



Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council

ANNUAL APPRAISAL of CLERK TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

CAROL BILVERSTONE

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.

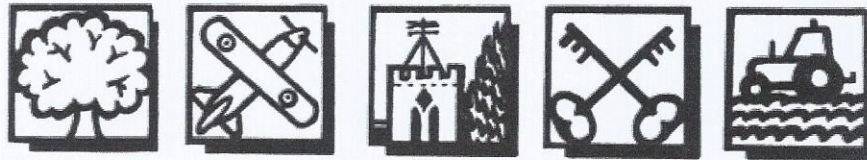
Since then, she has obtained the full CILCA qualification and has extended her knowledge through an extensive list of CPD courses and other activities (listed on the parish website)

Her original NJC Pay Spine position was Level 36; she is now at Level 38.

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 in the next couple of years.

The appraisal is divided into five categories as follows:

- i) **Financial Management:** Parish finances are very sound and in safe hands. Systems of authorisation and payment are automated through Unity Trust Bank'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 committee ensure that there is a forward view of expenditure which warns of impending variations by cost centre. The annual audit for 2016/17 has been completed and the report contained no points of issue; an excellent result given the terrible state of governance and financial control Carol inherited.
- ii) **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.
- iii) **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.
- iv) **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 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 lobbied Harlequin Group, the proposed installer of the O2 communications mast until a suitable compromise location could be agreed for example. Carol does occasionally tend to pursue causes to the extent that they encroach too much upon her personal time.
- v) **Meeting management:** Carol has supported the two deputy chairs very well in the absence of the chair 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.



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vi) 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.

According to her level of ambition she could develop a plural portfolio of parishes which would benefit from her organisational and management skills or she could alternatively stand for public office as a district or county councillor which will offer her a much larger platform.

In summary, Carol is an exceptional asset to the parish and to the parish council.

vii) Salary Review: Carol's contract requires an annual review of her salary on the anniversary of appointment. Carol has referred me to the minutes of the parish council meeting of October 2016 which read as follows:

The clerk was appraised by the vice-chairman and has received an outstanding appraisal. The vice-chairman proposed that the clerk be awarded an additional spine point (rising from point 37 to point 38 on the NJC pay scale) and noted that as point 38 is the top of the "LC2" range there can be no further progression without significant changes to the roles and responsibilities of this position in the future.

Whilst this is technically true, it is also the case that the parish council is responsible for setting and awarding additional spine points. In recognition of the achievement of the Quality Award I would therefore like to propose that Carol is awarded an additional spine point which would take her to point 39 on the NJC pay scale. This would result in an increase of £288.41 per annum (£24.03 per month) plus an additional £14.37 employer's pension contribution.

Robin Howe
Chairman

Upwood and the Raveleys Parish Council
August 2017