pride themselves in having a good deal of common sense, confidence to handle the administrative work, being a good organiser, IT literate and able to get on with people.

The key attributes required are detailed in the person specification included but underwriting these qualities is a sense of public duty - of wanting to help others in the community.

HISTORY AND PROFILE OF THE COUNCIL

The Parish Council Area and Environment

Detail of population, electorate and wards/electoral areas

Datchworth is a pretty village located in East Hertfordshire. The Parish includes the areas of Datchworth, Bulls Green, Burnham Green and Hooks Cross. This is made up of an electorate of approximately 1243.

History of the Council

The Parish Council has been operating for the benefit of the community for many years and has evolved over time. May 2019 saw the election of several new Councillors, with further input into a modernising Council.

Role in the community

Datchworth Parish Council is pivotal to the Community and works independently to ensure that all legal obligations are met. The Council also work with a number of organisations within the Parish, such as the Village Halls to ensure community needs are met.

Financial information – budget, precept etc

The Responsible Financial Officer issues financial reports ahead of each monthly meeting and also publishes them on our website. Annual accounts are audited each year.

Council Membership

The Council currently consist of the Chair, Vice-Chair and eight further members.

Key functions/responsibilities

The Parish Council work for the benefit of the community and cover all areas from parking issues and play equipment installation to litter bins.

Council facilities and property owned and managed

The Council own and manage a few pieces of land and play equipment and are custodian trustees of Datchworth Village Hall. Datchworth Village Hall has a Management Committee who deal with the day-to-day running of the Hall. Burnham Green Village Hall has a separate Committee.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

Delegated Responsibilities

Finance Committee

Cllrs. J Dodson, K Feldman, J Garrod, C Groves & T. Stowe (Chair TBC)

HR Committee

Cllrs. A Barker, N Burton, J Dodson (Chair) and T Stowe

Planning Committee

Cllrs. T Chapman, J Dodson and C Groves (Chair TBC)

Sub-Committees

Burnham Green & Joint Management Committee (including Inter-Village Liaison)

Cllrs. A Barker, T Chapman and J Dodson

Communications, Police and Neighbourhood Watch

Cllrs. T Chapman, J Dodson, K Feldman, M Light (Chair Cllr Chapman)

Compliance, Legal Issues, Insurance and Policies

Cllrs. A Barker, T Chapman, J Dodson and T Stowe, (Chair Cllr Chapman)

Environmental

Cllrs. A Barker, J Garrod and C Groves (Chair tbc)

Health and Well-Being

Cllrs. A Barker, N Burton, M Light (Chair tbc)

Highways

Cllrs. N Burton, Chapman & Groves (Chair tbc)

Leisure Plots Committee

Cllrs. A Barker, C Groves T Stowe

Trees, Amenities and Open Spaces

Cllrs. T Chapman, J Dodson, J Garrod and C Groves

Liaison

Burnham Green Village Hall

Cllrs. Barker & K. Feldman

Sports/Rugby Clubs

Cllrs. K Feldman & T Stowe

Datchworth Village Hall

Cllr. T Chapman (Custodian Trustee Representative)

Councillor election timetable

Elections of Parish Councillors take place every four years in May, except when vacancies occur, then by-elections can take place in accordance with standard procedures as set out by East Herts District Council.

Meetings of the Council and Sub-Committees – programme

Full Parish Council meetings take place on the last Tuesday of the month at 7pm in the Church Hall.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting normally takes place in May.

Staffing

The Parish Council employs a Clerk, a Community Ranger and a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

The Clerk is currently responsible for the line management of the Community Ranger. All HR related queries would be addressed to the Chair (Chair of HR Committee) and the Vice-Chair. Monthly 121 meetings, annual appraisals and six-monthly reviews will be held with members of the HR Committee.

VACANCY - PARISH CLERK

£25,419 - £28,226 (SCP LC2 18-23)
(pro rata, per annum depending upon skills & experience)

**Part-time (10 hours per week, flexible).
Monday to Friday, plus evening attendance at Parish Council meetings.**

Due to the resignation of our Clerk we are now seeking a highly organised and dedicated individual with excellent administration skills to undertake this key role.

You will be responsible for ensuring that lawful instructions of the Parish Council in connection with its function as a Council are carried out and to act as the main point of contact. Duties will involve the day-to-day administration including the receipt and dissemination of correspondence and documents, preparation of agendas and minutes, responsibility for the management of policies and line management of our Community Ranger.

You will need to be enthusiastic, flexible and community-focused with a hands-on style. Sound interpersonal and IT skills (Microsoft Suite) and social media experience are required in order to work successfully with Councillors, external organisations, stakeholders and community groups.

You will have experience of working in an administrative or similar role. Any relevant qualifications (e.g. GDPR, H&S, safeguarding etc.) would be advantageous. You will either possess or be willing to obtain the Certificate in Local Council Administration qualification (CiLCA) within 18-24 months. Evening meeting attendance is required at least once a month.

A knowledge of the Parish or a strong desire to contribute to our wonderful community would be beneficial. This is a home-based role and applicants from the local area would be encouraged.

Datchworth Parish Council is a dynamic, forward-thinking, and proactive Council at the centre of a local community.

