



# **SCARISBRICK PARISH COUNCIL**

Appointment of

## **Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Council**

RECRUITMENT INFORMATION & APPLICATION PACK

2024

---

## Contents

---

1. Scarisbrick Parish Council
2. Job Advertisement
3. Application Process
4. Selection Process

Appendix A: Person Specification

Appendix B: Job Description

Appendix C: Application Form

---

## CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS

**12 noon Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

# **1. SCARISBRICK PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Scarisbrick**

Scarisbrick is a rural agricultural parish in West Lancashire situated between Ormskirk and Southport. Historically, the huge lake of Martin Mere formed its northern boundary and drainage of the mere in 1774, by Thomas Eccleston, transformed farming in the area. The parish now has over 8,000 acres of the richest agricultural land in the country and is a major supplier of potatoes and vegetables to the region. There is no defined village centre, the population of 3,865 is scattered around seven hamlets. Over half the population is professional, managerial, or skilled. The majority commute to work in neighbouring towns and cities.

Scarisbrick is one of twenty parish councils within the catchment of West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC) which has offices in Ormskirk. It also lies within the area of Lancashire County Council (LCC) which has main offices in Preston.

## **The Council**

Parish councils are the third tier of local authorities below District (or Borough) and County Councils which are otherwise known as principal authorities. Parish councils can therefore be regarded as the form of local government which is closest to the people they serve. They are corporate bodies (i.e. they possess their own legal identity) and hold discretionary powers to improve the environment and quality of life of local residents, but they can only act as legislation permits. They may also provide services to the community, often in partnership with principal authorities and other organisations.

Activities are funded predominantly through the precept (local taxation which forms part of the Council Tax). Parish councils are therefore subject to statutory financial regulation which involves keeping accounts, establishing internal control systems, and undergoing audit. They are at all times accountable to the public they serve.

Scarisbrick Parish Council has ten elected members (parish councillors) who serve for a four-year period. Council meetings are held at either St Marks Parush Hall or Bullens Lane NSC on the first Monday of each month at 7.30pm (second Monday if there is a clash with Bank Holidays) with an Annual Parish Meeting in early May. There is an additional finance meeting in January and the Council does not meet in August.

The Council currently sets an annual precept in the region of £27,500 and the Clerk/RFO is the only employee. The Council has numerous assets which include community woodland (Millennium Wood), bus shelters, notice boards, War Memorial, benches, speed indicator devices, flood equipment and boundary signs. The Council is responsible for mowing a number of roadside verges, particularly along Southport Road

Previous achievements have included a rolling programme to replace Scarisbrick's ageing stock of timber bus-shelters and installation of a new War Memorial in the grounds of Scarisbrick Village Hall. More recently we have purchased and installed speed indicator devices, two of which are located permanently on Southport with the other two being moved on a monthly basis. We organise annual garden and scarecrow competitions. The Council has close links with WLBC (two of our members are also borough councillors) and the Lancashire Association of Local Councils where we have representatives on the Area Committee. The Parish Council is a consultee on all planning applications within the parish.

We seek to engage with issues such as local road maintenance, rural transport provision, flood prevention, rural crime reduction, and investment in open space projects. We continue with strategies to address the perennial problems of speeding and traffic volumes on rural roads.

Further information, including minutes and agendas, can be found on the community website at [www.scarisbrickparish.gov.uk](http://www.scarisbrickparish.gov.uk)

### **Role of the Clerk**

The clerk is the “engine” of an effective council. He or she is its principal executive and advisor and the officer responsible for its financial affairs. Clerks pride themselves in having a good deal of common sense, confidence to handle the administrative work, being a good organiser, IT literate and able to get on with most people. Underwriting these qualities is a sense of public duty - of wanting to help others in the community.

Parish council clerks have an interesting and rewarding job which plays a vital role in ensuring that the duties of the council are conducted properly. The role is varied and flexible with an opportunity to develop skills and gain experience through a mix of routine and fresh work. Working mainly from home the hours of work are flexible (except for attendance at meetings) requiring the post-holder to be well-organised and self-motivated to ensure that work is prioritised and completed in a timely manner. A computer will be supplied and in order to work from home the clerk must be able to store council IT equipment and paper files securely at their home address. A detailed job description is given in Appendix B of this document.

