

Job Advertisement



Arborfield & Newland Parish Council

The Parish Office, Arborfield Village Hall, Eversley Road
Arborfield, Berkshire, RG2 9PQ

Tel: 0118 976 1489

E-mail: parishclerk@arborfield.org.uk

Website: www.arborfield.org.uk

Clerk to the Council

NALC SCP LC2 - 24-28 £28,672 - £32,234 pa (pro-rata) depending on skills and experience

Circa 28 hours per week

Flexible working pattern to be agreed

Could you be our next Parish Clerk?

Arborfield & Newland Parish Council is advertising the position of Clerk to the Council / Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and is currently inviting applications for this role based in the Parish Council Office in Arborfield Village Hall.

The Clerk advises the Parish Council to ensure that it acts within its powers and in accordance with local government legislation, and to make sure that correct procedures are followed in all the Council's decision-making processes. The Clerk's role includes preparing agendas and producing minutes in respect of Council and Committee meetings, acting out approved decisions, liaising with contractors, Wokingham Borough Council and residents on various matters relating to the Council's activities.

The Clerk is involved in overseeing the maintenance of the Parish Council's assets including Arborfield Park which includes a playground, pavilion building, commemorative trees and a football pitch, Pound Copse (a Wildlife Woodland site), the maintenance of the old churchyard at Hall Farm, bus shelters, streetlights, notice boards, benches and a phone kiosk used as a book lending library. The Clerk is also the line manager for the Pavilion Caretaker.

The successful applicant will be a confident communicator, who is self-motivated and able to multitask with close attention to detail in all their work. Previous administrative experience is essential, and applicants must be able to demonstrate good organization, communication and IT skills together with administering, keeping and reporting adequate financial records for the Council. Previous local government knowledge would be welcomed along with a CiLCA qualification, however, training will be provided. A commitment to achieving CiLCA together with knowledge of Arborfield will be a definite advantage.

Arborfield is a very attractive place to live and you would be required to help the Council promote its services and uphold a good reputation within the local community. For further information on this role, please download a recruitment pack from www.arborfield.org.uk or contact the Clerk at parishclerk@arborfield.org.uk

This is an opportunity to play a part in the third tier of local government, and become more involved in the local community, working for an active and responsive Parish Council.

Arborfield & Newland Parish Council is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

Closing date for receipt of completed applications is 4pm on **Friday 30th July 2021**. Interviews are planned for week commencing **Monday 9th August 2021**



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Recruitment Information Pack

Job title: Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to the Council
Reports to: Chair of the Council
Accountable to: The Council
Key accountabilities: All Council staff, property and resources

Introduction

Thank you for responding to the Council's recent advertisement for this post. We hope that you find this Recruitment Information Pack of assistance in deciding whether to apply.

The information is arranged as follows:

- The role of a Clerk / RFO to the Council
- The application and selection process
- The job advertisement
- The job description
- The person specification

Enclosed with this Recruitment Information Pack is an application form (CVs alone will not be acceptable).

This Recruitment Information Pack will not form part of any subsequent Contract of Employment.

Further information about the Council can be found at www.arborfield.org.uk

If as a result of a disability or impairment you would like us to make any special arrangements concerning the completion of your application or attending for interview, please let us know.

Closing date for receipt of completed applications is 4pm on **Friday 30th July 2021**. Interviews are planned for w/c **Monday 9th August 2021**

Should you wish to have an informal discussion prior to submitting your application, please feel free to contact the current Clerk on 0118 976 1489.

Role of the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to the Council

Why become a Clerk?

Becoming a Clerk to a Parish or Town Council is one of the most rewarding jobs in a local community – a competent Clerk underpins a good Council.

The role of Clerk is to ensure that the Council as a whole conducts its business properly and to provide independent, objective and professional advice and support. Being a Clerk puts you in the centre of things.

Parish and Town Councils are part of the Local Government in Wokingham together with Wokingham Borough Council (WBC – a Unitary Authority).