We offer excellent terms and conditions of employment including a Pension Scheme.

Datchworth Parish Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

Closing date: Friday 29th April 2022

KEY TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT
(Note: this is NOT the Contract of Employment)

General	The terms and conditions of employment are in accordance with the National Joint Council Scheme of Conditions of Service and the provisions of the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks Conditions of Service for Clerks of Local Councils or as amended by the Council.
Salary	Salary is negotiable (LC2 SCP 18-23 £25,419 - £28,226 pro rata)
Working Week	The normal part-time working week is 10 hours per week plus negotiated study/training time as appropriate. This is a home-based role for which a monthly allowance is paid (currently £26).
Days and Hours of Work	Days of work are Monday to Friday and the hours of work will be flexible by agreement to include attendance at evening or weekend meetings and functions for which time off in lieu is granted.
Annual Leave	21 working days (25 working days after 5 year's continuous local government service) plus 2 discretionary days and bank and public holidays.
Pension	DPC are members of the NEST Pensions (a government workplace pension scheme), which you are welcome to join.
Probation	The probationary period is three months.
Pay Method	Salary is paid on the 30 th of the month, directly by credit transfer to a bank or building society.
Salary Review	The salary is subject to any revisions agreed nationally between NALC and SLCC as a result of pay negotiations and agreement by Full Council following a satisfactory performance review.
Work Location	This will be the Clerk's home address but attendance at other locations is required when necessary. Monthly meetings will normally take place within the Parish.
Expenses	Expenses are paid in accordance with the Council's policy. Car mileage allowance is payable in accordance with the casual user provisions in the Council's policy.
Other Terms	All staff are required to operate within the Council's code of practice on confidentiality.
Notice Period	After completion of the probationary period, one month's notice on either side in writing is required to terminate the employment, unless your employment is terminated on grounds of gross misconduct when summary dismissal will apply.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Recruitment Schedule

The proposed recruitment timetable is as follows:-

- ❖ Advert publication - **March**
- ❖ Advert closing date - **29th April**
- ❖ Short listing - **3rd May**
- ❖ Interviews - **w/c 9th May**

You will be advised of any material change to this timetable as appropriate.

Application Procedure

You should complete the Application Form in full and not disregard any section. CVs are not acceptable as an alternative to completing the Application Form but may be attached along with any supplementary information or documents in support of your application.

When submitting your application, you should address the requirements of the Job Description and Person Specification for the post and ensure that your relevant key experiences, knowledge, skills and personal style are clearly described to give you the best opportunity in the short-listing process.

Please note you will be required to show documentary proof of any qualifications you may claim to hold if you are offered an appointment.

When completed your application form should be sent either by email or by post to:-

Councillor J Dodson

Chair of HR Committee
Hawkins Grange Farm
Hawkins Hall Lane
Datchworth
Herts SG3 6TF

e: cldr.dodson@datchworth-pc.gov.uk

If the application is being sent by mail, please mark the outside of the envelope “**Confidential - Application for the post of Clerk**”.

Selection Process

It is expected that interviews for short listed candidates will be held by the Council’s HR Committee **w/c 9th May 2022**.

The interviews will be structured to assess your competence and suitability for the post and will include tests of relevant capabilities which will be explained to you if invited to attend for interview.

References

If you are shortlisted, references will normally be applied for in **advance of the interview** unless you indicate on the application form that you do not give the Council permission so to do. If appropriate, the authenticity of referees may be checked by direct confidential contact if you are to be offered the appointment.

Proof of Eligibility to Reside and Work in UK

In accordance with legal obligations, the Council will require you to provide proof that you are legally able to reside and work in the UK if you are successful in your application before commencing employment.

Canvassing

Canvassing, either directly or indirectly, will disqualify you from appointment. Sending copies of or extracts from your completed Application Form, CV or testimonials to any Member or Officer of the Council will be regarded as canvassing.

Equal Opportunities

The Council wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment opposing all forms of unlawful and/or unfair discrimination whether on grounds of any protected characteristic in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. We aim to appoint therefore purely on merit and suitability for the post on offer. You are invited to complete and return the enclosed Equality Monitoring Information Form and return it with your completed application Form. The completed form will be regarded as strictly confidential, kept separately from and in no way used or affect the outcome of your application for employment.

Equality Positive Action (where applicable)

The new positive action terms mean that it is not unlawful to recruit or promote a candidate who is of equal merit to another candidate if the employer reasonably thinks that:-

- the candidate has a protected characteristic that is underrepresented in the workforce;
- people with that characteristic suffer a disadvantage connected to that characteristic.

However, positive action does not allow an employer to appoint a less suitable candidate just because that candidate has a protected characteristic that is under-represented or disadvantaged.

Further Information

We hope that the information contained in this Recruitment Information Pack is helpful and sufficiently thorough to enable you to submit your application which we look forward to receiving.

If you have any questions on the information in the Recruitment Information Pack or any aspect of the appointment or the recruitment process, please do not hesitate to contact the Council as set out in the introduction earlier in the Pack.

Please note: This Recruitment Handout has been prepared by **Datchworth Parish Council** but does not form part of any future contract of employment.