A competent clerk underpins a good council so training is supported with numerous courses and conferences available locally and beyond. Networking is encouraged with fellow parish clerks, officers of principal authorities, and representatives of partner agencies such as the police and voluntary sector.

## **2. JOB ADVERTISEMENT**

### **SCARISBRICK PARISH COUNCIL**

#### **Vacancy**

#### **Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Council**

**(PART TIME – 17 HOURS PER WEEK)**

**Salary Range: SCP 13-22: £28,163 - £32,654 per annum**

**PRO-RATA SCP 13 -22 £12,940 - £15,003 per annum**

Scarisbrick Parish Council is seeking to appoint a first-class experienced administrator with strong financial and communication skills. The successful applicant will be forward thinking and enthusiastic.

The Clerk has responsibility for all the Council's functions and will be expected to advise and guide the Council as required.

Applicants should preferably have a local government background, although applicants from other sectors are welcome to apply.

However, strong administration and financial skills are essential due to the statutory nature of the post.

Closing date for receipt of applications is no later than

**12 noon on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

Application packs can be obtained from the Council by visiting the community website at [www.scarisbrickparish.gov.uk](http://www.scarisbrickparish.gov.uk) or by e-mail to [clerk@scarisbrickparish.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@scarisbrickparish.gov.uk)

*We will contact all candidates invited for interview shortly after the closing date.*

### **3. APPLICATION PROCESS**

Scarisbrick Parish Council is committed to equal opportunities and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

The application form (Appendix C) must be accompanied by a covering letter and should be placed in a sealed envelope marked "*Private and Confidential - Application for Scarisbrick Parish Clerk post*". It should be posted or hand delivered to:

Scarisbrick Parish Clerk, c/o 60 Turning  
Lane, Scarisbrick, Southport PR8 5HY

Or via email to:

[clerk@scarisbrickparish.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@scarisbrickparish.gov.uk)

A CV is not required but may be supplied if you wish to support your application. However, you must include in your application information which:

- Sets out how you meet the person specification.
- Gives clear examples of your previous achievements which link directly to the areas of responsibility in this post.
- Demonstrates the qualities you would bring to the role of Parish Clerk.

Any applications received that are incomplete will not be considered.

Applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. We will contact all candidates invited for interview shortly after the closing date. References will not be requested until after interviews.

**YOUR APPLICATION MUST BE RETURNED NO LATER THAN 12 NOON ON  
WEDNESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2025.**

**CANVASSING OF ANY MEMBER OR OFFICER OF THE COUNCIL WHO IS  
INVOLVED IN THE SELECTION PROCESS WILL DISQUALIFY YOU FROM  
BEING APPOINTED.**

## **4. SELECTION PROCESS**

The formal selection process will be by interview which will take place in January 2025 on a date to be agreed.

An appointment panel will conduct the interviews and will consist of at least three current parish councillors. However, appointments can only be made by full Council. This will be at the next meeting of the Council, following the interviews and receipt of references, and will take into account recommendations from the appointment panel.

### **Shortlisting**

This will be based on information contained in the application form and covering letter using the person specification and job description as assessment criteria.

### **Interview**

Candidates will be required to attend an interview at a time to be allocated individually. There will be a minimum of one week's notice. The interview will last up to an hour.

### **References**

Formal references will be taken up following interviews. Any offer of employment will be subject to two satisfactory references being received (one from the candidate's latest employer).

### **Disabled Candidates**

Any candidate who is disabled can contact Scarisbrick Parish Council by e-mail (clerk@scarisbrickparish.gov.uk) so that reasonable adjustments can be made to the recruitment process as required.

### **Criminal Convictions**

Failure to declare an unspent criminal conviction may lead to an appointment being terminated. The successful candidate must also disclose any subsequent conviction to the Chair of the Council.

