**BARLING MAGNA PARISH COUNCIL**

Report to: Full Council

Report from: Clerk

Date: 12th July 2018

Subject: Clerk’s report on current work and priorities

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1. If the Council is to obtain the best results from the finite staff time available, it is vital that councillors understand what the Clerk is (and is not) doing. In this way, councillors can steer the Clerk’s workload to best effect and make decisions about competing priorities which otherwise are left either to staff or circumstances to decide.
2. The following is an attempt at a comprehensive list of tasks and priorities. The list is in three categories:
* Blue: what I suggest are the core activities and priorities for the Clerk
* Yellow: what I have assumed to be current priority projects beyond the day-to-day
* Pink: agreed / potential projects, with no realistic prospect of adequate time available for their completion in the short-medium term

I have put tasks into these categories to aid discussion but I believe that it should be councillors rather than staff that decide which tasks should fall into which.

1. Not every task needs to be undertaken by the Clerk.
2. If the Council decides to increase the priority of one task or project, I must ask which other project’s urgency is to be downgraded.
3. Just to guide councillors in their understanding of the issues, each full council meeting takes around 8-9 hours’ staff time: at least 3 hours to prepare the papers and distribute (including noticeboards); up to 4 hours on-site for the meeting and a minimum of 2 hours for drafting the minutes, follow-up to decisions and despatch of cheque payments afterwards.
4. As you can see, there is no shortage of work. From June 2018 onward, except in emergency, I will be working office hours, usually on Monday and on two other half-days in the week. If one week is likely to be different I will email around in advance.
5. Best practice for the appraisal of staff is on the objective basis of their performance against a job description and / or the organisation’s priorities. I am not aware of any formal priorities yet agreed by the Council. I was appointed to a general description of the role rather than a detailed Job Description. Given the wide range of tasks that may reasonably be expected, this is not surprising. The National Association of Local Councils do offer a pro forma job description for Clerks but this itself is broad and general.
6. I recommend that the Council discusses and decides on the priorities below.

**Barling magna parish council**

**SUGGESTED CORE / PRIORITY TASKS FOR THE CLERK** this report dated 12.7.18

**Asset register**

* Maintain

**Audit**

* Preparation for audit
* Liaise with internal and external auditors
* Oversee the exercise of Public Rights

**Banking**

* Bank correspondence and security
* Current reconciliations

**Bookkeeping and monthly reconciliations**

**Charity**

* Bookkeeping and audit
* Secretarial

**Christmas events**

* Liaise about Hampers
* Publicise Citizen of the Year
* Publicise Christmas lights competition

**Clerks’ meetings (? 6 per year)**

* Attend at least some

**Communications**

* Contributions to Great Wakering Community Association news
* Email, income and outgoing mail
* Press releases
* Sharing information within the council

**Financial management**

* Budget preparation
* Financial monitoring and reporting
* Monthly payment process
* Precept calculation and submission

**Funding sources**

* Keep under review

**General Data Protection Regulations**

* Act as data protection lead

**Health and safety matters**

* CoSHH
* Electricity at Work
* Ensure PAT testing

**Insurance cover**

* Ensure currency and adequacy of cover
* Liaison with brokers and insurers

**Meetings of the Council, Committees and Charity (also see covering report):**

* Agendas, minutes and papers
* Follow-up to meetings
* Posting on noticeboards and website

**Monitor contractors**

* Grounds maintenance
* Parish Hall – alarms monitoring
* Street lighting repairs

**Parish Hall**

* Fire safety survey
* Heating issues (ongoing)
* Licencing
* Maintenance and repairs
* Marketing to potential hirers
* Performing Rights
* Security matters

**PAYE and liaison with HMRC**

* Monthly payments to staff
* Quarterly payments to councillors
* Salary deductions
* Use of PAYE Basic Tools

**Payments**

* Certify and pay invoices
* Write cheques and schedule for approval

**Pension Fund**

* Maintain pension records
* Make payments
* Make monthly and annual returns

**Personnel matters**

* Monthly supervision meeting with Hall Manager

**Planning applications**

* Scanning the weekly parish and other lists and responding with Council comments

**Policies to be drafted or reviewed (as recommended by NALC)**

* We have very few and are a way behind the best in the field

**Procurement**

* Ordering of goods and services

**Proper Officer**

* Keeping of legal records

**Public Works Loan Board**

* Act as point of contact
* Monitoring repayments

**Risk Assessment and Management**

* Annual risk assessment plan and 6-monthly reviews
* Events risk assessment and management

**Streetlamps**

* Manage ongoing repairs schedule

**Tenders**

* Administer tendering process

**VAT reclaims**

* Maintain records
* Quarterly claims

**Website**

* Maintain the currency of the website

**Wildlife Reserve**

* Source and purchase supplies

**ASSUMED TO BE CURRENT PRIORITY PROJECTS (is this correct?)**

**Bank accounts**

* Amend approved signatories
* Open new ones to replace HSBC accounts

**Charity**

* CIO current draft to be submitted

**CiLCA -** Achieve qualification

**General Power of Competence**

* Plans for using this power, which the Council may shortly assume

**Land issue**

* Meeting with Essex CC to resolve

**Local Highways Panel**

* Latest referral – liaison on outcome

**Parish Hall**

* Kitchen and toilet contracts

**Parish Plan Steering Committee**

* Winding-up bank account

**Photographic Competition**

* Administer and publicize

**Street lighting**

* Explore a capital replacement funding bid

**Wildlife Reserve – Water Supply**

* Apply for funding
* Research contractors

**AGREED OR POTENTIAL PROJECTS - WITH NO CURRENT PRIORITY AND NO SPARE CLERK’S TIME TO MOVE FORWARD**

**Archives**

* Sort what can be safely destroyed from what needs to be kept

**Communications strategy**

* How do we go about communicating with the residents in a more pro-active / positive way? (Currently most of the local relevant social media outlets are outside the Council’s influence and control)
* A Council newsletter

**Defibrillator**

* Explore viability and funding

**Emergency Plan for the Parish**

* To explore options and bring forward a draft plan

**Footpaths**

* Acquire large scale maps and have them mounted in the hall
* Liaise with Ramblers Association to create a footpath experience

**Future strategy**

* Priorities for the next 3-5 years

**Handyman to restore bus shelters**

**Illumination of the Village Sign**

**Landfill site and haul road**

* Long-term strategy?

**Neighbourhood Plan**

* Unresolved

**Operation “London Bridge” [death of a Royal]**

**Parish Hall**

* Commission a new ‘Chairmen’ board
* Explore the possibility of Farmers Markets
* Payphone
* Stage curtains

**Play Areas**

* new equipment – discussion with RDC to explore partnership in attracting new equipment
* Possible handover of The Parry to parish control

**Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils**

* Attend at least a few of the meetings

**Street lighting**

* Identification of lights / marking them

**Wildlife Reserve**

* Explore benefits of charitable status and future funding

**Wildlife Reserve – Survey of flora and fauna**

**Winter Salt**

* Charging of existing bins
* Distribution of current stock to residents
* Purchase and location of new salt bin, including liaison with highways and landowner
* Relocation of Church Road bin
* Resolving the ‘spent’ salt stock held at Mucking Hall Farm