

Upper Heyford Parish Council Staff Handbook

Reviewed & Approved in the Parish Council Meeting on the 17th July 2025
Minute Reference 19. a)
Next review July 2027

Upper Heyford Parish Council

1. Introduction

Welcome to Upper Heyford Parish Council. This Staff Handbook outlines the key policies, procedures, and expectations for all employees of the Parish Council. It supports good governance, legal compliance, and a positive working environment. This handbook is not a contract but sets out guidance based on current legislation and Council policy. It may be reviewed and updated from time to time.

2. About the Parish Council

Upper Heyford Parish Council is the first tier of local government, representing the interests of the local community and managing a range of services. The Council is made up of elected councillors and supported by employees such as the Clerk and RFO.

3. Employment Terms

- **Job Title:** As per your contract of employment
- **Hours of Work:** Stated in your contract
- **Place of Work:** Usually home-based or parish office, plus council meeting venues
- **Salary:** In accordance with NJC (National Joint Council) pay scales

All formal employment matters are handled in line with the Council's HR and Disciplinary policies.

4. Probationary Period

A probationary period of 6 months applies to all new staff. Performance will be reviewed before confirmation of permanent employment.

5. Code of Conduct

Staff are expected to:

- Act professionally, honestly, and impartially
- Maintain confidentiality
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Uphold the council's reputation
- Treat councillors, colleagues, and the public with respect

6. Working Hours and Flexibility

Your contract outlines your core working hours. The Council recognises the flexible nature of parish work and supports reasonable adjustments for meetings and community events. Overtime or TOIL (time off in lieu) must be agreed in advance.

7. Holidays and Leave

- Annual leave entitlement is based on length of service and pro-rated for part-time staff, in line with NJC terms.

- Leave must be approved by the Chair or Council as designated.
- Other types of leave (e.g. sick leave, compassionate leave) follow statutory requirements and will be managed accordingly.

8. Sickness and Absence

You must notify the Chair (or designated councillor) as soon as possible if you are unable to work. Absences over 7 calendar days require a GP's Fit Note. The Council reserves the right to request medical reports if necessary.

9. Performance and Appraisal

Annual appraisals will be conducted to support professional development and review performance. Training needs and future objectives will be agreed during this process.

10. Training and Development

The Council supports ongoing training and CPD (Continuing Professional Development). Staff are encouraged to participate in training provided by:

- Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)
- National Association of Local Councils (NALC)
- Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils

Reasonable training costs may be reimbursed with prior approval.

11. Health and Safety

The Council is committed to providing a safe working environment. Staff must:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- Report any hazards or incidents
- Follow any risk assessments or lone working policies

12. IT and Data Protection

- All Council data must be stored securely.
- Staff must comply with GDPR and the Council's Data Protection and IT Policies.
- Council email accounts (if issued) must be used for all official business.

13. Social Media

Staff must use social media responsibly and never post in a way that could harm the Council's reputation. Official communications should follow the Social Media Policy.

14. Grievance Procedure

Employees with concerns should first raise them informally with the Chair. If unresolved, a formal grievance may be submitted in writing and will be heard according to the Council's Grievance Policy.

15. Disciplinary Procedure

Misconduct will be managed in line with the Council's Disciplinary Policy, which provides for warnings, suspension, or dismissal depending on the nature of the issue.

16. Ending Employment

On leaving employment, staff are expected to:

- Provide written notice (as per contract)
- Return all council property
- Ensure handover of key tasks and documentation

Exit interviews may be offered to support continuous improvement.

17. Contacts and Support

If you have questions or need support, contact:

Chair of the Parish Council

Staffing Committee

18. Acknowledgement

All staff are required to confirm they have read and understood this handbook.