

# Holcombe Parish Council

## **APPOINTMENT OF CLERK TO THE COUNCIL AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

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**Information pack for applicants**



## **The Pack**

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

We hope that you find this Information Pack of assistance in deciding to apply.

The information is arranged as follows:-

- Letter of introduction
- Role of a Clerk to the Council
- The Job Description
- The Person Specification
- Key terms and conditions of employment
- The application and selection process.

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.

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## LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Thank you for responding to the recent advertisement for the post of Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer. This information pack includes a brief summary of the profile and work of the Parish Council, job description, person specification plus the key terms and conditions of employment which I trust you find useful in deciding whether to apply. In addition, you may wish to consult the website [Holcombe Parish Council \(holcombepc.org.uk\)](http://holcombepc.org.uk) which contains a wealth of information about the work that we carry out on behalf of the parish as well as the minutes of previous meetings. That said, should you require any additional information or have any queries then please contact the persons listed at the bottom of this letter.

The Parish Council comprises of 9 councillors all of whom are volunteers plus the clerk who is the sole paid member of the council. The council meets on the first Tuesday evening of each month to discuss a wide range of issues that affect the parish and to decide how to disburse the limited financial resources available. The councillors take their responsibilities seriously and ensure that every decision is made in full appreciation of the facts and all work carried out achieves best value for money. The clerk is an integral part of the team and is involved in all aspects of the decision-making process to ensure that decisions conform to current legislation and meet the requirements of the Council's code of conduct. To that end, the candidate should be passionate about wanting to support the local community and be willing to work flexibly with councillors and parishioners alike to achieve the principal objective of making Holcombe a better place to live for everyone.

I look forward to receiving your application.

Kind regards,

*Simon*

Simon Brand  
Chair

For more information please contact the following:

Mark Davies (Vice chair) – [mark.davies@holcombepc.org.uk](mailto:mark.davies@holcombepc.org.uk)  
Vickie Watts (Clerk) – [clerk@holcombepc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@holcombepc.org.uk)

## **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 Clerk underpins a good Council.

The role of the Clerk is to ensure that the Council as a whole conducts its business professionally and in accordance with all relevant statutory obligations. The Clerk is integral to the running of the council and provides independent, objective, and professional advice and support throughout.

Parish Councils are part of local government in your county together with your County Council which is based in Taunton. The County Council is responsible for strategic services such as highways, education, libraries, social services, strategic planning and refuse disposal. Somerset County Council has recently moved to being a unitary authority and therefore has taken over services which used to be run by district councils such as housing and local planning.

The Parish Councils in the County are often viewed as the part of government closest to the people. They are the only local government tier that represents residents at parish and town level.

Importantly all these councils can raise their own council tax each year to improve facilities and services for local people; this is known as the precept.

Their powers and duties cover many things that we take for granted in making for comfort and well being where we live and can include the provision and maintenance of allotments, burial grounds and public monuments, public clocks, halls, some street lighting, litter bins, car parks, public toilets, rights of way, roadside verges, bus shelters, swimming pools and village greens.

Parish councils are consulted on and can comment on planning applications and be represented at public inquiries, planning appeals and examinations in public. Similarly, they advise the county councils on the views of residents, and especially on priorities for local investment.

Most Council meetings are open to the public and are led by the council's chair 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 that follows 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 and governance (including policies)

- ensure that meeting papers are properly prepared and the public is aware of meeting times
- be responsible for the financial affairs of the council
- communicate the council's decisions
- organise and manage the provision of the council services
- organise and oversee the implementation of projects
- communicate and market the council services and facilities
- keep property register and other legal documents
- keep up to date by training/qualification/experience-based learning.

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

### **Skills and attributes needed**

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 most people.

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

## HOLCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

### JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Job Title:</b>	Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Full Council
<b>Responsible for:</b>	All Council property and financial resources
<b>Employment Status:</b>	Part time; up to 25 hours per month, including some evening work
<b>Salary scale:</b>	NJC pay scale (SCP 2-5) paid at an hourly rate (£11.59 - £12.18)

#### Job Purpose

1. To ensure that the Council's civic and administrative functions and services are performed professionally and in accordance with all relevant statutory obligations.
2. To carry out all the functions required by law of a local authority's Proper Officer in a timely manner and to issue all statutory notifications.
3. To ensure that the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are correctly observed and implemented.
4. To be the Council's principal adviser on policy matters, manage the provision of Council services, buildings, land and resources and to promote the Council.
5. To be responsible for ensuring that the instructions of the Council in connection with its function as a Parish Council are carried out and to produce all the information required for making effective decisions and to implement constructively all decisions.