Wokingham Borough Council are responsible for strategic services such as highways, education, libraries, social services, strategic planning and refuse collection.

Parish and Town Councils are often viewed as the part of government closest to the people.

They are the only local government tier that represents residents at Parish and Town level. Parish and Town Councils can ‘precept’ – raising a local tax each year, paid as part of Council Tax, to improve facilities and services for local people.

Their powers and duties cover many things that we may take for granted where we live and can include the provision and maintenance of allotments, burial grounds and public monuments, public clocks, halls, some street lighting, litter bins, car parks, public lavatories, rights of way, roadside verges, bus shelters, swimming pools and village greens.

Parish Councils are consulted on, and can only comment on, planning applications, and can be represented at public enquiries. Similarly, they advise the Borough authorities on the views of residents, and especially on priorities for local investment.

Most Council meetings are open to the public. The meetings are led by the Chair and advised by the Clerk to the Council who is there to see that business is conducted within the law.

What does the Clerk to the Council do?

The enclosed Job Description lists the duties in detail, but the main duties of the job can be summarized as:

- To ensure that the Council conducts its business lawfully
- To administer all the Council’s paperwork
- To ensure that meeting papers are properly prepared and that Councillors and public are aware of meeting times
- To communicate and carry out the Council’s decisions
- To organise and manage the provision of the Council services
- To organise and oversee the implementation of projects
- To manage and lead the Council’s staff
- To communicate and market the Council services and facilities
- To keep property register and other legal documents
- To keep up to date by training/qualification/professional development

What does the Responsible Financial Officer do?

- Carry out all the statutory functions, ensuring the implementation of, and compliance with the Council’s financial regulations.
- Ensure that you provide such information as directed by the Council is available in a timely manner
- Be responsible for advising the Council on the adequacy of, and changes to, its Financial Regulations. This shall include all internal controls and procedures to manage financial risk.

- Carry out an annual financial risk assessment is undertaken, documented and submitted to the council.
- Ensure that there are procedures in place and record all financial transactions, income and expenditure together with assets and liabilities.
- Ensure that there are procedures in place to ensure the correct and timely payment or receipt of invoices.
- Be responsible for the production of the Council's year end accounts and the relevant of the Annual Return as required by law.
- Submit the independent internal auditors report to the Council or Committee upon receipt and produce recommended changes to procedures and Financial Regulations as necessary.
- Ensure that the Council's bank accounts are monitored and carry out reconciling in accordance with the Councils Financial Regulations.
- To monitor the Council's cash flow and advise the Council or Committee(s) of recommended actions.
- Be responsible for the production and distribution of regular management accounts as directed by the Council or Committee(s). Monitor and explain any variance between budgeted items and actual cost.
- Be responsible for co-ordinating the Council, Committees, Members and other Officers in the production of the Council's annual budget.
- Advise the Council or Committee(s) as to the adequacy of its reserves having regard to the Council's risk assessments.
- Advise the Council or Committee(s) as to the budget and cost of projects.
- Obtain quotes and estimates for goods and services as directed by the Council or Committee(s) ensuring that you declare any pecuniary interests in accordance with the 1972 Local Government Act.
- Ensure that all VAT (Value Added Tax) returns and other HMRC deductions are administered, submitted correctly and on time.
- Be responsible for the production of the Council payroll, payment of wages, and deductions including pension payments, submission of data to HMRC.

Key duties and responsibilities of the post are in the job description included in this pack.

Like everything in life, once you know how to do it it's a very rewarding role.

It is important to understand however that being a Clerk to a Parish or Town Council is a job not a spare time activity.

Fundamentally the job is no different for large or small Councils. What is different however is the amount of time needed to deal with the volume of business.

Most Council meetings are held in the evenings, so being a Clerk is not just a daytime activity.

Skills and attributes needed

Clerks usually pride themselves in having a good deal of common sense, confidence to handle the administrative work, being a good organiser, IT literate and able to get on with people.

