



Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council

ANNUAL APPRAISAL of CLERK TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

CAROL SILVERSTONE

Carol was appointed in 2013 and was, following a year of unpaid service, appointed Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Parish Council for Upwood and the Raveleys in August 2014.

Since then, she has obtained the full CILCA qualification and has extended her knowledge through an extensive list of CPD courses and other activities (listed on the parish website)

Her original NJC Pay Spine position was Level 36; she is now at Level 39.

In 2016 the Council was awarded the NALC Quality Award which demonstrated the council achieves good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement. The award, one of very few won by Cambridgeshire councils was achieved largely due to Carol's professional and exceptionally high professional standards. The next objective is to achieve the Quality Gold award status for which preparation is in hand for an imminent application.

It would be an enormous honour for the parish council to be awarded Gold status; but it would wholly attributable to the clerks work and commitment.

As with previous years the appraisal is divided into six categories with a final section on the salary review.

If for a given section the status is unchanged, the text from last year's appraisal is repeated.

- 1. Financial Management:** Parish finances are very sound and in safe hands. Systems of authorisation and payment are automated through Unity TrustBank's paperless online banking service and are correctly endorsed by two other councillors before payments are made.

Book-keeping and control systems have further improved in recent years and the financial modelling system developed by Carol and the Chairman provide rolling reports of expenditure against budget. Regular meetings of the finance working party ensure that there is a forward view of expenditure which warns of impending variations by cost centre. For the fourth consecutive year the parish has kept expenditure under budget and have been able to increase parish reserves to provide for future large projects.

The annual audit for 2017/18 has been completed and the report contained no points of issue; an excellent result.
- 2. Governance:** The Quality Award and the clean audit indicate that governance is closely controlled. The web site has been improved and extended in the last year and contains all required minutes and other proceedings of council, financial statements and governance policies and controls, health and safety, risk management and insurance documentation ensuring full transparency. All policies are current and the website shows the dates of adoption. Carol has a meticulous approach to governance and this has not only achieved the high standard described above but has influenced the behaviour of parish councillors who now follow procedures to the letter.

Informal groups or individual Councillors are responsible for reviewing matters such as budgetary management, planning applications, tree and environmental management.
- 3. Minutes and Parish Records:** Parish records are comprehensively catalogued on the parish website along with other relevant information concerning council members, village records and historical data. All are kept well up to date. Carol has recently completed the first phase of a project to digitise parish records from the inception of the parish in 1894 to 1917. Work is proceeding to catalogue the remaining years of the 20th century.
- 4. Relationships:** Carol has built a wide network of contacts in adjacent parishes, within the county and district councils and other stakeholders who interface with the parish council. She shows real persistence in breaking



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through bureaucratic barriers in order to get things done and is willing to do extensive research to try to resolve disputes over boundaries and plots of land. She has shown great persistence in implementing the speed reduction initiatives in the parish, and the legal dispute over the status of the substation on Longholme Road, among many more.

Carol acts as the eyes and ears of the parish and is the trusted representative whom residents turn to for help and advice. When addressing a resident issue Carol needs to always ensure the council are involved and takes responsibility for the action agreed.

5. **Meeting management:** Carol has supported the Chair and Deputy Chair very well in the last year and ensured that the meetings run smoothly and to time.

The quality of preparation is of the highest order with all related documents attached to the Google drive to assist councillors in their preparation for the meeting and notes are provided with the chairman's agenda copy to aid the tempo and conduct of the meeting.

6. **Future Development:** Carol has obtained all the experience and qualifications which are necessary to perform her functions to a high level and is assiduous in adding courses and seminars to her CPD program.

She has established a wide network of contacts across public and private sector stakeholders in parish council affairs and has acquired experience of these organisations which assist not only existing duties but could provide insights should she decide to extend her career further.

Carol has recently used her experience and expertise to step in as Acting Clerk for Wyton on the Hill parish, which had fallen victim of bad governance and financial management in the last few years. She organised a full audit and financial reconciliation followed by the introduction of new standing orders and financial procedures and concluded with the recruitment of a new clerk whom Carol trained until she could operate independently.

On the strength of this success CAPALC have recruited Carol as a consultant to go into troubled parishes which require restructuring and turn-round.

In conclusion, Carol is held in the highest regard by parishioners and councillors alike and is an invaluable member of the parish council

7. **Salary Review:** Carol's contract requires an annual review of her salary on the anniversary of appointment.

Carol was awarded an additional spine point in the 2017/18 review which took her to 39 on the NJC pay scale.

I recommend that an additional spine point is awarded when the council is awarded Gold status; the increase taking effect from that date.

Robin Howe
Chairman

Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council
10 August 2018