

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN CLERK

CANDIDATE INFORMATION AND APPLICATION PACK



Thank you for your interest in the role of Town Clerk for Bicester Town Council. This pack contains all the information that you will need to support you in making an application.

The closing date for applications is 12pm on 30th November 2021. Interviews will be held in early January 2022. Further details will be provided to shortlisted candidates.

Applications should be made by submitting an application form and covering letter addressed to Councillor Zoe McLernon, Chairman of the Personnel Committee. An application form is attached to this pack and is also available from enquiries@bicester.gov.uk, or by telephoning 01869 252915. (CV’s will only be accepted as support for your application, an application form must be completed). Please provide details of 2 referees, one of whom should be your current employer if relevant.

Applications can be submitted via the website, by e-mail to [zoe.mclernon@bicester.gov.uk](mailto:zoe.mclernon@bicester.gov.uk) or by post marked Private & Confidential – CO to, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, OX26 6PS.

If you would like any further information please contact me directly on [zoe.mclernon@bicester.gov.uk](mailto:zoe.mclernon@bicester.gov.uk), or the Town Council office on 01869 252915.

Councillor Zoe Mclernon  
Personnel Committee Chairman

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**Information about Bicester Town Council**

Further information about the Town, and the work of the Town Council can be found on our website www. Bicester.gov.uk



Picture courtesy of Beauty & Bicester

Bicester is a lively market town just north of Oxford. The Town Council is seeking an experienced and qualified Town Clerk (or one who is willing to qualify by May 2023), as soon as possible.

This is a challenging but stimulating role in a town with a rich history and a vibrant community with a can-do attitude. This is a great opportunity for an exceptional individual to hone their skills and make a major contribution to this lovely town.

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that the instructions of the Council in connection with its function as a Local Authority are carried out. The Town Clerk will be the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is under a statutory duty to carry out all the functions, and in particular to serve or issue all the notifications required by law, of a local authority's Proper Officer. The Town Clerk is expected to advise the Council on, and assist in the formation of, overall policies to be followed in respect of the Council’s activities and in particular to produce all the information required for making effective decisions and to implement constructively all decisions. The person appointed will be accountable to the Council for the effective management of all its staff and resources and will report to it as and when required.

**Specific Responsibilities**

**Strategic responsibilities**

1. To assist the Council to develop and implement a strategic vision for the Town, to define its strategic objectives and to develop appropriate performance management arrangements to monitor their achievement.
2. To review annually the achievement and objectives with the Council, and work with the Chairmen of the appropriate sub-committees to develop action plans for delivering short and medium term objectives.
3. To monitor the implemented policies of the Council to ensure they are achieving the desired result and where appropriate suggest modifications.

**Staff responsibilities**

1. To manage other members of staff as their line manager in keeping with the policies of the Council. This includes the supervision either direct or indirect of all staff employed by the Council.
2. To ensure the effective delegation and allocation of responsibilities and activities to members of staff.
3. To ensure the appropriate training of staff and updating of skills to match their responsibilities and duties in the light of annual appraisals and personal development plans.
4. To undertake all necessary activities in connection with the management of salaries, conditions of employment and work of other staff.

**Statutory responsibilities**

1. To ensure that statutory and other provisions governing or affecting the running of the Council are observed.
2. To advise the Council in relation to its legal obligations, including those as an employer, and in relation to Health & Safety.
3. To alert Members of Council to changes in respect of their statutory and other responsibilities as Councillors, and act as adviser to Members on such matters as required.

**Financial responsibilities**

1. To support the work of the Responsible Financial Officer of the Council, and in particular to ensure that they are carrying out their statutory duties.
2. To ensure that the Council’s annual budget is set and managed in accordance with the relevant local authority framework.

**Asset management responsibilities**

1. To oversee the Council’s property portfolio which include commercial property, residential property, listed buildings and open spaces and to ensure that appropriate security arrangements are in place for all Town Council assets.
2. To ensure that the Council has a programme of planned preventative maintenance for all Town Council properties.

