

Managing Clerk Absence Policy

**This policy was formally adopted by
St Cleer Parish Council**

on

24.09.2025

Review Date 24.09.2028

ST CLEER PARISH COUNCIL
Policy for management of Clerk Absence

1. Background

Absence of the clerk may be due to illness / crisis, working part time, or taking annual leave

2. Illness / Crisis

~~Whilst absence is avoided at all costs~~ There are times, such as illness or external crisis, that means at short order Parish must arrange for Clerk cover for an indeterminate period of time.

It may be that a Councillor is content to step forward on a voluntary basis to undertake the role, but this effective power imbalance in the medium or longer term is not desirable for any parish.

Process

There are both core functions (defined as mission critical):

- Meeting Agendas and Minutes
- Planning
- Precept and AGAR
- Payment of Salaries, NEST and HMRC
- Urgent commissioning (e.g. repairs)
- Payment for contractors not covered by banking arrangements

And secondary functions (defined as possible to delay):

- Actions from the meetings which require interventions
- ITTs, commissioning
- Reports and routine maintenance
- Policy and procedural development or compliance (eg audit work)

Council can manage themselves

The following functions can be managed viz:

Meeting Agendas and Minutes	Informally by a Councillor / Chair (or digital recording of the meetings) as long as the 3 day period is managed for the summons
Planning	This can be agreed with Cornwall Planning
Precept and AGAR	Needs input from a third party
Payment of Salaries, NEST and HMRC	Whyfield accountant handles PAYE, Salaries to be paid online by a Unity Signatory
Urgent commissioning (eg repairs)	If the meeting gives precise delegated authority to an individual councillor to act in the voluntary place of clerk this is acceptable
Actions from the meetings which require interventions	If the meeting gives precise delegated authority to an individual councillor to act in the voluntary place of clerk this is acceptable
ITTs, commissioning	Needs input from a third party

Reports and routine maintenance	Can be pended
Policy and procedural development or compliance (eg audit work)	Can be pended


Professional advice on legal matters

Can be provided by

CALC	CornwallALC Enquiries <enquiries@cornwallalc.org.uk>	01812 272648
Cornwall's Monitoring Officer	Mansell Simon Simon.Mansell@cornwall.gov.uk Or Garraway Eleanor <Eleanor.Garraway@cornwall.gov.uk>	01872 322704 01209 614304
The DPO	Paul Russell <Paul@MicroshadeVSM.co.uk>	07971 253257
Cornwall Legal	'legaldisputeresolution@cornwall.gov.uk' 'legalregulatory@cornwall.gov.uk'	01872 224727
Head of Cornwall Legal	'Stokes Matthew' <Matthew.Stokes@cornwall.gov.uk>	01872 324482 07875654227
Cornwall Planning	Pritchard Davina <Davina.Pritchard@cornwall.gov.uk>	01579 341417

Locums

There are 3 main sources of locums, the advice from SLCC is valid in all cases:

Other parishes	<p>Via CALC – they can manage an appeal or:</p> <p>clerk@lateglosbyfowey.org.uk; clerk.deviockpc@btinternet.com; dobwallstrewpc@btinternet.com; lyndarigler@tiscali.co.uk; clerk@polperrocommunitycouncil.gov.uk; townclerk@liskeard.gov.uk; looetowncouncil@ymail.com; clerk@menheniotparishcouncil.co.uk; clerk@morvalparishcouncil.org.uk; jancook@pelyntparish.co.uk; clerk@quethiockparishcouncil.gov.uk; clerk@stkeyneparishcouncil.org.uk; stmartinpc1@btinternet.com; stneotpc@hotmail.co.uk; t.hoskin@btinternet.com; warlparish@hotmail.com</p>
CALC	As above
SLCC	<p>I think it's an excellent idea to have arrangements for Locum cover as part of a Council's risk assessment. To find a Locum you can approach Local Council Consultancy by email (consultancy@slcc.co.uk) and ideally your Council would need to have discussed and agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of hours per week the Locum would be required to cover. (Note that most temporary arrangements for a Locum would not and should not require as many hours as being worked by the permanent Clerk – the Locum would probably keep the Council going but not start new tasks). The Council meetings which would require the Locum's attendance (which days of the week and estimated timings). The amount of much work which could be done off-site/at home and how often the Locum would need to attend in person. <p>LCC would endeavour provide a Locum based on the requirement above. Costs are likely to be around £30 per hour plus any travel costs. Locums are in short supply in some areas and demand sometime cannot be met. In the event that LCC could not source a Locum we would help with other avenues within the Local Council sector.</p> <p>I hope this meets your needs.</p> <p>Kind regards</p> <p>Clive</p> <p>Clive Stilwell PS/SLCC Associate Manager</p> <p> AN SLCC ENTERPRISE</p> <p><small>The Society of Local Council Clerks is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company registration number 10566132. Registered office: 8, The Crescent, Taunton, Somerset TA1 4EA.</small></p>

