



QUALITY  
PARISH  
COUNCIL

# Striving Towards Quality

Evidence File for the  
Quality Parish and Town  
Council Scheme

Checklist for Meeting Quality Status Criteria

Name of Council:

Clerk:

Address:

Date:

**Purpose of the File:** This file should greatly aid councils in compiling all the relevant information to submit an application for Quality status and should be used in conjunction with the 'guide to becoming a Quality council'. It breaks down the status into relevant sections and provides pointers to ensure that nothing is missed. Once the council has submitted all the relevant evidence into the appropriate sections this file can be submitted for accreditation.

**Acknowledgement:** This file was originally produced by the Essex County Training Partnership and has been further developed by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) to be rolled out nationally. NALC would like to personally thank Alison East at the Essex Association of Local Councils for developing the product. The file also has the endorsement of the Parish and Town Council Development Group, consisting of relevant government departments and key stakeholders involved in setting up the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme.

**What next?** Once you have completed this file you should send it to your local County Accreditation Panel, via your local CALC. You will be given details of when the panel meet and notice of the date your application will be considered

To help cover the cost of the accreditation process an application fee is charged and this needs to be sent with the application. The fee is based on actual gross income or expenditure of the council and must be payable to the National Association of Local Councils

Expenditure of parish/town council	Application fee (including VAT)
Under 50,000	£58.75
£50,000-£100,000	£117.50
Over £100,000	£235.00

# ELECTORAL MANDATE

## Criteria

<b>Electoral mandate - Mandatory</b>	Number
1. Number of seats	
2. Number of Councillors that were nominated and stood at the last election	
3. Number of co-opted members or vacant seats	

At least two-thirds of members must have been elected. The conversion table below illustrates the number of elected councillors that are required to meet the test. In calculating the correct number of councillors you should round up to the nearest whole number.

Total no. of cllrs (council Size)	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Two-thirds of total council size	4	4	5	6	6	7	8	8	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	14

## Evidence

- A copy of the latest election return(s) for your council.
- This should include the last full council election return plus copies of any other returns for elections held by the district authority to fill a vacancy on your council (eg a Statement of Persons Nominated and Declaration of Result of Poll (if contested))

# QUALIFICATIONS OF THE CLERK

## Criteria

<b>Qualifications of the Clerk - Mandatory</b>	Yes	No
1. Does the Clerk hold a Certificate in Local Council Administration?		
Or:		
2. The Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy (or the earlier CertHE in Local Council Administration) awarded by the University of Gloucestershire?		

## Evidence

- A copy of the qualification certificate for the clerk and any other relevant qualifications

# MEETINGS

## Criteria

<b>Meetings - Mandatory</b>	Number	
1. How many meetings did the parish hold in the 12 calendar months preceding this application?		
	Yes	No
2. Were they all open, or partly open, to the public?		
3. Does the parish council meet at least six times each year (including the Annual Meeting of the council)?		
4. Are Notices of Meetings publicly displayed at least 3 clear days before each Meeting?		
5. Are the Minutes (whether agreed or draft) of meetings published and available for inspection by any elector in the parish?		
6. Were they published within 2 months of the meeting being held?		
7. Was time set aside in each meeting for public participation?		

## Evidence

For the twelve months prior to the application for Quality status copies of the following must be provided;

- Copies of notices and minutes for the twelve months prior to the application of Quality status.

# COMMUNICATIONS

Part Mandatory, Part Discretionary

## Criteria

<b>Communications – Mandatory</b>	Yes	No
1. Do you have a website for the parish that provides a list of council members and officers with contact details and access to the annual report?		
2. Does your council have an e-mail address that is publicly available?		
3. Do you provide regular information to your electorate – in the form of a newsletter or contribution to another community publication?		
4. Did it include a list of council members and officers with contact details?		
5. Was the information placed in readily available public sites such as Notice Boards or the Village Hall?		

