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IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

Parish and town councils recommended basic governance checklist

Good governance underpins a well-run town or parish council, and without it can be the cause of civility and respect, and other issues and problems which could escalate.

This first step governance checklist is recommended to councillors, clerks, county officers and monitoring officers to review when there are complaints and concerns regarding the functioning of the council.

If the council is unable to complete part of the checklist, addressing this initially could prevent the problem from escalating.

1	<p>Is the council a member of National Association of Local Councils (NALC)?</p> <p>NALC supports and promotes parish and town councils providing statutory and not statutory information. NALC also works with county associations for local support.</p>	STC is a member of NALC
2	<p>Is the clerk a member of Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)?</p> <p>Parish and town councils should ensure and pay (Local Government Act 1972 S143 (1) (b)), for their clerk to have professional membership to enable to receive training and be kept fully up to date on the sector. SLCC has a mentoring scheme to support new clerks and local meetings.</p>	<p>Yes both the Clerk and Office Manager / Assistant to the Town Clerk are members of SLCC.</p> <p>Administrative staff regularly attend SLCC training as part of their ongoing professional development within the local council sector.</p>
3	<p>Employment matters</p> <p>Does the clerk (and other staff) have a contract of employment? Does the clerk (and other staff) have a personal development plan reviewed at least annually?</p>	All staff are employed under formal contracts and have professional development plans, which are reviewed at least every six months and annually.
4	<p>Code of conduct</p> <p>Have all councillors signed up to the code of conduct? Have all councillors received code of conduct training?</p>	Yes all Councillors have signed up to the Code of Conduct.

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5	<p style="text-align: center;">Training</p> <p>Is there a plan for undertaking recommended training e.g. code of conduct for councillors? Some free training is available via county associations and principal authorities and/or can be shared with neighbouring councils.</p> <p>Does the clerk have access to recommended training? There are many forms of training for clerks from progression for new clerks one day online up to an MA. There are also many relevant topic-based training in person and online to keep clerks up to date and benefit their councils and community. Being a member of SLCC will normally ensure a reduced rate for training. Some grant funding can be available for training.</p>	<p>Yes. The Council has agreed to include Code of Conduct training within its Standing Orders. Recommended training is planned and provided where appropriate for all Councillors and staff, in line with good practice. All STC staff and Councillors have access to relevant training opportunities to support professional development and ensure the effective governance of the Town Council.</p>
6	<p>Does the clerk attend professional development conferences?</p> <p>Professional conferences have sessions specifically designed for clerks' skill building, professional development and enrichment. This will enable a clerk, council and the community to stay ahead of a challenging and fluctuating environment and recommending solutions to issues that have been addressed by other clerks and councils. Conferences provide ideas, best practices, contacts and tools which can not only improve the day-to-day governance of the council, can assist with financial savings, accessing funds and project management.</p>	<p>Yes. The Town Clerk regularly attends SLCC conferences and attended the SLCC Practitioners Conference in 2026.</p>
7	<p style="text-align: center;">Professional helpline, advice and support</p> <p>Has advice on the problem been sought from NALC? Has it been acted on? Being a member of NALC will enable free access to the professional helpline and support.</p> <p>Has advice on the problem been sought from SLCC? Has it been acted on? SLCC is not a union. It's helpline for clerks is provided to assist with professional matters advising of best practices and practical solutions. It also provides the facility of networking clerks who have been through similar problems. SLCC Advice Library includes over 700 documents listed under the 90 categories; within each category you'll find the documents grouped by advice notes – statement of fact or law, guidance notes – how to do something, model documents – can be adapted to suit a council's particular circumstances. SLCC members may use and adapt the documents within their own council(s) on the understanding that the copyright remains with SLCC. The document must not be shared with or transferred to non-members.</p>	<p>Yes. Where appropriate, advice has been sought from NALC and acted upon. Advice and guidance have also been accessed through SLCC, including use of the helpline and advice resources and have been implemented where relevant to support best practice and good governance.</p>