**Administrative responsibilities**

1. To ensure that the Council’s standing orders, financial regulations and delegation scheme are regularly reviewed and in particular to ensure that any changes required by changes in the law, guidance or best practice are implemented.
2. To ensure the efficient running of the Town Council offices, reviewing and monitoring systems, processes and procedures and updating where appropriate, making best use of appropriate information technology.
3. To ensure the preparation and circulation, in consultation with appropriate members, agendas and supporting documentation for meetings of the Council and Committees. To attend all meetings of the Council and meetings of its committees and sub-committees as necessary, and to ensure the preparation and circulation of minutes, notes and reports for approval.
4. To study reports and other data on activities of the Council and on matters bearing on those activities. Where appropriate, to discuss such matters with specialists in particular fields and to produce reports for circulation and discussion by the Council.
5. To recommend the Council to obtain external specialist advice when appropriate and to ensure that the advice is placed before the Council to assist members in making decisions.
6. To draw up both on his/her own initiative and as a result of suggestions by councillors’ proposals for consideration by the Council and to advise on practicability and likely effects of specific courses of action.
7. To receive correspondence and documents on behalf of the Council and to deal with the correspondence or documents and bring such items as are appropriate to the attention of the Council. To issue correspondence as a result of instructions of, or the known policy of the Council.
8. To ensure the proper maintenance and safe custody of all Council records, deeds and documents, including electronic storage where appropriate.

**Communications responsibilities**

1. To act as the representative of the Council as required, including attending meetings with key stakeholders and promoting the Council within the local community to ensure the continued presence of the Council in local affairs.
2. To liaise closely with other Councils, in particular Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council on matters regarding the Town, and to participate in joint initiatives.
3. To represent the Council to members of the public and ensure that enquiries are dealt with sensitively and appropriately.
4. To prepare, in consultation with the Mayor, press releases about the activities of, or decisions of, the Council, and respond to ad hoc enquiries from the press.
5. To prepare for the Town Annual Meeting ensuring that it provides an opportunity for all local residents to participate.
6. To ensure that relevant information on the Council and other related matters is made widely available to members of the public, including making the best use of technology where appropriate.
7. To maintain the confidentiality of information as appropriate.

**Civic responsibilities**

1. To provide support, advice and assistance to the Mayor/Chairman as appropriate.
2. To respect the traditions and heritage of Bicester and attend and co-ordinate, relevant personnel on all civic occasions.
3. To arrange for the organisation of both annual and ad hoc civic and ceremonial events on behalf of the Council.

**Personal development responsibilities**

1. To attend training courses or seminars on the work and role of the Town Clerk as required by the Council.
2. To continue to acquire the necessary professional knowledge required for the efficient management of the affairs of the Council: Suggested is membership of the professional body The Society of Local Council Clerks.
3. To attend the conferences of relevant bodies, as a representative of the Council as required.

**Other responsibilities**

1. To undertake such other responsibilities and functions as may be required from time to time by the Council commensurate with the duties and responsibilities of the post.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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| **Education & training** | |
| **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| * Educated to at least A level or equivalent, including professional qualifications where appropriate. * Experienced clerk holding a CiLCA qualification or able to attain the qualification by May 2023. | * Educated to Degree level or equivalent |
| **Skills & knowledge** | |
| **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| * Theoretical and/or practical knowledge of the statutory duties of a local council * Knowledge of current employment and health and safety legislation * Practical experience of local government financial procedures * Excellent written and oral communication skills * Strong analytical skills * General administration skills * Project management skills * Effective prioritisation and delegation skills * Ability to manage and implement change diplomatically * Managing meetings within set regulations and to a predetermined agenda * Ability to communicate complex and potentially contentious issues to a range of audiences, including non-specialists * Ability to anticipate future needs as well as deliver on current priorities * Use of IT systems including Microsoft Office (or equivalent) * Ability to build effective working relationships with Members of Council, staff and a range of stakeholders | * Implementation of IT projects which benefit members of the public * Experience of identifying best practice and implementing where appropriate * Knowledge of civic protocols * Project management qualification - Prince 2 or equivalent |
| **Experience** | |
| **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| * Previous experience in local government * Procurement of resources and services within predetermined budgets * Effective budget management, (currently £1.5m) * Implementing solutions to administrative challenges using IT where appropriate. * Managing and deploying other significant non-financial resources (e.g., people, services, property), across a range of projects * Experience of managing a property portfolio * Managing a range of activities to deadlines within pre-agreed timescales, within changing priorities * Managing and developing staff * Leading a team, inspiring and empowering colleagues * Experience of working in a successful customer service environment * Developing solutions to a range of practical and technical problems * Independent decision making, applying judgement to refer decision making where necessary * Delivery of agreed corporate objectives * Acting in an advisory capacity to non-executives | * Experience in a leadership role in complex organisation |
| **Personal Qualities** | |
| **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| * Energy, enthusiasm and commitment * Focused on solutions rather than problems * Ability to inspire confidence in key stakeholders * Ability to motivate and inspire staff to drive up standards * Strong interpersonal, negotiating and mediating skills * Strong networking and communication skills * Confident in speaking and presenting in public * Commitment to current non-party-political stance of the Council * Prepared to be license holder if required * Respect for the traditions and heritage of Bicester (including the wearing of ceremonial dress when required) * Commitment to Continual Professional Development * Willingness to work evenings and weekends as required |  |

