



**Penketh
Parish
Council**

CHIEF OFFICER / PARISH CLERK & RFO – FULL JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Chief Officer / Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Statutory Role: Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer

Reports to: The Council

Accountable to: Penketh Parish Council

Salary Range: SCP 32–37, subject to experience, qualifications and Council approval

Hours: To be confirmed by Council

Key accountabilities:

To lead and assist in all matters relating to the efficient governance, financial management, administration and operational oversight of Penketh Parish Council, including Council staff, property, resources, services, Penketh Pool and Community Centre, and all Council Committees.

Job Purpose

The Chief Officer / Parish Clerk and RFO is accountable to the Council for the effective management of its resources, including the proper administration of its finances.

The postholder will be the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer of the Council and will undertake those statutory responsibilities. As Proper Officer, the postholder is under a duty to carry out all functions and to serve or issue all notifications required by law of a local council's Proper Officer.

The overall purpose of the role is to ensure that the Council is run lawfully, effectively, transparently and in accordance with relevant legislation, statutory obligations, proper practices, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Council policy.

This is a senior officer role. Penketh Parish Council operates a significant community facility, including Penketh Pool and Community Centre. The postholder will be expected to provide integrated governance, financial and operational oversight of the Council's services, assets, staff, resources and public-facing activities.

The role is not limited to meeting administration. The postholder will be expected to ensure that Penketh Pool and Community Centre remains properly connected to Council governance, financial reporting, staffing, compliance, risk management and decision-making.

Key Accountabilities

- 1. To ensure that the Council's civic, administrative, financial and operational functions are performed professionally and in accordance with all relevant statutory obligations.***

- 2. To carry out all functions required by law of a local council's Proper Officer in a timely manner and to issue all statutory notifications.**
- 3. To act as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and ensure the proper administration of the Council's finances.**
- 4. To ensure that the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, policies and procedures are properly observed, implemented and reviewed.**
- 5. To manage the Council's employees effectively and ensure clear line management, professional standards and proper employment processes.**
- 6. To be the Council's principal professional adviser on governance, finance, policy, service delivery, risk, staffing and statutory compliance.**
- 7. To be responsible for ensuring compliance with all aspects of health and safety legislation, safeguarding requirements, risk management and public liability obligations.**
- 8. To provide integrated oversight of Penketh Pool and Community Centre as a Council-run community leisure facility.**
- 9. To ensure that the reasonable and lawful instructions of the Council are carried out, that councillors receive the information reasonably required to make effective decisions, and that Council decisions are implemented constructively.**
- 10. To uphold clear member/officer boundaries and ensure that officers are managed through proper line management arrangements rather than by individual councillor instruction.**

Key Duties and Responsibilities Leadership and Staff Management

- 1. To provide a positive role model for employees, to support a professional working culture and to uphold the good reputation of the Council within the wider community.**
- 2. To manage the Council's paid service, including office, administrative, pool, community centre and operational staff.**
- 3. To arrange and/or undertake staff performance reviews, appraisals, supervision and regular management discussions.**
- 4. To undertake necessary activities in connection with the management of salaries, conditions of employment, contracts, staff records, training, absence, conduct and performance.**
- 5. To ensure that all staff have appropriate contracts, job descriptions, induction, training, supervision and reporting lines.**
- 6. To work with the Council's HR provider on employment matters, including recruitment, disciplinary, grievance, absence, capability, performance and policy issues.**

- 7. To apply the principles of equality and equal opportunities as embodied in the Council's policies and practices.**
- 8. To ensure that concerns about staff conduct or performance are dealt with through proper employment procedures.**
- 9. To promote a safe, respectful and professional working environment for all officers, staff, contractors and volunteers.**
- 10. To ensure that individual councillors do not directly instruct staff outside agreed Council arrangements.**

