

SOMERCOTES PARISH COUNCIL

STAFF APPRIASAL POLICY | ADOPTED NOV 2024

1. Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1. This Staff Appraisal Policy sets out a structured framework for appraising the performance of Parish Council employees. The objectives of the policy are to:
 - 1.1.1. Provide a clear process for reviewing employee performance on a regular basis.
 - 1.1.2. Facilitate meaningful conversations between employees and their line managers.
 - 1.1.3. Align individual performance and objectives with the strategic goals of the Parish Council.
 - 1.1.4. Identify training, development, and support needed for employees to reach their full potential.
 - 1.1.5. Recognize and reward good performance while addressing underperformance in a fair and constructive manner.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all Parish Council employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract staff. It is designed to support the growth and development of all employees, regardless of their position within the Council. Line managers and employees alike are expected to engage in the appraisal process with openness, respect, and a shared commitment to improvement.

3. Appraisal Process

- 3.1. The appraisal process follows a continuous cycle of feedback, review, and improvement. The three main components are:
 - 3.1.1. **Annual Appraisal Meeting:** A formal evaluation of the employee's performance over the past year, where strengths, weaknesses, and future goals are discussed.
 - 3.1.2. **Mid-Year Review:** An informal review meeting held halfway through the appraisal cycle to check progress and make any necessary adjustments.
 - 3.1.3. **Ongoing Feedback:** Continuous, informal feedback is encouraged to address performance-related issues or recognize achievements as they occur.

4. Annual Appraisal Meeting

4.1. The formal annual appraisal is the cornerstone of the process, with the following elements:

4.1.1. **Preparation:** Both the employee and line manager are expected to prepare in advance of the meeting. The employee will complete a **Self-Assessment Form**, reflecting on their achievements, challenges, and goals. The line manager will complete the **Manager's Appraisal Form**, based on the employee's performance throughout the year.

4.1.2. Agenda for the Appraisal Meeting:

4.1.2.1. **Welcome and Introduction:** Setting the tone for an open, constructive discussion.

4.1.2.2. **Review of Past Objectives:** A detailed discussion of each of the objectives set in the previous appraisal. Were they met? What were the obstacles? What could be improved?

4.1.2.3. **Performance Against Job Requirements:** A review of how well the employee has fulfilled their role, taking into account key responsibilities and competencies required for the position.

4.1.2.4. **Feedback on Strengths and Achievements:** Positive feedback on the employee's performance, including their strengths and any key achievements over the appraisal period.

4.1.2.5. **Areas for Improvement:** A candid discussion about any areas where performance could be enhanced. This is not to criticize but to explore ways for the employee to develop professionally.

4.1.2.6. **Employee Input:** The employee's opportunity to discuss their experiences, any challenges they have faced, and their own thoughts on their performance.

4.1.2.7. **Training and Development:** Identifying any training needs or professional development opportunities to help the employee improve their skills and advance their career.

4.1.2.8. **Goal Setting for the Next Year:** Setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) objectives for the employee to achieve in the coming year.

- 4.1.2.9. **Performance Rating:** Assigning an appropriate performance rating based on the employee's overall contributions during the year.
- 4.1.2.10. **Documentation:** The outcome of the appraisal discussion, including agreed-upon objectives and performance ratings, will be documented within two weeks and shared with the employee for review and signature.

5. Mid-Year Review

- 5.1. The mid-year review is an informal check-in designed to assess progress toward the objectives set during the annual appraisal. It allows the employee and line manager to:
 - 5.1.1. Review the employee's progress and discuss any issues or challenges.
 - 5.1.2. Make adjustments to the objectives if needed, especially if the employee's role or responsibilities have changed.
 - 5.1.3. Provide additional support or training where required to ensure the employee is on track to meet their goals.
 - 5.1.4. Offer feedback and guidance to keep the employee motivated and focused.

