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The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme

Application Form



QUALITY
PARISH &
TOWN
COUNCIL
SCHEME

The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme –

Application Form

- 1 The main requirements or 'Tests' that a parish, town or city council¹ must meet to be recognised as a Quality parish council are listed below. You are asked to tick the relevant boxes and attach papers to this return as requested.
- 2 When completed, the Form should be passed to your local county association of local councils along with a cheque, made payable to the National Association of Local Councils. You may be asked further questions about the answers you have given, or to provide further supporting information. You will be notified if your application has been successful.
- 3 Copies of this document should be kept for record purposes and made available for inspection at any time.

Introduction

- 4 A Quality parish council will be able to demonstrate that it is representative of, and actively engages with, all parts of its community and that it is properly managed.
- 5 So, in order to become a Quality parish council, a parish council must comply with certain 'Tests' to demonstrate the above in order to show that it has the capacity to take on the broader role envisaged:
 - a) To have at least two-thirds of seats filled by members who were elected at an election;
 - b) Have a qualified clerk;
 - c) Hold at least six Council meetings each year;
 - d) Provide regular information to residents on parish council activities;
 - e) Publish an Annual Report;
 - f) Produce properly prepared and audited accounts;
 - g) Have formally adopted a local Code of Conduct including section 12 (2);
 - h) Promote local democracy and citizenship;
 - i) Have adopted the NALC/SLCC Terms and conditions agreement and issued all staff with a written contract of employment; and
 - j) Have prepared a 'Statement of Intent' on training and at reaccreditation can provide evidence they have acted upon it.
- 6 Parish councils inevitably deal with their duties and communicate with their electorates in different ways, depending on their size, resources and circumstances. What might be possible and appropriate for one parish may not be so for another. This form allows for these differences in approach by giving some flexibility in meeting the criteria in the Communications test where there is a selection of ways to show that the parish is representative of and engages with its community. Not all of these need be met, although we would encourage all parish councils to meet as many as they can.

¹ Hereafter, reference to parish councils also includes town, city, community, neighbourhood and village councils

Electoral mandate	Number
1. Number of seats	
2. Number of current councillors that were nominated and stood at elections	
3. Number of co-opted members or vacant seats	
Refer to conversion table in guidance for correct number of elected councillors. Please attach all relevant electoral returns.	

Qualifications of the Clerk	Yes	No
1. Does the Clerk hold the 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?		
Please attach copies of certificates and details of any other relevant Qualifications or experience that may be relevant.		

Meetings	Number	
1. How many meetings did the parish hold in the twelve calendar months preceding this application?		
	Yes	No
2. Were they all open, or partly open, to the public? ²		
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 three clear days before each Meeting?		
5. Are the draft minutes of meetings published and available for inspection by any elector in the parish?		
6. Were they published within two months of the meeting being held?		
7. Was time set aside in each meeting for public participation?		
Please attach minutes of meetings for last year		

² If no please explain the necessity for closed meetings and how many such meetings there were.

Communications – Mandatory	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 the parish have an email address that is publicly available?		
3. Did you provide regular information to your electorate – in the form of a newsletter or contribution to another community publication – on all parish council activities over the last year?		
4. Did it include a list of council members and officers with contact details?		
5. Was information placed in readily available public sites such as notice boards or the Village Hall		
Communications – Discretionary		
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 or contributed to a town or village plan?		
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 the council developed a community engagement strategy?		
9. Does your council provide a regular weblog on its website about council activity or encourage the local community to talk to it through an online forum or through surveys on its website?		
10. Do Councillors hold regular 'surgeries' for local residents (i.e. more than six 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?		

Please provide examples of the way information has been passed to your community – Newsletters, magazines, articles in other local papers or district council publications, notice boards, leaflets in public places etc – and of other ways that you consult with your local community and make information available to them. Details of how local people access the parish council and how you ensure that the parish represents the views of the electorate should also be provided.

Annual Reports	Yes	No
1. Was the last Annual Report completed and published by 30 th 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?		

Accounts	Yes	No
1 Did the last statement of accounts 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?		
Please attach the last audited Statement of Accounts, reports from the Internal Auditor to the council, copies of minutes approving the latest Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement and confirmation that the External Auditor has not issued a report in the public interest within the last three years.		

Code of Conduct	Yes	No
1. Have the parish council resolved to adopt a local Code of Conduct including Section 12 (2) of the revised Model Code of Conduct?		
Please attach a copy of the meeting minutes that include the resolution to adopt the revised Model Code of Conduct, expressly including paragraph 12 (2) and the date of its adoption.		

Promoting local democracy and citizenship	Yes	No
1. Do you undertake activities that actively support local democracy or citizenship in your area?		

Terms and conditions	Yes	No
1. Has the parish council adopted (as a minimum) the NALC/SLCC Terms and Conditions agreement? (for councils with a paid clerk)		
2. Have all staff been issued with a written contract of employment?		
Please attach a statement signed by both the chair of the council and clerk confirming that both parts of the test have been met.		

Training	Yes	No
1. Has your council evaluated and identified the training needs of both staff and members?		
2. At reaccreditation – Has your council acted upon your previous statement of intent?		
Please attach a copy of your training 'statement of intent'. At reaccreditation please attach your new training 'statement of intent' and evidence explaining how you have acted upon your previous 'statement of intent'.		

Other

These issues 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. It also has the benefit of gathering data on parish council activities, which will be useful when considering the effectiveness of the Quality Parish Scheme in the future, and any improvements that might be made.

	Yes	No
1. Do you own a Village Hall?		
2. Do you manage ³ a Village Hall that you also own?		
3. Do you manage a Village Hall that you do not own?		
4. What was the average number of Councillors in attendance at parish council meetings over the preceding twelve 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?		
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?		

³ i.e. deal with the day-to-day running of the hall

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

Signed.....

Chairman/Mayor of the Parish/Town Council of.....

Address.....

Date.....