The key attributes required are detailed in the person specification included in the Pack, but underlying these qualities is a sense of public duty – of wanting to help others in the community.

Application Selection Process

Selection Process

The recruitment process will include:

- Shortlisting, based on the information submitted in the application form
- Assessment against the person specification, and
- Selection interviews, with a panel of interviewers consisting of Councillors of Arborfield & Newland Parish Council.

You should complete the enclosed Application Form in full and not disregard any section.

CVs are not acceptable as an alternative to completing the Application Form but may be attached along with any supplementary information or documents in support of your application.

When submitting your application, you should address the requirements of the Job Description and Person Specification for the post and ensure that your relevant key experiences, knowledge, skills and personal style are clearly described to give you the best opportunity in the short-listing process.

You will be required to show documentary proof of any qualifications you may claim to hold.

If you are shortlisted, references will normally be applied for in advance of the interview unless you indicate in the application form that you do not give the Council permission to do so.

If appropriate, the authenticity of references may be checked by direct confidential contact if you are being offered the appointment.

In accordance with their legal obligations the Council will require you to provide proof that you are legally able to work in the UK before commencing employment.

Canvassing

Canvassing, either directly or indirectly, will disqualify you from appointment. Sending copies of, or extracts from, your completed Application Form, CV or testimonials to any Member or Officer of the Council will be regarded as canvassing.

Equal Opportunities

The Council wholeheartedly support the principle of equal opportunities in employment and opposes all forms of unlawful and/or unfair discrimination including on the grounds of any protected characteristic in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

We will appoint purely on merit and suitability for the post on offer.

Further information

We hope that the information contained in this Recruitment Information Pack is helpful and sufficiently thorough to enable you to submit your application, which we look forward to receiving.

Further information can be found at www.arborfield.org.uk or by contacting the current Clerk on 0118 976 1489.

Job Description

Job title:	Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to the Council
Reports to:	Chair of the Council
Accountable to:	The Council
Key accountabilities:	All Council staff, property and resources

Job Purpose

The Clerk to the Council will be the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is under a statutory duty to carry out all the functions, and in particular to serve or issue all the notifications required by law of a local authority's Proper Officer.

The Clerk will be totally responsible for ensuring that the instructions of the Council in connection with its function as a Local Authority are carried out.

The Clerk is expected to advise the Council on, and assist in the formation of, overall policies to be followed in respect of the Authority's activities and in particular to produce all the information required for making effective decisions and to implement constructively all decisions. The person appointed will be accountable to the Council for the effective management of all its resources and will report to them as and when required.

The Clerk will be the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and responsible for all financial records of the Council and the careful administration of its finances.

Key accountabilities

1. To ensure that statutory and other provisions governing or affecting the running of the Council are observed.
2. To monitor and balance the Council's accounts and prepare records for audit purposes and VAT.
3. To ensure that the Council's obligations for Risk Assessment are properly met.
4. To prepare, in consultation with appropriate members, agendas for meetings of the Council and Committees. To attend such meetings and prepare minutes for approval.
5. To attend all meetings of the Council and all meetings of its committees and sub-committees.
6. To receive correspondence and documents on behalf of the Council and to deal with the correspondence or documents or bring such items to the attention of the Council. To issue correspondence as a result of instructions of, or the known policy of the Council.
7. To receive and report on invoices for goods and services to be paid for by the Council and to ensure such accounts are met. To issue invoices on behalf of the Council for goods and services and to ensure payment is received.
8. To study reports and other data on activities of the Council and on matters bearing on those activities. Where appropriate, to discuss such matters with administrators and specialists in particular fields and to produce reports for circulation and discussion by the Council.
9. To draw up both on his/her own initiative and as a result of suggestions by Councillor's proposals for consideration by the Council and to advise on practicability and likely effects of specific courses of action.