## Evidence

- Provide both email and website addresses
- Provide a minimum of four newsletters from the past 12 months, including names of councillors and the clerk and how they can be contacted
- The minimum requirement to pass the newsletter section of this test is to produce or contribute to at least four newsletters a year and make them publicly available. The County Accreditation Panel must be satisfied that the newsletters have been made as publicly available as possible in order to pass this test so evidence and narration is needed
- Provide evidence or examples of how the newsletter has been made publicly available and other ways you have communicated with residents about parish activities (eg copies of newsletters, magazines, articles in local press/publications, leaflets, information on notice boards, copies of web-pages, lists of where newsletters have been made available etc)

# COMMUNICATIONS

## Criteria

<b>Communications – Discretionary</b>		
You should be able to tick yes to at least 9 of the following:		
1. Was the Annual Report sent to every household in the parish council area?		
2. Did the Annual Report include a summary of reports of council activities during the year?		
3. Have you a Parish Plan, contributed to a town or village plan or been involved with community-led planning?		
4. Do you provide an information/access point for details on local government services and parish council activities?		
5. Is the access point electronically linked to the district and county councils?		
6. Is information about local government services and parish council activities distributed to every household?		
7. Have you established links with voluntary and other community organisations in your area?		
8. Has a community engagement strategy been formulated?		
9. Do you provide a regular weblog on your website about council activity or encourage your community to talk to you through an online forum or through surveys on your website?		
10. Do Councillors hold regular “surgeries” for local residents (i.e. more than 6 times a year)?		
11. Do you consult residents on planning matters?		
12. Do you keep the relevant principal authorities informed of parish council activities?		
13. Do you publicise parish council activities in local libraries/shops/other public places?		
14. Do you publicise the parish council activities in the local press?		
15. Do you ensure coverage of parish council activities in any district council publication?		
16. Do you undertake Consultations/Questionnaires with the electorate on local issues affecting the parish council area?		
17. Do you provide Information leaflets/brochures on the work of the parish council?		

# Evidence

For each of the nine or more discretionary items ticked in this section you must provide evidence, whether in narration or further copies (for example the parish plan, newsletters, web-pages etc), to evidence that the requirement has been met.

1. How was this achieved? Narration needed or copies of postal costs
2. Provide an additional copy of the Annual Report and highlight section
3. Include Parish Plan, Market Town Action Plan or other relevant plan
4. Include Parish office or one stop shop opening hours and documents/leaflets/links that sign post how to access services
5. Show the relevant electronic link or narrate how this is done
6. If in Newsletter include extra copies. Or include relevant leaflet etc
7. Provide a Directory of Groups or any joint publications or areas of work
8. Provide a copy of the Community engagement strategy
9. Provide web addresses and print-outs of the relevant information
10. Include copies of notices
11. If planning issues are in minutes at which public attend enclose and highlight
12. Narrate and explain what information is sent to principal authorities
13. Include Notices and narrate where they are displayed
14. Provide press cuttings
15. Provide copies of the district publications cuttings
16. Include Parish Plan, Village Design Statement
17. Provide the leaflets or brochures

# ANNUAL REPORTS

## Mandatory

## Criteria

<b>Annual Reports - Mandatory</b>	Yes	No
1. Was the last Annual Report completed and published by 30 <sup>th</sup> June of the following year?		
2. Was the Annual report made available for inspection by any elector in the parish council area?		
3. Was it made publicly available by being placed at the offices of the principal authorities and local libraries?		
4. Did the Annual Report include a list of council members and officers with contact details?		
5. Did it include a summary of the accounts of the parish council?		
6. Did it include a Chairman's overview of the Councils' achievements?		

## Evidence

- A copy of the latest Annual Report
- Provide evidence or narration that illustrates that the report has been made publicly available

# ACCOUNTS (ANNUAL RETURN)

## Criteria

<b>Accounts - Mandatory</b>		Yes	No
1	Did the last statement receive an unqualified opinion from the external auditor?		
2	Were the last available Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and appropriate proper practices, and approved within three months of the accounting date, and published within six months of the accounting date?		

## Evidence

Councils should submit;

- A copy of the last audited Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement
- Reports from the internal auditor to the council
- Copies of minutes approving the latest Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement
- Confirmation that the External Auditor has not issued a report in the public interest within the last three years

# CODE OF CONDUCT

## Criteria

<b>Code of Conduct - Mandatory</b>	Yes	No
Have the parish council resolved to adopt a local Code of Conduct including section 12(2) of the revised Model Code of Conduct (as opposed to the code being applied in the absence of adoption)?		

