Swillington Parish Council

Statement of Intent on Training

Training is increasingly being seen as vital to the development of parish council’s tier of local government. We believe that training is not only for our staff but is very important for our councillors. Parish councils are elected by local people to represent local interests and provide local services. They are a democratic tool – close to the people and potentially alert to local needs. If Swillington Parish Council is to become a Quality Council then it has to provide a statement of intent in relation to council training. Councils are expected to develop a culture in which they are continually learning, improving, updating and gathering new ideas. This means making sure that the council has a training budget and that councillors, clerks and other staff take up the opportunities for training to meet their needs.

Training is a process to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future needs of the Council. Our commitment is highlighted in the paragraphs below:

1. Swillington Parish Council is committed to undertaking training as appropriate to ensure that it continues to fulfil its duties and responsibilities and provide a first class service to residents.

2. Training is required for all councillors the clerk and other staff.

All councillors share responsibility for planning. In addition, they have an allocated area of responsibility (reviewed annually) and it is expected that they will keep up-to-date with developments in these areas. Training will include attendance at regular meetings in connection with councillors' allocated area together with relevant one-off conferences, meetings and training sessions organised by the YCLA. The clerk is expected to keep up-to-date with developments in the sector and undertake training required to improve her efficiency e.g. IT skills, finance, operation of the Code of Conduct. She is also expected to attend the Yorkshire Local Councils Association (YLCA) annual clerks' conference and other relevant training sessions arranged for clerks.

All new councillors, in addition to attending the training should, have an introductory session with the clerk and the Chairman and will be provided with an information pack.

3. Training needs will become apparent as a result of changes in legislation, availability of new equipment, discussion with other councillors/ clerks, articles in the press or specialist publications, information on relevant available training from the YLCA and other providers, decisions taken at meetings, notification of training opportunities etc. The clerk is expected to notify councillors of all needs and opportunities of which she becomes aware and councillors are also expected to identify their own needs and ask the clerk to find relevant training to fulfil these needs. The Chairman has a role in identifying the training needs of other councillors and the clerk.

4. An allocation is made in the budget each year to fund training fees and travel expenses as required. The amount is reviewed annually. The Parish Council subscribes to the YLCA and Society of Local Council Clerks in order to receive regular up-dates on matters relevant to the sector and have access to the courses which are provided.

5. All councillors who attend training are expected to report back to the full Council either verbally or by means of circulating the minutes of the meeting attended or both. This includes an assessment of the relevance of the course.

February 2014