

ROWLANDS CASTLE PARISH COUNCIL

Job Description – Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to the Parish Council

1. Background

Becoming a Clerk to a Parish Council can be one of the most rewarding jobs in a local community. However, it is important to understand that being a Clerk is a job not simply a spare time activity, and in Rowlands Castle it takes 30 hours a week to undertake. 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 can provide a voice for residents at parish level.

The skills and attributes needed to be our Clerk include a good deal of common sense, confidence to handle the administrative work, being a good organiser and being IT literate and able to get on with most people. Underwriting these qualities is a sense of public duty, of wanting to help others in the community.

Much learning will take place on the job during meetings and at District, Borough or County level where you will meet other clerks and start to get answers to the many questions you will have. A clerk can go on to complete the nationally recognised Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). Further opportunities include structured training and study, leading, if you choose, to degree level qualification.

Most council meetings are held out of normal working hours and our Clerk can be called upon at all times of a day on occasion so is not just a daytime activity.

The Parish Clerk is known in law as the Proper Officer and, in Rowlands Castle, is also the Responsible Finance Officer of the Council. As Clerk you will be responsible for ensuring that the instructions of the Council in connection with its function as a Local Authority are carried out and that statute and regulation is complied with. The Clerk is expected to advise the Council on, and assist in the formation of, overall policies to be followed in respect of the Authority's activities and, in particular, to produce the information required for making effective decisions and putting them into effect. The person appointed will be accountable to the Council for the effective management of all its resources and will report to it as and when required.

2. Rowlands Castle Parish

In this Parish located to the north of Havant on the border with West Sussex in Southern Hampshire, at the last census (2021), there were 3,190 residents, with a slightly lower proportion of young people and a slightly higher proportion of people of older people than in East Hampshire as a whole. The population has risen by 16% since 2011 with new housing developments and there were 2,650 registered electors at the last ballot in 2024 in connection with the Neighbourhood Plan.

The main population centre in the Parish is Rowlands Castle itself at the southern end with a small hamlet at Finchdean about 4 miles to the north. The Parish is overwhelmingly rural and over 50% is located within the South Downs National Park where housing development is of course very limited.

The Parish Office is located in the village above the hardware store/post office. The staff consists of the Clerk together with 4 other part-time members of staff: the Administrative Officer, the Facilities Officer (mainly concerned with issues relating to the Parish Hall and the Recreation Ground), the Parish Hall Administrator and a general duties/handyman at the Recreation Ground.

The turnover of the Council is about £175,000 per annum with about 95% of income coming from the precept charged to all residents through the Council Tax.

3. Duties of the post - overview

- a. To act as the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer for the Council
- b. To ensure that statutory and other provisions governing or affecting the running of the Council are observed.
- c. To monitor and balance the Council's accounts and prepare records for statutory and audit purposes.
- d. To ensure that the Council's obligations for Risk Management are properly met.
- e. To prepare, in consultation with appropriate members, agendas for meetings of the Council and Committees.
- f. To issue notices and prepare agendas and minutes for the Parish Council Meetings
- g. To attend such meetings and prepare minutes for approval.
- h. To attend any Parish Meetings that may be called by members of the community or the Parish Council, providing an agenda if required and any minutes on completion and to implement the decisions made at the assemblies that are agreed by the Council.
- i. To receive correspondence and documents on behalf of the Council and to deal with the correspondence or documents or bring such items to the attention of the Council.
- j. To manage the day-to-day business of the Parish Office and staff.
- k. To ensure correct payments are made under the workforce payroll system.
- l. To operate the council's accounts

The systems and activities which underpin these responsibilities are well established and will be discussed and set out in detail with the successful candidate as part of the induction process.

4. Summary of the main terms and condition of the post

Working hours – 4 days (30 hours per week). The working hours are flexible to recognise the nature of the post, and the post holder will agree the general arrangements for working hours on appointment. The office is open for fixed hours each week when members of the public and councillors may wish to visit or make contact and the working hours will need to reflect this. Some degree of working from home may also be agreed if appropriate.

Salary - £30,900 for 30-hour week. Salaries are reviewed annually taking into account pay rises awarded nationally to Local Government staff.

Holidays – 25 days plus 3 extra days after five years of service for full time staff, pro-rata for part time staff, in addition to Bank holidays.

Pension – auto enrolment in the Council's pension scheme run by Cushon. There is a 3% employee contribution rate.

Probationary Period - There will be a six months' probationary period in the role with regular review during the period to ensure that development needs are identified and met. A permanent appointment will be confirmed after 6 months only following a successful review; the probationary period may be extended if felt advisable