Statutory, Governance and Policy Duties

1. To ensure that statutory and other provisions governing or affecting the running of the Council are observed and to advise councillors on meeting procedures, regulations and lawful decision-making.
2. To be the Council's principal adviser on policy, governance and service delivery matters.
3. To keep up to date with changes in legislation and forthcoming changes, advising the Council accordingly.
4. To prepare and publish, in consultation with appropriate members where required, agendas for meetings of the Council, Committees, Sub-Committees and the Annual Meeting in accordance with statutory requirements.
5. To prepare minutes for approval and ensure that Council decisions are accurately recorded.
6. To ensure that all meetings of the Council, Committees and Sub-Committees are clerked, attending personally unless such duties have been delegated to another officer.
7. To maintain councillor attendance records, declarations of office, declarations of interests and other statutory records.
8. To implement decisions made by the Council.
9. To receive and manage correspondence and documents on behalf of the Council, bringing relevant items to the attention of Council where appropriate.
10. To maintain the Council's official records, including minutes, policies, contracts, leases, declarations, registers and governance documents.
11. To ensure that elections, co-options and member administration are properly managed.
12. To ensure that the Council's website and publication arrangements meet statutory, transparency and accessibility requirements.
13. To maintain effective arrangements for Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulations, data protection and records management.
14. To ensure that Council policies, procedures and protocols are kept under review and that recommendations for amendment are brought to Council where required.

Responsible Financial Officer

1. To act as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer and principal adviser on financial matters.
2. To ensure the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.
3. To provide general advice on the budget preparation process, the presentation of budget estimates and precept proposals to Council and Committees.
4. To prepare and present annual budget estimates, precept proposals, financial forecasts and budget monitoring reports.
5. To ensure that the Council's budget is prepared and balanced and that accounts, invoices, payments and financial records are maintained properly.
6. To ensure that the Council's Financial Regulations are correctly observed, implemented and regularly reviewed, recommending revisions where necessary.
7. To monitor and manage the Council's budget expenditure and income and provide Council and Committees with regular statements of income and expenditure under each heading in the approved budget.
8. To ensure that meaningful financial reporting is provided for Penketh Pool and Community Centre, including income, expenditure, staffing, bookings, hire income and operational costs.
9. To ensure that all supplier invoices, direct debits, standing orders, card payments, regular payments and other transactions are processed, coded, authorised and reported correctly.
10. To ensure that all payments made to the Council are recorded, receipts issued where required, income banked or reconciled, and queries investigated and resolved.
11. To ensure that invoices are prepared and issued promptly for goods and services supplied by the Council and that debts are monitored and pursued appropriately.
12. To ensure that payroll, PAYE, National Insurance, pensions, RTI submissions, VAT and any other statutory financial returns and payments are completed accurately and on time.
13. To ensure that VAT records, VAT returns and any partial exemption considerations are properly reviewed and supported.
14. To ensure that records, returns and public notices for the annual audit and AGAR process are prepared and published correctly.
15. To prepare accounts, records and working papers for internal and external audit.
16. To ensure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return process is completed in the correct order and within statutory deadlines.
17. To maintain and review the Council's asset register, insurance records and financial risk assessments.

18. To ensure that adequate financial security, internal controls and accounting records are in place, maintained and reviewed.
19. To ensure that appropriate financial and other IT systems are in place and operated securely.
20. To work closely with internal and external audit to ensure compliance with Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and proper practices.
21. To ensure that surplus Council funds are held or invested securely in accordance with Council policy and legal requirements.

