

# **Stanwick Parish Council**

## **Staff Appraisal Protocol**

### **Background**

The development of staff is a key management process and appraisal is one of the best ways to achieve this.

It is important that everyone responsible for or involved in staff appraisal must operate within a planned and structured process and be aware and understand the key issues to avoid as well as the best techniques to use.

A formal appraisal system also provides a specific opportunity to sit down together at regular intervals to look at what the member of staff is doing, whether they are happy doing it, whether they have abilities which are not being used or whether they are being asked to do things outside their immediate capabilities. It is not a substitute for effective day to day management or disciplinary action but does provide an opportunity to discuss all those underlying factors which make or mar effective performance.

### **What are the benefits of appraisal?**

In general the appraisal process and meeting benefits the Council and members of staff as they:

- can ensure that staff are clear on the Council's aims, objectives and priorities
- develop a better understanding of the skills and abilities of those who work for them
- discuss the member of staff's strengths and weaknesses
- identify the barriers to good performance and can take remedial action
- can help plan to make better use of their staff now and in the future
- can identify those who have potential to develop further
- gain an insight into their own management style and its strengths and weaknesses
- can set individual objectives for their staff which tie in with the Council's goals
- review progress regularly

In particular the benefits of the Scheme are as follows:

(a) for the member of staff it serves to:

- provide clarification of job purpose and role
- provide recognition of commitment to work and the business
- review objectives and receive recognition for achievements
- agree priorities
- receive constructive feedback
- identify and resolve any problem areas or weaknesses
- improve job performance and communication
- identify and agree future training needs and development plans

(b) for the Council it serves to:

- provide a formal vehicle through which to monitor work
- identify any performance problems
- improve communication
- jointly formulate solutions to problems
- provide positive feedback and recognition
- motivate and provide career development advice

### **Fair and equitable process**

The Council staffing procedure and/or process has to be:

- Effective - producing the expected benefits for the Council through the staff development and monitoring performance
- Efficient - using the most cost-effective process to achieve the expected benefits whilst involving staff throughout the process; and
- Fair - protecting the Council by dealing consistently, fairly and honestly with all staff and avoiding any discriminatory practices and processes.

There are inherent risks to the Council when operating the appraisal process and the Council can suffer damaging claims of discrimination if it goes wrong and is handled improperly.

The potential claims of discrimination are now on the grounds of one of the following protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

- Sex
- Race
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

Apart from these forms of discrimination there are numerous types of personal prejudice that have no place in a fair appraisal process such as those associated with education, class, dress and appearance etc which must be eliminated from any decisions made.

Apart from the legal implications, discrimination and prejudice:

- invariably lead to the wrong conclusions
- limit the range of potential benefits available to the Council
- cause resentment and low morale
- are bad for the Council's image

and have no place in the appraisal process or employment in general.

The Council has an Equality Policy that must be observed at every stage and in all actions during the appraisal process.

## **Guiding principles**

- performance management and appraisal needs to be seen and developed as a continuous cycle of objective setting, feedback, development and review;
- feedback, positive and negative, is most effective when delivered shortly after the task;
- good people managers talk regularly to employees discussing the status of goals/priorities and giving feedback and the annual appraisal meeting then becomes a summary of these discussions thus avoiding any year-end surprises;
- it is a two-way process and an exchange of ideas should be incorporated into the formal process;
- training for all involved in appraisal enhances success. Staffing Committee Members should be regularly encouraged to undertake training and self-develop and reflect on their own performance;
- the Council will define what is meant by performance and the standards against which performance is being measured;
- Forward-looking - the main value of reviewing past performance is to identify matters which can be built upon, problems that can be tackled by the Council or by training, and new opportunities.
- Positive - problems, difficulties and mistakes should be discussed openly so that solutions can be found, training offered or defective systems improved.
- Appraisal is not simply a tick-box exercise – this just encourages a shallow dialogue once a year
- Appraisal meetings are not the forum for criticism or admonishment. The disciplinary procedure exists if punitive outcomes are sought.

## **Appraisal process - outline**

Who – the appraisal will be carried out by two members of the Staffing Committee. The member of staff has the right to be accompanied if they so choose.

When – the appraisal will be carried out between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> October on an annual basis.

How – the member of staff will be given a minimum 21 days' notice to provide sufficient time for preparation and the member of staff will be advised the date by which any completed self-appraisal forms need to be returned by.

Where – the interview will take place in a COVID secure location where it is likely that there will be minimal interruptions.