### **Pre - Employment Checks**

Checks may be made to confirm eligibility to work in the UK and a basic DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check may be undertaken for unspent convictions. Original copies of qualifications may be requested. Attention is drawn to the Declaration and Important Notice on the application form (Appendix C).

## **APPENDIX A**

### **SCARISBRICK PARISH COUNCIL**

#### **PERSON SPECIFICATION FORM**

#### **JOB TITLE: CLERK TO THE COUNCIL and RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER**

<b><u>Qualifications</u></b>	<b>E = Essential D = Desirable</b>
A good general standard of education.	E
Possess the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA).	D
Have a commitment to personal development, willing to undertake additional training as necessary.	E
<b><u>Experience</u></b>	
Similar experience in an administrative role.	E
Similar experience in a finance role	E
Previous experience as Clerk to a Parish Council.	D
Experience of Local Government structure and processes.	D
<b><u>Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities</u></b>	
Ability to meet the statutory requirements of the Council in issuing notices of meetings, preparing agendas, taking minutes, and dealing promptly with correspondence.	E
Excellent communication skills. Possess good command of English language. Write clearly and concisely. Speak confidently and effectively.	E
Excellent organisation skills with the ability to achieve and maintain varying strict deadlines and prioritise workloads particularly when under pressure.	E
Above average IT skills with a good working knowledge of current IT and computer systems (such as Microsoft Word and Excel etc). Experience in research, using search engines and the internet.	E
Working knowledge of Local Government financial matters, a sound working knowledge of local government law, procedures, functions, and structures.	D
Possess knowledge of financial management, procedures, and controls. Have the ability to maintain good financial records, perform monthly reconciliations, provide financial reports, and prepare and manage budgets.	E
Possess knowledge of payroll procedures and HMRC requirements	D
Knowledge or experience in updating a website and producing a newsletter.	D
Possess a driving licence and have access to a vehicle insured for business purposes.	E
Knowledge of the Scarisbrick area	D
<b><u>Personal Qualities and Attributes</u></b>	
Capable of exercising tact, diplomacy, discretion and assertiveness with Councillors, members of the public, and representatives of outside agencies.	E
Willing to work during evenings and some unsocial hours (the Parish Council meets in the evening).	E
Works effectively in a team and able to relate well to colleagues.	E
Self-motivated and adaptable to change. Able to work effectively and efficiently without supervision.	E



## **APPENDIX B**

### **SCARISBRICK PARISH COUNCIL**

#### **JOB DESCRIPTION: CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER TO THE COUNCIL**

(This is a part-time position of 17 hours per week)

#### **Principal Accountabilities:**

The Clerk acts as the Proper Officer of the Council, a statutory role under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, and has responsibility for discharging the proper functions of the Council. This is an executive position responsible for implementing decisions of the Council, administering Council business, and providing advice on legal and procedural matters to ensure that at all times the Council acts lawfully. The Clerk will also act as the Responsible Financial Officer to the Council and will have responsibility for the proper administration of the council's financial affairs.

#### **Key Tasks:**

- Ensure compliance with the statutory and other provisions governing the administration of the Council and its affairs; maintain a current knowledge of such matters.
- Convene ordinary meetings according to the law by issuing and displaying notices, signing and serving summonses to attend, and by specifying the business to be transacted.
- Prepare agendas in consultation with appropriate members, attend meetings of the Council and its committees, take and prepare minutes and submit them to the Council for approval.
- Co-ordinate the Annual Parish Meeting by issuing notices, preparing agendas, attending such meetings and preparing minutes.
- Administer the Council's financial affairs, monitor the budget, prepare and maintain financial records according to statutory and audit requirements.
- Ensure that the Council's obligations to risk management and other principles of good governance are met.
- Receive and report on invoices for goods and services to be paid for by the Council and ensure such accounts are met. Issue invoices on behalf of the Council for goods and services and ensure payment is received.
- Promptly and accurately implement resolutions of the Council as a body, and of any committees and sub-committees of the Council as they may from time to time exist.
- Manage the Council's correspondence (including telephone calls and e-mails), resources, assets, website, notice boards and media relationships. Identify and bring to the attention of the Council any relevant issues that may arise.
- Contribute to the parish newsletter on Council related topics.
- Receive, distribute and safely retain all deposited documents in the manner and for the purposes that are dictated by legislation.
- Study reports and other data on activities of the Council and on matters bearing on those activities. Take advice where necessary and report to the Council as appropriate.
- Supervise staff and contractors in accordance with conditions of employment and the Council's Financial Regulations and other relevant policies. Organise the payroll and PAYE.
- Liaise with partner organizations and represent the Council at meetings, public inquiries and other events as directed by the Council (which may occasionally involve working unsocial hours).
- Prepare and maintain a register of the Council's property, ensuring it is properly maintained and adequately covered by insurance.
- Act as the 'qualified person' under the Freedom of Information Act.
- Receive complaints about the Council (other than those relating to the Clerk).
- Prepare reports and recommendations for consideration by the Council, providing unbiased evidence-based advice on the practicality and likely consequences of specific courses of action.
- Be independent, objective and professional at all times.
- Maintain and develop knowledge appropriate to the affairs of the Council, attend training courses and conferences as required by the Council.