#### Duties and Responsibilities: Clerk to the Council

1. To ensure that statutory and other provisions and notices governing or affecting the running of the Council are observed and to advise the Councillors on all meeting procedures and regulations.
2. To be the Council's principal adviser on all policy issues, to keep services and activities under continuous review and to identify, plan and implement improvements in quality, efficiency and effectiveness.
3. To keep up to date with changes in legislation and forthcoming changes and advise the Council accordingly ensuring that all Council policies and procedures meet statutory requirements.
4. To prepare and publish, in consultation with appropriate Members of the Council, agendas for meetings of the Council and Committees in accordance with all statutory requirements and prepare minutes for approval, other than where such duties have been delegated to another Officer.
5. To ensure that all meetings of the Council and all meetings of its Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties are clerked, attending personally other than where such duties have been delegated to another Officer, and to maintain Councillor's attendance records.

6. To action all necessary and appropriate correspondence and documents on behalf of the Council as a result of the instructions, or the known policy of, the Council or, when appropriate, bring relevant items to the attention of the Council.
7. To sign, seal and deliver any agreements, contracts, conveyances, licences, consents, approvals etc on behalf of the Council. To ensure the Council's planning obligations are met.
8. To provide general advice to the Council on the budget preparation process and ensure that all Management Reports are presented to the Council and the statutory External Audit requirements are completed each year.
9. To ensure that Council's budget is prepared and balanced and accounts raised, and invoices paid and prepare records for audit purposes and VAT.
10. To assist in the preparation and publishing of the Council's Annual Report.
11. To undertake all necessary activities in connection with the management of salaries, conditions of employment and work of staff.
12. To monitor the implemented policies of the Council to ensure they are achieving the desired result and where appropriate suggest modifications.
13. To act as the official representative of the Council at meetings of other relevant organisations as required.
14. To issue notices and prepare agendas and minutes for the Annual Parish Meeting, attend the Annual Parish Meeting and to implement the decisions made by the Council.
15. To maintain effective and positive press and public relations and prepare, in consultation with key Councillors, press releases about the activities of, or decisions of, the Council.
16. To take appropriate public relations action to enhance the profile and image of the Council and promote and protect the views/interest of the Council with all relevant external organisations or individuals.
17. To develop effective liaison and an effective working partnership with other relevant County Councils, other public authorities, statutory and voluntary bodies and other agencies as the Council's representative, to ensure that the Council plays a full and effective role in issues affecting the area.
18. To work to improve, develop and up-date the Council's website.
19. To have an understanding of planning and development issues as they affect the Council area, in particular Neighbourhood Plans, the Local Development Plan, the Local Strategic Partnership, economic strategies and the Emergency and Resilience Plan and advise Councillors accordingly.
20. To ensure the casual vacancy process is followed when a Councillor vacancy arises. To explain the requirements of Ordinary Elections to all Councillors and undertake publicity for recruitment.
21. To ensure that the Council's obligations for financial risk assessment and insurance are properly met and that health and safety obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act and other related legislation are met.
22. To attend training courses or seminars on the work and role of the Clerk and the Council's activities as required by the Council.
23. To obtain the Certificate in Local Council Administration (if not already gained) as a minimum requirement for effectiveness in the role (within a period of 18 months).
24. To manage the arrangements to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

## **Duties and Responsibilities: Responsible Financial Officer**

1. As the Council's Responsible Financial Officer to be responsible for all financial procedures and records, and the careful administration of its finances, in compliance with all statutory obligations or other laws, provisions and notices governing or affecting the running of the Council including:
  - (a) being responsible as and carry out all the functions required by law of the Council's Responsible Financial Officer under S151 of the Local Government Act 1972 for all financial matters and records of the Council
  - (b) acting as the Council's principal adviser on financial matters, and to be responsible for the careful administration of the Council's finances, and the proper application and maintenance of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
  - (c) ensuring that the Council's finances are effectively managed and monitored, and to advise the Council on its financial forward plan, strategy and policies
  - (d) advising the Council and its Committees on and prepare the annual budget estimates of income and expenditure for revenue services, the capital budget programme and annual Precept requirements
  - (e) monitoring and managing the Council's budget expenditure and income, and to provide the Council and Committees with a regular statement of income and expenditure under each heading in the approved annual revenue and capital budgets
  - (f) ensuring that all Management Reports are reported to the Council, and the statutory internal and external audit requirements are undertaken and completed each year, and any consequential action taken
  - (g) issuing and reporting on invoices for goods and services to be paid for by the Council, and to ensure such accounts are met and that: -
    - all necessary activities in connection with the management and payment of salaries and expenses are administered accurately and legally
    - all payments made to the Council are recorded, any necessary receipts issued, all cash and cheques received banked, all associated records kept and any queries are investigated
    - invoices are prepared and issued on behalf of the Council for goods and services to ensure payment is received
    - all necessary records in connection with the above are maintained
    - all necessary administration and banking procedures are arranged to ensure that all full- and part-time staff wages and salaries are paid
    - all relevant rents or charges are collected for relevant Council services and facilities
    - all necessary Revenue and Customs, VAT, SSP and pension financial returns and/or payments are completed and dispatched on time
    - records, returns and public notices for the annual audit are prepared and the necessary public notices displayed
    - appropriate financial IT systems are in place and operated securely
  - (h) monitoring and ensuring that the Council's accounts are controlled, and the Council is informed of the ongoing financial situation
  - (i) ensuring all necessary records are prepared for audit and VAT purposes
  - (j) ensuring that the Council's obligations for financial risk management, including risk assessments, are properly met and where necessary risks are properly insured
  - (k) ensuring that adequate financial security, and internal financial and accounting controls, are in place and periodically reviewed, and the accounting records of the

