Training and Development Policy

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Policy Purpose

This purpose of this policy is to set out Meriden Parish Council's position on the provision of training and development opportunities for staff. It applies to all staff whether full or part-time, temporary or fixed term. The policy also details Meriden Parish Council's commitment to offer training and development opportunities to its Council members.

Training Statement of Intent

Meriden Parish Council is committed to provide a level of training for both its members and staff to enable them to undertake their respective roles for the betterment of not only the Council and the Community it serves, but also the Councillors' and employees personnel development.

Training

Training is defined as a planned process to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future needs of the Organisations. Learning can be categorised into the following:

- Intuitive – learning which happens by chance and we may not be conscious of it.
- Incidental – learning by reflection on events or activities.
- Retrospective – a system approach to reflecting on activities and identifying what we learned from them.
- Proactive – planning to learn form an activity, reflecting on it and planning to use what we learned. It is anticipated that member/staff learning will reflect many of the above.

Training Aims

Meriden Parish Council's training aims are:

1. To improve the understanding of its members, of their role as a local Councillor, the powers available to the Council and how best to utilise the resource available to the Council for the betterment of the residents it serves.
2. To provide the necessary training to its staff to ensure that they can undertake their respective roles.
3. To ensure an acceptable level of succession planning in order to:
    a. ensure the Council can operate effectively following local elections and potential changes to the Council membership
    b. ensure the Council can continue to operate during times where staff may be unavailable (e.g. holidays, sickness staff turnover etc.)

Training Budget

Meriden Parish Council will allocate an annual training budget to cover provision of training activities, attendance at conferences and training publications for Council members and staff. The training budget will be agreed by all Council members when approving the annual budget.

Councillor Training

Meriden Parish Council recognises that newly elected Councillors will require training to better understand their role and carry out the responsibilities associated with being a Parish Councillor. Experienced Councillors may require refresher training or may wish to attend new training and development opportunities relevant to their role. All Councillors will be encouraged to undertake the following:

- On election to office, all Councillors are encouraged to read the following publications, The Parish Councillors Guide, Local Council Finance and Governance and Accountability.
- On election to office, all Councillors shall undertake training in the Code of Conduct within six months of the delivery of their declaration of acceptance of office.
- All Councillors are encouraged to attend conferences and training events as appropriate to members and the needs and responsibilities of the Council.
- All Councillors are provided with Meriden Parish Council policies and procedures as soon as practicable after the local elections.

The Clerk will inform all Councillors of training opportunities and maintain a register of training attended. Councillors may also seek out and request additional training opportunities relevant to the role of a Parish Councillor. Meriden Parish Council will fund all expenses and costs associated with Councillor training and development required for the role of a Parish Councillor or Chair of the Parish Council.

Volunteer Training

Meriden Parish Council recognises that volunteers may require training for tasks or roles undertaken on behalf of the Council. Training will be given where appropriate, and the exact nature of the training will depend upon the role or activity. Training standards will be sufficient to ensure the Health and Safety of volunteers and any people who might be affected by the work. Volunteers will be informed about the task and its purpose, health, safety and supervision arrangements and all volunteers shall have regard to the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 when undertaking work.

Identifying, Meeting And Evaluating Training And Development Needs Of Employees

Training and development needs will be identified from a variety of sources:

- Induction and probationary periods.
- One-to-one discussions/meetings.
- Appraisal process.
- Workforce planning.
- Team meetings.
- Annual planning.
- Change processes.

In addition, Meriden Parish Council will encourage staff to identify their own learning styles and will seek to provide a wide variety of learning and training methods, including:

- Attendance at conferences, seminars and short courses.
- Online training.
- Internal coaching.
- Shared in-house learning resources (books, journals, DVDs etc).
- Access to industry advice and publications (for example, SLCC, WALC).
- In house training.
- Work shadowing.
- Time for self-directed research and learning.

Consideration Of Training And Development Requests By Employees

Employees are encouraged to seek out relevant training opportunities from industry training providers, such as SLCC and WALC, to ensure they have the necessary skills and development opportunities to perform their role. Requests for training opportunities will be considered and approved by the line manager.

A number of factors will be considered when assessing a request from an individual for training and development. This policy provides one element of the decision-making process. Other factors will include the availability of finance and the individual's employment record. In order to ensure that Meriden Parish Council is able to consistently evaluate requests, training and development opportunities have been organised into three categories according to the degree of importance each intervention has for different roles.

Categorising Training And Personal Development For Employees:

The three categories are as follows:

1. Mandatory

Mandatory training is legally required for the post-holder, or a qualification deemed to be so fundamental to the role, that the council makes it a mandatory requirement. Any mandatory training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description. For mandatory qualifications, it is unlikely that an applicant would be recruited without having previously attained the qualification. Where a qualification becomes mandatory for the role, Meriden Parish Council will provide reasonable assistance for the employee to attain the qualification (see the section on guidance for support below). Some mandatory training may be specific to a particular job role whilst other training may be a generic requirement. Examples of mandatory training, depending upon the business sector, may include:

- Health and Safety (Personal Safety, Manual handling).
- Food hygiene.
- Data Protection.

2. Desirable

Desirable training is not legally required for the post, but it is directly relevant to the individual's job. Any desirable training or qualifications are to be stated on the job description. For desirable qualifications or training, an individual may be recruited without having previously attained the qualification or undergone the training but may be expected to attain the qualification within a defined period of time. The need for training may also be identified through one-to-one meetings or annual appraisals. A desirable qualification is likely to enhance the skills and reputation of the council. Examples may include:

- Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).
- Microsoft Excel.
- Clerk’s toolkit
- Financial management and budget preparation

3. Optional

An optional qualification or optional training may not be directly linked to the individual’s current job. Optional training or development is generally more beneficial to the individual’s career than it is for the council.

Financial Guidance For Employee Training And Development

Support for qualifications, training and personal development can include financial assistance towards the cost of tuition, examinations and resource materials.

For employees undertaking mandatory training and desirable training (refer to the above training classifications), they are entitled to payment of normal earnings; all prescribed fees and other relevant expenses arising. Mandatory and desirable training course fees will be paid by Meriden Parish Council. Employees are also entitled to paid leave for the purpose of sitting the required examinations. When attending training courses outside contracted daily hours, part-time employees should be paid on the same basis as full-time employees. All employees attending training courses in addition to their contracted hours can choose to take time off in lieu, if preferred.

Any financial support to training and development that is classified as optional is entirely at the discretion of Meriden Parish Council and requests will be considered by the employment committee.

Study Leave For Employees

Employees may require half/day release and time off for study leave, along with time off for taking an examination.

Where individuals require study leave to undertake mandatory and desirable training, they will be able to take all the leave within normal working hours.

Where individuals require study leave to undertake training which is optional and part of the individual's desire for career development, the council will not contribute any study leave days but will consider requests for flexible working to allow the study to take place, as long as the needs of the council can be met.

Time off for study leave must be approved in advance. To make a request the individual is asked to write to the Clerk (or Chair of the Council), setting out the details of the course of study, how it relates to their work, and the time being requested.