**SCARISBRICK PARISH COUNCIL**

**Post of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the Council**

**Application Form**

Please note that information may be copied and stored for use during the recruitment process, or used to form part of the personnel file if successful.

Complete in black ink and print where possible, include separate sheets if necessary.

**PERSONAL DETAILS**

Surname		
Other names		
Title	Mrs / Miss / Mr / Ms / Dr / Other:	
Address		
Telephone	Home:  Mobile:	
E-mail address		
Are you legally eligible for employment in the UK?	Yes	No
National Insurance Number		
Do you hold a current driving licence?	Yes	No
Please give details of any unspent criminal convictions that you may have (in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974).		

**PRESENT EMPLOYER**

Name of current employer	
Job title	
Date commenced	
Type of business	
What period of notice are you required to give?	
Please outline your main tasks, responsibilities and achievements (continue on a separate sheet if necessary).	

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY** (Most recent first, continue on a separate sheet if necessary).

Name of employer	
Job title	
Period of employment (give dates)	
Type of business	
Describe your duties and responsibilities	
Reason for leaving	

Name of employer	
Job title	
Period of employment (give dates)	
Type of business	
Describe your duties and responsibilities	
Reason for leaving	

Name of employer	
Job title	
Period of employment (give dates)	
Type of business	
Describe your duties and responsibilities	
Reason for leaving	

**SECONDARY / FURTHER / HIGHER EDUCATION ATTENDED** (in date order). Please also include any professional qualifications attained.

Establishment	From	To	Qualification(s) – subjects, level, grade

**HOBBIES AND OTHER INTERESTS.** Please include any positions of responsibility held.

--

**WHY ARE YOU APPLYING FOR THIS POST AND WHAT CAN YOU OFFER IN TERMS OF YOUR PERSONALITY / ABILITIES / SKILLS / APTITUDES / EXPERIENCE/ ACHIEVEMENTS?** Describe how you meet the person specification (Appendix A) and give examples that link directly to this post (continue on another sheet if necessary).

## REFERENCES

Please give the names and addresses of two referees. One should be your present or last employer.

Referee 1	Referee 2
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:

Are you related to any member or employee of this Council?  
If yes, please give full details:

Yes No

--

Scarisbrick Parish Council is an Equal Opportunities employer and confirms its commitment to equality of opportunity in all areas of its work. All individuals will be treated in a fair and equal manner in accordance with the law regardless of gender, marital status, race, religion, colour, age, disability or sexual orientation. Recruitment practices exclude all assumptions, preferences, or judgements that are not job-related.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

Failure to answer all the questions on this application truthfully or failure to reveal information which might influence a decision on whether or not to employ you will automatically invalidate the application and the offer of employment and, where employment has commenced, to dismissal.

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that the information given by me on this application and in any other form (including at interview) is correct to the best of my knowledge, and that I have not knowingly withheld any fact or circumstance which, if disclosed, would influence a decision to employ me or not employ me. I understand that any form of canvassing will disqualify me.

Signature:	Date:
------------	-------