- Council are maintained and kept up to date in accordance with proper practices
- (l) ensuring that an annual equipment inventory and asset register are in place
  - (m) advising the Council on and assist in the raising of funds by way of grants and sponsorship etc by following the necessary consultations and processes
  - (n) ensuring that all surplus Council funds are invested securely and income maximized
  - (o) to ensure that the Bribery Action requirements are complied with.

#### **Duties and Responsibilities: Burials Clerk**

1. The Clerk is responsible for acting as Burial Clerk to Holcombe Parish Council Cemetery in accordance with the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977.
2. The Clerk will administer the sale of exclusive right of burials; and memorial rights according to the list of charges approved by the Council.
3. The Clerk will ensure all certificates are correctly completed for interments and collect all fees due according to the list of charges approved by the Council.
4. The Clerk will maintain an accurate record of all interments in the Register of Burials and the Record of Public Graves.
5. The Clerk will maintain an accurate and tidy plan of the cemetery showing all interments and plots with exclusive right of burials.
6. The Clerk will act as a point of contact for members of the public and stone masons seeking to erect new memorials and will ensure that the design, wording, and dimensions are in line with policy before presenting to the Council for approval.
7. The Clerk will liaise with the grave digger to ensure grave plots are correctly allocated before interments.
8. The Clerk will respond to queries from undertakers and the public in person, by phone, or by email regarding new interments and help identify existing graves.
9. The Clerk to ensuring that memorial inspections are carried out to maintain a safe environment.

#### **General Duties**

1. To continue to acquire the necessary professional knowledge required for the efficient management of the affairs of the Council and to attend training courses or seminars on the work and role of the Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer and the Council's activities as required by the Council.
2. To attend the Conference of the National Association of Local Councils, Society of Local Council Clerks, and other relevant bodies, as a representative of the Council as required.
3. To undertake such other duties commensurate with the level of the post and job purpose as required by the Council from time to time.

**HOLCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL**  
**CLERK TO THE PARISH COUNCIL**

**Person Specification**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>ESSENTIAL</b>	<b>DESIRABLE</b>
Qualifications & Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must hold the Certificate in Local Council Administration or be prepared to work towards obtaining it within 18 months of commencement of appointment</li> <li>• High levels of literacy and numeracy (minimum of level 2 (good passes at GCSE/O level))</li> <li>• Relevant organisational and administrative experience in a structured environment</li> <li>• Demonstrable experience of formal Committee work, agenda preparation and minute taking</li> <li>• Experience of budget setting, monitoring processes, controls and financial management reports – at appropriate level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous experience of working for local authority or similar body</li> <li>• Experience of dealing with the public and working on own initiative</li> </ul>
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of local government responsibilities, system and procedures.</li> <li>• Knowledge of the governance, operational and legal framework in which the Council operates including local authority planning procedures.</li> <li>• Knowledge of relevant accounting procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of local area.</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of importance of good public relations and how to raise the Council's profile in the community</li> </ul>
Qualities & Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reliant and self-motivated with the drive, determination and initiative to achieve results and motivate others with minimal supervision</li> <li>• Flexible, pro-active and hands on approach to tasks</li> <li>• Supportive - demonstrating loyalty and commitment to the organisation and staff in past employment</li> <li>• Trustworthy with confidential information.</li> <li>• Ability to demonstrate tact and diplomacy.</li> <li>• Community focussed</li> <li>• Ability to develop and maintain good relationships with staff, councillors, external bodies, contractors and the public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability and enthusiasm to adapt to change</li> <li>• Enthusiastic with innovative qualities</li> <li>• Business perspective and acumen</li> <li>• Ability to interpret political drivers</li> </ul>
Skills & Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to communicate effectively with others' at all levels both internally and externally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate speaker in public</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent written and oral communication and presentational skills</li> <li>• Ability to form and maintain sound working relationships</li> <li>• Formal agenda preparation and minute taking skills</li> <li>• Ability to produce understandable and concise written reports on complex topics</li> <li>• Ability to develop, implement and monitor effective systems and procedures</li> <li>• Ability to organise and prioritise own and others work</li> <li>• Be able to show ability to work in a logical manner and to strict deadlines</li> <li>• IT literate (with sound working knowledge of MS Office, Excel and Windows packages)</li> </ul>	
Special Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness to work and/or attend Committees and other meetings and functions in evenings</li> <li>• Prepared to work varied hours to meet the needs of the post</li> <li>• Willingness to undergo training to acquire relevant new skills or knowledge relevant to the job</li> </ul>	