## Evidence

- Minutes showing adoption of the Code of Conduct (to show the date of its adoption)
- Minutes showing the resolution to adopt section 12(2) of the Code

# PROMOTING LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP

## Criteria

<b>Promoting local democracy and citizenship – Mandatory</b>	Yes	No
Do you undertake activities that actively support local democracy or citizenship in your area?		

## Evidence

- Evidence to show that the council proactively supports local democracy and citizenship. This might include activities such as actively involving and listening to the views of young people, supporting a youth council. It could also include working on a democracy or citizenship project with a local school, encouraging people to register to vote or providing information to hard to reach groups. Further details of appropriate activities can be found at the NALC website. You should provide documents that highlight your activities which could include project plans, relevant correspondence, news releases, promotional materials, news cuttings etc.

# TERMS AND CONDITIONS

## Criteria

<b>Terms and conditions – Mandatory</b>	Yes	No
Should you have a paid clerk have you adopted (as a minimum) the NALC/SLCC Terms and Conditions agreement?		
Have all staff been issued with a written contract of employment		

## Evidence

- A statement signed by both the Chair and clerk that the council adhere to both parts of the test

# TRAINING

## Criteria

<b>Training – Mandatory</b>	Yes	No
Has your council evaluated and identified the training needs of both staff and members?		
At re-accreditation – Has your council acted upon your previous Statement of Intent on Training?		

## Evidence

- A Statement of Intent on Training that shows that the council has identified key areas of training need for both staff and members and details of how these needs were identified. A Statement of Intent on Training should be submitted at accreditation and all subsequent accreditations
- At reaccreditation you should provide evidence to show how you have acted upon your previous statement. Supporting evidence might include a list of training courses attended, by whom and on what date

Note – If you are reaccrediting for the first time under the amended criteria you will not have previously submitted a Training Statement of Intent, therefore you will not be required to show evidence that you have acted upon one. You will only be required to provide a Statement of Intent on Training. For example, a council that accredited for the first time in 2006 under the old criteria will be required to provide a Statement of Intent on Training when reaccrediting in 2010. In 2014 the council will be required to provide evidence as to how it acted upon its Statement of Intent on Training from 2010 and submit a new Statement of Intent on Training.

# OTHER

These areas do not form part of the assessment but will be of interest to the Panel and act as an aid to understanding your capabilities and the role you currently play in your local community.

	Yes	No
1. Has the Clerk attended any training courses in the last year?		
2. Have any Councillors attended Training courses/briefings in the last year?		
3. Do you own a Village Hall?		
4. Do you manage <sup>1</sup> a Village Hall that you also own?		
5. Do you manage a Village Hall that you do not own?		
6. What was the average number of Councillors in attendance at parish council meetings over the preceding 12 calendar months?		
Which of the following services is your parish council currently involved with:		
Do you provide and/or equip buildings for use of clubs having athletic, social or educational objectives (Community Centres) or for Conference facilities?		
Do you provide and manage any recreation grounds, public walks, boating pools or other open spaces?		
Do you work on local youth projects?		
Are you involved in any community transport schemes?		
Do you contribute to crime prevention measures in your area?		
Do you provide or maintain Bus Shelters or other roadside seats?		
Do you provide lighting or traffic signs for roads and public places?		
Do you repair and maintain public footpaths and bridle-ways and road side verges?		
Do you provide parking places for vehicles, bicycles and motor-cycles?		
Have you been involved in traffic calming measures?		
Have you made any Bye Laws?		
Do you regulate or maintain any Commons and/or common pastures, ponds or ditches?		
Do you promote Lotteries?		
Do you participate in Tourism activities?		
Do you provide or maintain allotment gardens?		

<sup>1</sup> i.e. deal with the day-to-day running of the hall

Do you maintain or contribute towards expenses of Burial grounds, cemeteries and crematoria, closed churchyards, monuments and memorials (including war memorials)?	
Are there any other functions that the parish is discharging on behalf of principal authorities (please provide details)?	

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairman/Mayor of the Parish/Town Council of** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_