6. Ongoing Feedback

- 6.1. Throughout the year, continuous feedback is encouraged. This can include:
 - 6.1.1. **Recognition of Good Work:** Immediate feedback when an employee performs well, boosting morale and reinforcing positive behaviors.
 - 6.1.2. **Addressing Issues Promptly:** If a problem arises, it should be discussed and addressed as soon as possible, rather than waiting for the formal appraisal.

7. Performance Rating System

- 7.1. Employees will be rated on the following scale to provide a consistent and clear evaluation of their performance:
 - 7.1.1. **Exceeds Expectations:** Employee consistently performs beyond the requirements of the role, demonstrating initiative, leadership, and innovation.

- 7.1.2. **Meets Expectations:** Employee fulfills the requirements of their role effectively, meeting all objectives and demonstrating competency in their responsibilities.
- 7.1.3. **Needs Improvement:** Employee has not met one or more objectives or is struggling to consistently fulfill the responsibilities of the role. A performance improvement plan may be needed.
- 7.1.4. **Below Expectations:** Employee has not met key objectives and is significantly underperforming in their role. Immediate action, including a performance improvement plan, is required.

8. Setting Objectives

- 8.1. Objectives should be set in a way that supports both the individual's professional growth and the Parish Council's broader goals. These objectives should be:
 - 8.1.1. **Specific:** Clear and well-defined.
 - 8.1.2. **Measurable:** With criteria for success that can be tracked.
 - 8.1.3. **Achievable:** Realistic and within the employee's control.
 - 8.1.4. **Relevant:** Aligned with the employee's role and the Parish Council's strategic goals.
 - 8.1.5. **Time-Bound:** With deadlines or specific review dates.

9. Training and Development

- 9.1. The Parish Council is committed to fostering a culture of learning and development. During the appraisal, training and development needs will be discussed and an action plan put in place. This could include:
 - 9.1.1. **Internal Training:** Opportunities to learn new skills on the job or through mentorship.
 - 9.1.2. **External Courses:** Professional development courses, seminars, or workshops relevant to the employee's role.
 - 9.1.3. **Coaching and Mentoring:** Providing support from more experienced colleagues or external mentors to help the employee develop.

- 9.1.4. **Career Development:** Identifying longer-term career progression opportunities within the Parish Council.

10. Addressing Underperformance

- 10.1. If an employee's performance falls below the required standard, the following process will be implemented:

- 10.1.1. **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP):**

- 10.1.1.1. A detailed action plan outlining the areas that need improvement.

- 10.1.1.2. Specific targets and timelines for improvement.

- 10.1.1.3. Regular review meetings to track progress.

- 10.1.2. **Support and Monitoring:**

- 10.1.2.1. The line manager will provide support to the employee, which may include additional training, coaching, or adjusted duties to help them meet the targets.

- 10.1.2.2. Regular feedback will be provided throughout the PIP period to ensure the employee understands their progress.

- 10.1.3. **Outcome:**

- 10.1.3.1. If the employee meets the objectives of the PIP, their performance will be reviewed, and they will return to the regular appraisal cycle.

- 10.1.3.2. If the employee fails to meet the objectives, further action may be taken, including formal disciplinary procedures.

11. Appeals Process

- 11.1. Employees who feel that their appraisal was unfair or inaccurate have the right to appeal the decision. The appeals process includes:

- 11.1.1. **Written Appeal:** The employee must submit a written appeal to the Parish Clerk within 10 working days of receiving their appraisal outcome.

- 11.1.2. **Review:** The appeal will be reviewed by an independent senior manager or designated council member who was not involved in the original

appraisal process.

11.1.3. **Appeal Meeting:** A meeting will be held to discuss the appeal, allowing the employee to present their case.

11.1.4. **Outcome:** A final decision will be made and communicated to the employee within 14 working days of the appeal meeting.

12. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

12.1. All appraisal discussions and documents are confidential and will be securely stored in the employee's personnel file. Only the employee, their line manager, the Parish Clerk, and designated HR personnel (if applicable) will have access to these records.

13. Review of the Policy

13.1. This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective in promoting performance management and development. Any updates will be communicated to all employees.