Penketh Pool and Community Centre

1. To provide integrated oversight of Penketh Pool and Community Centre as part of the Council's overall service delivery.
2. To ensure that Penketh Pool and Community Centre operates within Council policies, budgets, delegated authority, health and safety requirements and financial controls.
3. To ensure that Penketh Pool and Community Centre does not operate as a detached service outside Council governance, finance, staffing and reporting arrangements.
4. To work with relevant staff, including the Deputy/Assistant Clerk, swim administrator, swim lead, lifeguards, instructors, reception/cashier staff, caretaking/cleaning staff and contractors, to support safe and effective operation.
5. To ensure that income streams, including public swimming, swimming lessons, party hire, pool hire, hall hire, private hire and regular hirers, are properly recorded, coded and reported.
6. To oversee the use of booking, payment and customer management systems to reduce manual administration, avoid double bookings, improve customer service and strengthen audit trail.
7. To ensure that till, card, direct debit, booking and invoice income is properly separated and reconciled.
8. To ensure that pool staffing, rotas, qualifications, training and operational responsibilities are appropriately recorded and monitored.
9. To ensure that incident reporting, first aid arrangements, safeguarding processes, health and safety checks and escalation routes are clear and followed.
10. To ensure that regular reports are provided to Council on Pool and Community Centre performance, including income, expenditure, staffing, bookings, usage, incidents, risks, complaints, maintenance and development actions.
11. To support Council in planning for the long-term sustainability, repair, development and improvement of Penketh Pool and Community Centre.
12. To ensure that any operational lead, swim lead or supervisory role remains properly accountable within the Council's officer structure and does not create a separate management chain outside Clerk/RFO oversight.

Health, Safety, Safeguarding and Risk

1. To ensure that the Council has appropriate health and safety policies, risk assessments, inspections and reporting systems.
2. To ensure that Penketh Pool and Community Centre has appropriate operating procedures, safety checks, first aid arrangements, incident reporting processes and escalation routes.
3. To ensure that serious incidents, accidents and near misses are properly recorded, reviewed and escalated where required.
4. To ensure that safeguarding arrangements are appropriate for services involving children, young people and vulnerable users.
5. To ensure that insurance requirements, public liability considerations, contractor controls and maintenance records are properly managed.
6. To liaise with external advisers, insurers, HR support, health and safety advisers and statutory bodies where required.
7. To ensure that risk assessments and risk registers are reviewed and reported to Council.

Press, Public Relations, Liaison and Partnerships

1. To maintain effective and positive public relations and communications on behalf of the Council.
2. To publish press releases, website updates and social media content about the activities and decisions of the Council in accordance with Council policy and in consultation with appropriate members where required.
3. To develop effective liaison and working relationships with Warrington Borough Council, other local councils, statutory bodies, voluntary organisations, community groups, contractors, hirers and partner organisations.
4. To maintain an understanding of planning and development issues affecting the Council area and advise councillors accordingly.
5. To support the Council in promoting the community value of Penketh Pool and Community Centre, including swimming lessons, public swimming, community hire, fitness sessions, youth employment, training and water safety.
6. To ensure that complaints, reputational issues and public concerns are escalated and managed appropriately.

Continuous Professional and Personal Development

1. To attend training courses or seminars on the work and role of the Clerk, RFO and Council as required.

2. To continue to acquire the necessary professional knowledge required for the efficient management of the affairs of the Council.
3. To hold CiLCA or work towards CiLCA within an agreed timescale if not already held.
4. To maintain professional knowledge of local council law, governance, finance, employment, audit, health and safety, safeguarding and public-sector good practice.
5. To support councillor training and induction where appropriate.

Other

1. To undertake such other duties commensurate with the level of the post and job purpose as required by the Council from time to time.
2. To work flexibly to meet the needs of the Council, including attendance at evening meetings and occasional attendance outside normal office hours.
3. To ensure that the role is carried out with political impartiality, professionalism, integrity and accountability.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title: Chief Officer / Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

Reports to: The Council

Accountable to: Penketh Parish Council

Key accountabilities:

To lead and assist in all matters relating to the efficient governance, financial management, administration and operational oversight of the Parish Council, including all Council staff, property, resources, services, Penketh Pool and Community Centre.