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8	<p>Is the council trying to operate without a clerk? There can be several reasons why the clerk is not currently available. The recommendation is that a locum clerk who has professional qualification is brought in to assist with the issue to prevent escalation.</p>	N/A
9	<p>Does the chair and mayor have professional support? This can be from the clerk, locum clerk, county association or NALC.</p>	<p>Yes. The Town Clerk leads on this matter, and in their absence the Office Manager / Assistant to the Town Clerk will provide support, drawing on advice from NALC and CALC where required.</p>
10	<p>Are the council, councillors and clerk clear about their roles and responsibilities? Council who acts as a corporate body making policies and decisions on behalf of the Council. Councillors who form the corporate body and cannot act as individuals nor be involved in the day to day management of the council. Clerk who carries out the instructions of the council as a corporate body and manages the day to day functions and governance of the council.</p>	<p>Yes. The Council, Councillors, and the Clerk are clear about their respective roles and responsibilities, with the Council acting as a corporate body, Councillors operating collectively rather than individually and the Clerk managing the day-to-day operations and governance of the Town Council in accordance with its decisions.</p>
11	<p>Is there evidence of bullying and harassment by a councillor? This becomes a code of conduct matter and therefore the council as the corporate body cannot investigate and take actions. The process is referred to the monitoring officer for determination.</p>	<p>No. Councillors are aware of the Code of Conduct and the process for reporting conduct matters. Where required, the Town Clerk will provide advice and signpost Councillors to the Monitoring Officer.</p>
12	<p>Is there evidence of inappropriate behaviour by the clerk? The council if it believes the clerk has acted inappropriately should ideally address in the regular performance development plan. If there continues to be a problem it is recommended that professional advice is sought to address employment matters rather than a council trying to do their best, which can sometimes make problems more difficult and bring the council into a crisis situation. Ideally a plan should be in place if this is needed (e.g. who to contact). Ideally larger councils would have professional external HR support. It is recommended that all times a professional trained clerk is in place even if a locum.</p>	<p>No. There is no evidence of inappropriate behaviour by the Clerk. Any concerns, should they arise, would be addressed through the Clerk's performance development process, with professional advice sought where necessary.</p>

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13	<p>Has the council signed up to the Civility and Respect Pledge?</p> <p>Have councillors been asked as individuals to sign up to the Statement of Assurance?</p>	<p>Yes. STC has signed up to the Civility and Respect Pledge and seeks to embed its principles across all relevant policies and processes. All councillors have signed the Statement of Assurance.</p>
14	<p>Are the basic governance arrangements in place?</p> <p>The items below indicate a basic level of governance procedures which should be in place for a town or parish council. It should also be noted that if a council has all of these governance arrangements in place it can use these as a base to apply for the Local Council Award Scheme Bronze Award.</p>	<p>Yes. Saltash Town Council has all the basic governance arrangements in place. The Town Council's future aim is to apply for the Local Council Award.</p>
i	Standing Orders	STC has adopted
ii	Financial Regulations	STC has adopted
iii	Code of Conduct	STC has adopted
iv	Publication Scheme	STC has adopted
v	Complaints Procedure	STC has adopted
vi	Privacy Notice	STC has adopted
vii	<p>Audit completed, advertised correctly, evidence of reports presented to Council.</p>	<p>STC has recently commissioned a full and comprehensive governance review delivered by CALC and regularly reviews its policies, with clear reporting and evidence of approval presented to Council.</p>
vii i	<p>Internal Audit reports regularly reported to Council</p>	
ix	<p>Financial Transactions – transparent information available</p>	<p>Transparent financial information is provided through published agendas, minutes, payments lists, budgets, accounts, and audit reports, all approved in public meetings and made publicly available.</p>
x	Meeting Calendar	<p>STC reviews its schedule of meetings on an annual basis and publishes the approved timetable both on the Council's website and on all Town Council noticeboards and via its social media channels.</p>
Xi	<p>Minutes – available and transparent</p>	<p>All minutes are published online, publicised via social media, and are available in printed form on request to ensure accessibility and transparency.</p>
xii	Risk Management Policy	<p>STC has a robust Risk Management Policy in place, which is reviewed annually to</p>

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		ensure ongoing compliance and effectiveness.
xii i	Register of Assets	STC has a register of assets and reviews annually.
xi v	Insurance Policy	STC has a General Insurance Policy, Fleet Insurance Policy, Pontoon Insurance and Cyber Crime Insurance policy in place, all of which are reviewed annually to ensure ongoing compliance and effectiveness.