Confidentiality – the appraisal documentation will be confidential to the member of staff and those undertaking the interview. The Council will be notified that the appraisal has been completed but not provided with details or sight of the documentation.

## **Appraisal process – detailed**

The appraisal meeting will be structured as follows:

(a) Introduction

The purpose, scope and format of the appraisal meeting will be explained by the manager.

(b) Self Assessment

Prior to the appraisal meeting the appraisee will have reviewed their performance over the past year and be able to comment on:

- what went well during the year
- how far you met the objectives for the year
- what, of particular note, did you achieve during the year
- what did you enjoy most/least in respect of the work undertaken
- what did you consider to be your key strengths and weaknesses
- what additional support do you require from the Council
- any outstanding performance problems that require attention

A completed Self-Assessment Form will be submitted it at least two weeks before the date of the appraisal meeting in the interviewer.

(c) Job Review, Key Tasks and Objectives

The appraisee's job description will be jointly reviewed and any necessary changes agreed as part of the meeting and the opportunity should be taken to clarify any tasks of which they are unsure or might like to lose.

In addition the previous year's objectives will be reviewed and the achievements or failures identified along with the reasons behind them.

(d) Feedback on Performance

Feedback on performance during the year will be given by the manager which will include any significant achievements, strengths and, where relevant, any weaknesses that have prevented the completion of objectives. Where agreed weaknesses are identified, solutions or steps that can be taken to overcome barriers to more effective performance will be agreed.

The feedback will be factual, supportive, honest and constructive. At the end of the feedback the member of staff will be given an opportunity to comment and record any mitigating circumstances or obstacles that have prevented them from completing key tasks or objectives. An opportunity will also be taken to identify how the Council can better support and help the appraisee realise their potential and performance.

(e) Training and Development

Any training and the development needs will be discussed in respect of both the existing job and the future needs of the Council. Development opportunities may include training, work experience and new responsibilities.

(f) Future Targets and Objectives

A new set of objectives or key tasks will be jointly agreed for the following appraisal year which will be:

- understandable
- achievable
- measurable
- timetabled
- prioritised
- challenging; and
- limited in number.

(g) Conclusion of Meeting

The appraisee should have an opportunity to ask any further questions at the end of the meeting and the key outcomes of the meeting will be summarised to ensure that there is common understanding of the objectives and the action points.

**After the Appraisal Meeting**

Shortly after the meeting, the main outcomes of the meeting and the agreed objectives and tasks for the following year will be summarised in writing in Section 3 of the Appraisal Review Form and a copy given to the post holder for agreement. The Plan will be signed off by both parties and a copy of the form given to the appraisee whilst the original is held on the Personnel File.

The Staffing Committee will be responsible for ensuring that the agreed tasks are implemented, training is provided and objectives are then met during the following review period.

Progress on these points may be discussed or reviewed at informal, one to one meetings during the course of the year but progress on the agreed tasks and objectives set will be formally reviewed after six months.

**Setting objectives – additional guidance**

(a) There are three steps in setting effective objectives:

1. Select the part of the job to which the objective will relate.
2. Agree what is the end result to be achieved within that area.
3. Settle how the end result will be achieved and the steps that the appraisee will need to take: these are standards of performance.

(b) For objectives that work for staff they are formulated in clear and positive terms in accordance with the acronym “SMART” which can be summarised as follows.

SMART stands for:-

**S is for Specific**

- Unless objectives are clear, staff have little chance of achieving them.

**M is for Measurable**

- The objectives must be capable of being monitored and establishing whether or not the member of staff has met them.
- Such measurements may be quantitative or qualitative.
- Potential ambiguities in the monitoring criteria should be identified and eliminated.

**A is for Achievable**

- Easy-to-meet objectives are unlikely to stretch staff and/or the organisation.
- If objectives are too difficult to achieve they can have a de-motivating effect.
- Imposed objectives also tend to have a de-motivating effect.
- Employees involved in setting their own objectives are likely to be more committed to their achievement.

**R is for Realistic**

- Objectives should be within the member of staff's capability, potential and control.
- The manager and member of staff may have differences of opinion about their capability but unless it is tested they will never know.

**T is for Time-framed**

- Dates for reviewing progress should be set and the objectives themselves should either have deadlines or relate to a particular period.

Any objectives agreed with the appraisee against each of these factors.

**Protocol review**

This protocol will be reviewed after the first appraisal cycle and then every two years.

Version	Date adopted	Minute ref	Reviewed
1			