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Education / Qualifications	Good general education, including English and Maths at GCSE Grade C/4 or above, or equivalent. Relevant professional qualification, degree-level qualification, senior management qualification, finance/governance qualification, or demonstrable equivalent senior experience. CiLCA, ILCA with commitment to complete CiLCA, or substantial transferable senior experience with commitment to undertake local council training and work towards CiLCA within an agreed period.	CiLCA qualification. Educated to degree level or equivalent. Relevant qualification in finance, governance, law, management, public administration, leisure management, charity management, school business management, HR or health and safety.
Experience / Understanding	Senior administration, governance, management, finance or operational leadership experience. Experience of financial management, budget monitoring, income and expenditure reporting, audit preparation or financial control. Experience of managing staff, contractors or service delivery. Experience of working with committees, boards, elected members, trustees, senior managers or formal decision-making bodies. Experience of producing reports, agendas, minutes, briefing papers or decision documents. Experience of handling confidential, sensitive or contentious matters professionally. Experience of working with the	Experience as a Clerk/RFO, Deputy Clerk, Chief Officer, Town Clerk, local government officer, charity chief officer, school business manager, leisure facility manager, finance manager or similar senior role. Experience of parish council law, AGAR, VAT, payroll, pensions, audit, procurement and public rights. Experience of managing or overseeing a public-facing community facility, leisure service, swimming pool, sports facility, community centre, school facility or similar operation. Experience of leading service improvement or

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
	public, customers, service users or community stakeholders. Understanding of public accountability, financial controls, audit trail, governance and risk management.	stabilising inherited governance or finance issues.
Skills / Aptitude	Excellent communication skills, both written and oral. Excellent IT skills, including Microsoft Outlook, Word, Excel and digital document management. Ability to use accounting, finance, booking and customer systems confidently. Excellent administrative and organisational skills. Ability to provide sound, impartial and professional advice to councillors. Ability to interpret financial information and present it clearly. Ability to lead and support staff while maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. Ability to manage pressure, conflict, complaints and competing deadlines. Ability to form and maintain sound working relationships with councillors, officers, staff, contractors, customers, hirers and external stakeholders. Ability to combine governance discipline with practical understanding of operational service delivery.	Experience of Scribe Accounts, Scribe Bookings, payroll systems, HR systems, risk management systems or similar applications. Website development and maintenance skills. Experience of public communications, social media, customer service systems or online booking/payment systems.
Knowledge	Understanding of the role of a statutory officer, governance adviser or senior accountable officer. Understanding of financial controls, audit trail, budget management and public accountability. Understanding of employment, HR, health and safety, safeguarding, data protection, equalities, freedom of information and risk management principles. Understanding that councillors act collectively through lawful decisions	Good working knowledge of local council procedures, planning consultation processes, procurement, transparency requirements and employment practice. Knowledge of pool, leisure, community facility, education, charity or public-sector operating environments. Knowledge and understanding of the local area and the community

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
	of the Council and that officers are not directed by individual councillors outside agreed arrangements. Willingness and ability to learn local council law, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and sector-specific requirements quickly.	value of Penketh Pool and Community Centre.
Other / Personal Qualities	Ability to work effectively and efficiently under pressure and unsupervised. Trustworthy with confidential and sensitive information. Self-motivated, resilient and flexible attitude to work. Willingness to attend evening meetings and occasional out-of-hours commitments. Community minded. Politically impartial. Strong judgement, discretion and integrity. Ability to work constructively with councillors while maintaining clear professional boundaries. Access to, or use of, transport suitable for the role.	Willingness to undertake appropriate training and keep knowledge up to date. Membership of SLCC or another relevant professional body. Strong interest in community facilities, youth employment, swimming, sport, leisure, health, wellbeing or community development.

Recruitment Position

This role should be advertised as a senior Chief Officer / Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer post.

The Council is seeking a candidate able to operate at the required level from appointment, with support for local council-specific training where required.

The Council should not appoint unless the successful candidate demonstrates the competence, judgement, resilience and leadership required to manage the full scope of the role.

Where a candidate is highly qualified and experienced but does not have a parish council background, the Council may consider appointment where there is clear evidence of transferable senior governance, finance, management, public-sector, regulated-service or operational leadership experience, together with a clear commitment to complete local council training, including CiLCA where required.