Passwords and ITC

	Access from
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Clerk@stcleerparishcouncil.gov.uk	Email - Webhosting Company
clerkstcleerparishcouncil@gmail.com	Google drive - Jon Prinn is recovery
Facebook	Sue Harbord and Jon Prinn have access
Xero	Sue Harbord can get editable access via the accountant (minute ref 2025.05.28-20)
HSBC	Bank signatories
Unity Bank	Bank signatories

3 – Clerk absence – Contact Procedure

Purpose:

To ensure continuity of service and appropriate handling of matters during the Council Clerk's absence

Contacts

Clerk – Katie-Marie Goodwright – clerk@stcleerparishcouncil.gov.uk – 07359 768914

Chair – Jonathan Prinn – jprinn@stcleerparishcouncil.gov.uk – 07875 655786

Vice Chair – Sue Harbord – sharbord@stcleerparishcouncil.gov.uk - 07896 630949

Tier 1: Emergency – Immediate Action Required

Definition: Matters involving health and safety, legal issues, or anything requiring urgent attention to prevent harm, liability, or disruption of essential services.

Examples:

- Health & safety incidents (e.g., threat to life, accidents, damage to property)
- Legal deadlines or court-related communications
- Data breaches
- Urgent press/media queries
- Disruption of critical services (e.g., IT failure, public building issues)

Action:

1. **Contact the Chair of the Council** immediately via phone.
 2. If the Chair is unavailable, contact the **Vice-Chair**.
 3. Send an email to the **Chair, Vice Chair** and **Clerk** outlining the issue
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Tier 2: Urgent – Action Needed Within 48 Hours

Definition: Matters that are not emergencies but cannot wait for the Clerk's return.

Examples:

- Supplier/payment issues requiring immediate processing
- Resident complaints requiring quick response

- Meeting logistics or agenda queries for upcoming events
- Time-sensitive correspondence (non-legal)

Action:

1. Contact the **Chair** by Phone
 2. Send an email to the **Chair, Vice Chair** and **Clerk** outlining the issue
 3. If no response within 24 hours, call the **Chair and Vice Chair** by phone
 4. If the **Chair** is unavailable – call the **Vice Chair**
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Tier 3: Can Wait – Routine Matters

Definition: General administrative or informational items that can be addressed upon the Clerk's return.

Examples:

- Routine enquiries
- Non-urgent documentation
- General feedback or updates
- FOI or subject access requests within statutory timeframes

Action:

1. Send an email to the **Clerk**
 2. If you receive an automated out-of-office reply, rest assured the matter will be addressed upon return.
 3. If the matter can not wait until the Clerks return, refer to action in Tier 2
 4. No further action is required unless it escalates to Tier 1 or 2.
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Notes:

- 1 - If you're unsure which tier your matter falls into, contact the **Chair** for guidance.
- 2- Where there **Chair** and / or **Vice Chair** are to be absent at the same time as the Clerk, Councillors are to be informed and a councillor may be asked to act as an additional point of contact if deemed appropriate by the Clerk or Chair.