



TOWN & PARISH COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDED BASIC GOVERNANCE CHECKLIST

Good governance underpins a well run town or parish council and without it can be the cause of Civility & Respect and other issues and problems which could escalate.

This first step Governance Checklist is recommended to Councillors, Clerks, County Officers and Monitoring Officers to review when there are complaints and concerns regarding the functioning of the Council.

If the Council is unable to complete part of the checklist, it may be by addressing this initially it could prevent the problem escalating.

1

Is the Council a member of National Association of Local Councils (NALC)?

NALC supports and promotes local councils providing statutory and not statutory information.

NALC also works with County Associations for local support.

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2

Is the Clerk a member of Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)?

Councils should ensure and pay (Local Government Act 1972 s 143 (1) (b)), for their Clerk to have professional membership to enable to receive training and be kept fully up to date on the sector.

SLCC has a mentoring scheme to support new Clerks and local meetings.

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3

Employment Matters

Does the Clerk (and other staff) have a Contract of Employment?

Does the Clerk (and other staff) have a Personal Development Plan reviewed at least annually?

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Code of Conduct

Have all Councillors signed up to the Code of Conduct?

Have all Councillors received Code of Conduct training?

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Training

Is there a plan for undertaking recommended training e.g. Code of Conduct for Councillors?

Some free training is available via Principal Authorities and County Associations and or can be shared with neighbouring councils.

Does the Clerk have access to recommended training?

There are many forms of training for Clerks from progression for new Clerks 1 day on line up to an MA.

There are also many relevant topic based training in person and online to keep Clerks up to date and benefit their Councils and Community. Being a member of SLCC will normally ensure a reduced rate for training.

Some grant funding can be available for training.

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6

Does the Clerk attend professional development conferences?

Professional Conferences have sessions specifically designed for Clerks skill building, professional development and enrichment. This will enable a Clerk, Council and the community to stay ahead of a challenging and fluctuating environment and recommending solutions to issues that have been addressed by other Clerks & Councils. Conferences provide ideas, best practices, contacts and tools which can not only improve the day to day governance of the Council, can assist with financial savings, accessing funds and project management.

7

Professional Helpline / Advice / Support

Has advice on the problem been sought from NALC?
Has it been acted on?

Being a member of NALC will enable free access to the professional helpline and support.

Has advice on the problem been sought from SLCC?
Has it been acted on?

SLCC is not a union. It's helpline for Clerks is provided to assist with professional matters advising of best practices and practical solutions. It also provides the facility of networking Clerks who have been through similar problems.

SLCC Advice Library includes over 700 documents listed under the 90 categories; within each category you'll find the documents grouped by: • Advice Notes – statement of fact or law • Guidance Notes – how to do something • Model Documents – can be adapted to suit a council's particular circumstances. SLCC members may use and adapt the documents within their own council(s) on the understanding that the copyright remains with SLCC. The document must not be shared with or transferred to non-members.

8

Is the Council trying to operate without a Clerk?

There can be several reasons why the Clerk is not currently available. The recommendation is that a Locum Clerk who has professional qualification is brought in to assist with the issue to prevent escalation.

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Does the Chair / Mayor have professional support?

This can be from the Clerk / Locum Clerk, County Association or NALC.

10

Are the Council, Councillors and Clerk clear about their Roles and Responsibilities?

- ♥ Council who acts as a corporate body making policies and decisions on behalf of the Council.
- ♥ Councillors who form the corporate body and cannot act as individuals nor be involved in the day to day management of the Council.
- ♥ Clerk who carries out the instructions of the Council as a corporate body and manages the day to day functions and governance of the Council

11

Is there evidence of bullying and harassment by a Councillor?

This becomes a Code of Conduct matter and therefore the Council as the corporate body cannot investigate and take actions. The process is referred to the Monitoring Officer for determination.

12

Is there evidence of inappropriate behaviour by the Clerk?

The Council if it believes the Clerk has acted inappropriately should ideally address in the regular Performance Development Plan.

If there continues to be a problem it is recommended that professional advice is sought to address employment matters rather than a Council trying to do their best, which can sometimes make problems more difficult and bring the Council into a 'crisis' situation.

Ideally a plan should be in place if this is needed (e.g. who to contact).

Ideally larger councils would have professional external HR support.

It is recommended that all times a professional trained Clerk is in place even if a Locum.

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Has the Council signed up to the Civility & Respect Pledge?☐

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Are the basic Governance arrangements in place?

The items below indicate a basic level of governance procedures which should be in place for a town or parish council.

It should also be noted that if a Council has all of these governance arrangements in place it can use these as a base to apply for the NALC Bronze Local Council Award see www.nalc.gov.uk

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Standing Orders

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Financial Regulations

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iii

Code of Conduct

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iv

Publication Scheme

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v

Complaints Procedure

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vi

Privacy Notice

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vii

Audit completed, advertised correctly, evidence of reports presented to Council.

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Internal Audit reports regularly reported to Council

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Financial Transactions – transparent information available

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Meeting Calendar

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Minutes – available and transparent

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Risk Management Policy

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Register of Assets

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Insurance Policy

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Civility & Respect for the local council sector

- IS top of the
agenda

Civility & Respect Pledge

To treat other councillors, clerks, all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles.



**Civility &
Respect**

IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

Take the pledge today!
Visit: www.nalc.gov.uk
or www.slcc.co.uk