- 10.** To supervise any other members of staff as their line manager in keeping with the policies of the Council and to undertake all necessary activities in connection with the management of salaries, conditions of employment and work of other staff.
- 11.** To monitor the implemented policies of the Council to ensure they are achieving the desired result and where appropriate suggest modifications.
- 12.** To act as the representative of the Council as required.
- 13.** To issue notices and prepare agendas and minutes for the Parish Meeting: to attend the assemblies of the Parish Meeting and to implement the decisions made at the assemblies that are agreed by the Council.
- 14.** To prepare, in consultation with the Chair, press releases about the activities of, or decisions of, the Council.
- 15.** To attend training courses or seminars on the work and role of the Clerk as required by the Council.
- 16.** To work towards the achievement of the status of Qualified Clerk as a minimum requirement for effectiveness in the position of Clerk to the Council.
- 17.** To continue to acquire the necessary professional knowledge required for the efficient management of the affairs of the Council: Suggested is membership of your professional body The Society of Local Council Clerks.
- 18.** To attend the Conference of the National Association of Local Councils, Society of Local Council Clerks, and other relevant bodies, as a representative of the Council as required.

Person Specification

Job title: Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to the Council
 Reports to: Chair of the Council
 Accountable to: The Council
 Key accountabilities: All Council staff, property and resources

Qualifications and Experience

<i>Essential</i>	<i>Desirable</i>
Hold CiLCA qualification or be prepared to achieve it within 2 years	Knowledge of the governance and legal framework in which the Council operates
Experience of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee work, agenda preparation and minute taking • Dealing with the public • Budget setting, monitoring processes, controls and financial management reports 	
Excellent organisational and administrative experience and the ability to prioritise	
Strong interpersonal skills	
Ability to form and maintain sound working relationships with key internal and external stakeholders	
Solid oral and written communication skills, including the ability to assimilate and present information coherently and concisely	
Good working knowledge of Microsoft 365, Outlook, HMRC RTI, Scribe Accounts	Interest in using and learning IT systems

Personal Qualities and Other Requirements

<i>Essential</i>	<i>Desirable</i>
Have a genuine interest in Arborfield, its residents, its history and its future as a thriving village	Have some knowledge of Arborfield.
Self-reliant and self-motivated with the drive, commitment and initiative to achieve results and motivate others	
Trustworthy with confidential information	Business perspective and acumen
Ability to demonstrate tact and diplomacy	Sensitivity to working in a political environment
Ability to exercise sound judgement and lead by example in ensuring the standards of conduct and integrity	
Availability and willingness to attend evening Council meetings	Current driving licence

Application Form

Job title: Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)to the Council
 Reports to: Chair of the Council
 Accountable to: The Council
 Key accountabilities: All Council staff, property and resources

Arborfield & Newland Parish Council is an equal opportunities employer and your application will be judged solely on merit. Please answer all the questions in this form honestly and truthfully and read and sign the declaration and consent under the Data Protection Act at the end of the form to provide the best chance of obtaining an interview. **Please complete the form in full in black ink or type and only use A4 size paper for any continuation sheets. Please ensure pagination is retained.**

Personal Details

Name		Preferred title	
Address			
		Postcode	
Home telephone			What is your preferred contact phone number in connection with this application? <i>Please tick</i>
Mobile telephone			
Email address			

Outside Interests or Non-vocational Experience

Please give details of any outside interests or non-vocational experience which you feel will support your application.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Please give details of any ‘unspent’ convictions as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Unless the nature of the position allows the Council to ask questions about your entire criminal record we will only ask about ‘unspent’ convictions. A criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining employment with the Council.

Education and Qualifications

Please give details of your education and qualifications obtained plus those currently being pursued.

School/college/university	Date from	Date to	Subjects studied; qualifications obtained

You will be asked to provide evidence of your qualifications.

Professional Institute Membership

Please give details of any relevant professional or technical bodies of which you are a member.

Name of Institute/Professional Body	Level of Membership	Year of Award

Training Courses

Please give details of any relevant short training courses, trade/professional training, Government training schemes or secondments you have completed.