### Specific to the role of Responsible Financial Officer

CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications & Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some experience of budget preparation, management, and financial control systems experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounting/bookkeeping experience</li> </ul>
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of financial systems</li> <li>• Some knowledge of budget setting, audit and monitoring processes and financial management reports</li> </ul>	

## KEY TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

<b>General</b>	The terms and conditions of employment are generally 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.
<b>Salary</b>	Salary is negotiable within Salary Range NJC pay scale (SCP 2-5) paid at an hourly rate (£11.59 - £12.18). SCP 2 – if not in possession of CILCA qualification or SCP 4 if CILCA qualified or on obtaining the full qualification.
<b>Hours of Work</b>	You will be expected to work up to 25 hours per calendar month but the hours of work will be flexible by agreement to include attendance at evening meetings.
<b>Annual Leave</b>	Holiday pay will be paid as a proportion of 5.6 weeks of statutory paid leave.
<b>Pension</b>	You could be eligible to become a member of the contributory Local Government Pension Scheme. The rate of employee contribution for the LGPS is based on full time pensionable pay.
<b>Probation</b>	3 month probationary period.
<b>Pay Method</b>	Salary is paid by cheque at the monthly meeting, but could be paid into a bank or building society account if preferred on a specific date.
<b>Salary Review</b>	The salary is subject to any revisions agreed nationally between NALC and SLCC as a result of pay negotiations which are usually effective from 1 April.
<b>Work Location</b>	The role will be home based plus attendance in person for the Council's meetings on the first Tuesday of each month.
<b>Expenses</b>	Reasonable subsistence for conference attendance in accordance with Somerset County Council's policy.

Car mileage allowance payable in accordance with the casual user provisions in Somerset County Council's policy.

**Notice Period**

After completion of the probationary period, 4 weeks on either side in writing to terminate the employment. Unless your employment is terminated on grounds of gross misconduct when summary dismissal will apply, the minimum period of notice of termination of your employment which you are entitled to receive from the Council in writing, after completion of any probationary service, is four weeks.

*Other Terms*

All staff are required to operate within the Council's adopted policies and procedures.

A no smoking policy is in operation in the Council's buildings

## APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

### Recruitment Schedule

The proposed recruitment timetable is as follows: -

• Advert	- Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> September
• Closing date	- Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> October
• Short listing	- Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> October
• Selection Panel interviews	- Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> October
• Successful candidate informed	- No later than Monday 28 <sup>th</sup> October

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

### Application Procedure

1. You should complete a letter of application (maximum 2 pages A4) in which you must:
  - Articulate your key attributes and explain why you feel you are suitable for the post
  - Address how your skills and past experiences would allow you to meet the requirement of the job description.
2. Submit a Curriculum Vitae (CV)
3. Please provide the names, addresses of 2 referees. One of which should be your current/or last employer. The second should be a character reference.

When submitting your application try to 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 to: -

[mark.davies@holcombepc.org.uk](mailto:mark.davies@holcombepc.org.uk) by **mid-day on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October**

### Selection Process

It is expected that interviews for short listed candidates will be held by the Council's Selection Panel on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October.

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

Please note the above date and confirm your availability to attend for interview on that date if short listed when completing your application form. If selected for interview you will be advised before Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October at the latest.

### **References**

If you are shortlisted references will normally be applied for in advance of the interview unless you indicate in 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 their 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.

### **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.

### **Further Information**

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

However, if you have any questions on the information provided or any aspect of the appointment or the recruitment process, please do not hesitate to contact the Council members as detailed in the Letter of Introduction.

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