**SUMMARY OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

**Salary**

Salary: SCP 46 – 62 depending on qualifications and experience as recommended by the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks based upon the size of population, budget and level of services of the Council. Additional increments may be available to a successful candidate possessing relevant experience and qualifications.

For all other purposes not specified within this document, the post is subject to the terms of the conditions of service determined by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, a copy of which is available on request.

**Starting Date**

It is intended that the successful candidate will start employment as soon as possible.

**Interview Expenses**

Candidates attending for interview will be paid expenses in accordance with the scale laid down by the National Joint Council. Expenses will not be paid until the conclusion of the interview. In the event of a candidate withdrawing their application or refusing the offer of an appointment on grounds which in the opinion of the interviewing panel or Mayor are inadequate, no expenses will be paid. The expenses of the candidate appointed to the post will not be paid until the successful applicant takes up their duties with the Council.

**Probation period**

All new employees will be subject to a six-month probationary period which will involve regular discussions on progress.

**Membership Fees for Professional Institutions**

The Council will pay the subscription to relevant Institutes and will encourage attendance at professional development events organised by these bodies.

**Working Week**

The normal working week is 37 hours, working pattern to be agreed. The Town Clerk will be required to attend the meetings which form part of the Council’s published Calendar of Meetings and specified annual civic and ceremonial events.

**Flexible working**

Full consideration will be given to a reasonable request for flexible working arrangements.

**Other Employment**

The post holder will be fully engaged in the employment of the Town Council and agrees not to undertake any other paid employment without the express written consent of the Council.

**Annual Leave**

In accordance with the national conditions of service currently 23 days annual leave rising to 28 after 5 years’ service, plus one local government concessionary day and bank holidays.

**Period of Notice**

One weeks’ notice on either side during the probationary period and three months written notice is required on either side to terminate the employment after this period.

**Pension**

Employees of the Council are entitled to join the Local Government Final Salary Pension Scheme as operated by Oxfordshire County Council.

**Employee Development**

On appointment the successful candidate can expect:

* a monthly meeting during the probationary period to explore the direction of work and personal development.
* after 6 months at the completion of the probationary period, a discussion to agree and refine the responsibilities of the post and to agree performance measures, indicators and milestones, and an agreed Personal Development Plan setting out the tasks and training required to achieve key result areas and to develop personal goals over the next period of 12 months.

**Health and Safety**

Bicester Town Council recognises its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to provide appropriate health and safety training and to ensure safe and healthy premises for all employees and visitors.

**Equality Policies**

The Council is committed to a policy of equal treatment of all employees and applicants and requires all employees to abide by this general principle and the requirements of legislation and Codes of Practice. In its employment policies all employees will be given equal opportunities in the application of their conditions of service, training and promotion prospects, regardless of sex, disability, age, marital/family status, sexual orientation, race, colour, religion, belief or political persuasion.

**Other**The appointment will be subject to suitable references.