

COTHERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Certificate in Local Council Administration Clerk Qualification

Meeting date 10 October 2018

Background

The Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) is a foundation qualification for local council officers, awarded at Level 3 of the National Qualifications Framework. It is administered by the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Thirty learning objectives (separate 'assignments') are organised into five units covering:

- Core roles in local council administration
- Law and procedures for local councils
- Finance for local councils
- Management for local councils
- Community engagement

Update, October 2018

The Clerk registered for the CiLCA qualification in September 2017 and attended the two-day mentoring course in March 2018. Middleton-in-Teesdale and Newbiggin Parish Council has supported the Clerk in achieving the CiLCA qualification through funding the qualification registration and the mentoring two-day course. The necessary study time and time to complete the portfolio of evidence (78 hours) has not been apportioned to any parish council as yet.

The portfolio of evidence (30 learning objectives, in five units) was submitted in August/September 2018.

On 25 September 2018 notice was received that the Clerk had successfully achieved the CiLCA qualification, with 'an exemplary submission'.

Appendix 1 presents a sample of the feedback received from the assessor.

Implications

1. As per the Clerk's contract of employment, achievement of CiLCA qualification results in a one-point increment in the salary scale.
2. The Parish Council is now in a strong position, being clerked by a professionally qualified Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.
3. Training in council business, legislation and procedures can be cascaded from the Clerk to councilors as appropriate, if desired.

Recommendations

1. Councillors note the Clerk's achievement of the CiLCA qualification and the implications of this for the Parish Council.
2. Councillors approve the one salary point increase in the Clerk's salary based on the CiLCA achievement.
3. Councillors consider whether a proportion of the study hours to achieve CiLCA can be attributed to Cotherstone Parish Council and paid at the Clerk's usual hourly rate (a suggestion being in proportion to precept levels: Middleton/Newbiggin = 48%, Startforth = 35% and Cotherstone = 17%, on which basis Cotherstone Parish Council would pay £123.86).

Appendix 1

Sample of feedback from the assessor of Judith Mashiter's CiLCA portfolio

Overall

Congratulations, on your achievement. You have shown all of the required competencies of a qualified clerk and the award of Certificate in Local Council Administration. It has been a real pleasure to review all your hard work. Hopefully, the process has given you the added confidence in your role. All three of your Councils should be proud of your success.

Unit One (Core roles in local council administration)

Judith, a really great first unit. You have shown that you are aware of the core roles relating to local councils.

Learning Objective 2 (carrying out research and making recommendations)

Brilliant, Judith. You have concisely appraised the issues arising from the General Data Protection Regulation and identified a potential course of action for Cotherstone Parish Council. Not only have cited a number of sources and provided a tabulated review of the personal data held by the Council but also provided an additional explanation.

Learning Objective 7 (General Power of Competence)

Great. You would be surprised by how many experienced clerks get confused about the general power of competence. Your explanation is explicit and exactly on target.

Learning Objective 10 (preparing for and supporting council meetings)

Judith, you have given a lot of thought to the various documents that you have submitted for this learning outcome. Not only have you provided informative annotations but also suggested improvements.

Learning Objective 11 (advising a council on standing orders)

In providing comprehensive and thoughtful comments to a number of Standing Orders you have shown a complete understanding of them.

Learning Objective 12 (advising on the different kinds of committee and delegation to the clerk)

Superb, Judith. Not only have you in a clear manner covered delegation and the advantages and disadvantages of the various types but also included a draft of a delegation scheme suitable for adoption by Cotherstone Parish Council.

Learning Objective 13 (the council's duty to uphold standards of behaviour on public life)

Judith, a great way to close this unit. You have fully covered the basis of the ethics of public office and its relevance and practice for local councils. It sounds like all three of your Councils are supportive of your position as their Clerk.

Learning Objective 14 (advising on preparation and monitoring of budgets)

Judith, what a fabulous start to your last unit. You have fully explained your budget and monitoring statement. Clearly, you have a sound appreciation of the budget setting and monitoring processes.

Learning Objective 16 (writing a risk management scheme and understanding the value of insurance)

In uploading a clear Risk Register for Cotherstone Parish Council you have annotated it to show how the Council manages its various risks and values the provision of appropriate insurance. You have also suggested a couple of improvements.

Learning Objective 18 (advising on financial procedures)

Brilliant. Your thorough annotations to Financial Regulations and Standing Order 17, along with your explanation on payroll, comprehensively show that you understand their use and application.

Learning Objective 27 (understanding the impact of positive community engagement)

Judith, what a fabulous way of describing the different characteristics of your residents. You clearly have given this some thought - especially the ways that the Council might outreach to the various types.

Learning Objective 28 (advising on raising the council's profile)

Superb. Not only have you provided a list that is illustrative of the various ways Middleton-in-Teesdale and Newbiggin Parish Council raises its profile within its community but also two newsletters. The latter are easy to read and reflect well on the work of the Council and role of councillors.