Course Title and Duration	Provider	Date

Current or most recent employment

Employers Name			
Employers Address			
		Postcode	
Job Title		Current/final salary	
Date commenced		Date left or notice period required	

Please provide a brief description of the main duties and responsibilities of your current or most recent job. (Please attach a copy of the job description if you wish)

Why do you/did you wish to leave your current/most recent job?

Employment history

Please list your previous employment history in chronological order, using a separate sheet if necessary, and please give reasons for any gaps in your employment history.

Name & Address of Employer	From	To	Job Title, main responsibilities	Reason for leaving

Relevant skills, experience and knowledge

Please give your reasons for applying for this post and the experience, skills and knowledge you have which would enable you to do it well. Please refer to the Person Specification and ensure you cover all the criteria set out for the post. This should include information about any period not accounted for in the section above by full time employment or education and training (and if appropriate, voluntary work). Please use a separate sheet if necessary and/or attach any supporting documents.

Prevention of Illegal Working

The Council has legal obligations to ensure that you can work legally in the UK. Prior to taking up any employment you will be required to provide evidence of a passport and/or other relevant documents on the approved list to satisfy the Council that you comply with this requirement.

Do you require permission or a work permit to take up employment in the UK?	Please write 'Yes' or 'No'	
Are there any restrictions on your residing in the UK?	Please write 'Yes' or 'No'	

Driving and Driving Licence

Do you hold a full driving licence?	Please write 'Yes' or 'No'	
If 'Yes', what type/class of licence?		
Do you have any current endorsements or are you currently banned from driving?	Please write 'Yes' or 'No'	
If 'Yes', please provide details:		
Are you a car owner or do you have access to a car?	Please write 'Yes' or 'No'	

References

Please give details of two persons who we could contact and would be willing to supply a reference for you. We would prefer your referees to be your most recent employers, including your current employer if applicable.

Referee 1		Referee 2	
Name		Name	
Address		Address	
Postcode		Postcode	
Telephone number		Telephone number	
Email address		Email address	
May we obtain reference prior to interview?		May we obtain reference prior to interview?	

References will be obtained and their authenticity checked if you are to be offered the appointment.

Relationships

Are you, to your knowledge, related to, or do you have any relationship with, an Elected or Co-opted Member or an employee of the Council?	Please write 'Yes or 'No'	
If 'Yes', please give details		

Declaration and Data Protection Act Consent

I declare that all the foregoing details given in this application are true to the best of my knowledge and belief, and I understand that verification checks may be made. I also understand that if the information I have given is found to be untrue or misleading this will be sufficient grounds for disqualification from appointment or dismissal from any employment gained.

I understand that the information given in this form will be processed by the Council only for the purpose of considering my application for employment and if I am successful in my application this form and the information in it will be retained in my personnel file for such time as I am an employee and for up to six years after the end of my employment. Otherwise, this form will only be retained by the Council for so long as it is required in connection with the application.

Signed	Date

Notification of Vacancy

How did you find out about this vacancy? <i>Please tick</i>	Advertisement	Word of Mouth	Other
If 'Advertisement', in which publication or if 'Other' please explain			

Acknowledgement and Return of Completed Form

Please return the completed application form to parishclerk@arborfield.org.uk

Return by email is preferred. However, if you return by post, please send to:
Arborfield & Newland Parish Council, The Parish Office, Arborfield Village Hall, Eversley Road, Arborfield, Berkshire, RG2 9PQ.

Please mark the envelope 'Strictly Confidential – Application for the post of Clerk/RFO to Arborfield & Newland Parish Council'. Acknowledgement of receipt for all applications will be provided by email.

Interview Arrangements

All applicants will be contacted to either be offered an interview or be informed that their application hasn't been successful.

Interviews will be carried out by the current Clerk, who is retiring, and members of the Executive Committee. If there are a high number of applications there may be a second round of interviews, which will be conducted by the Parish Chairman and one other member of the Executive Committee.