

## **Finance & Administration Committee - 22 September 2022**

### **Agenda Item FA1639/22**

#### **Recruitment of Two Additional Employees**

##### **Background**

This is a proposal that was discussed at the meeting of the HR & Compliance Committee. It is a recommendation, in principle, to create two new roles for employees of the council, namely:

- An events organiser/social media, communications & engagement specialist – part time
- An apprentice ranger – full time

Both posts are a response to a need that we recognise and represent an opportunity to increase the breadth and depth of council activities with limited impact, in the short to medium term, on the council tax precept.

##### **Description**

###### An events organiser/social media, communications & engagement specialist – part time

The staging of events has proven to be the most visible and effective way of bringing the community together, even during the pandemic and particularly since. Examples include the recent Easter egg hunt, the French Market, the dog shows, karaoke, virtual pumpkin carving, photography and art exhibition, Revels on the Green (part funded by the council) and the Platinum Jubilee street parties. However, these events are often time consuming to organise and can interrupt the normal operations of the council.

Effective communications with the council's stakeholders are becoming increasingly important – both to 'sell' the services that are provided and to demonstrate the value added delivered. Such communications need to be over a broad spectrum, from traditional paper means (newsletters), the council's website, through wide area broadcasts (Facebook, TikTok and or Twitter) to focused channels (email lists, Telegram channels, WhatsApp groups).

The council misses opportunities to deliver this desired level of communication as that kind of engagement is not a primary responsibility of either of the office-based staff.

A new post that combines the above roles could be part time, home or office based and would suit anyone who has the attributes but chooses not to work full time. It is envisaged that the post holder would always attend the events that they have organised (c 12 minimum per year)

A benefit of creating this role is to add some capacity to the current office staff and to provide an element of future proofing as there is no obvious succession plan in place for those colleagues.

The estimated basic salary cost to the council might be of the order of £15/hour, plus salary overheads (national insurance, local government pension scheme) and usual holidays and other benefits.

A draft job description and person specification is included at appendix A.

#### An apprentice ranger – full time

The council is committed to fulfil its responsibility to provide staff with the correct training for the job roles and to allowing staff to develop with the council. A good example is that the current Senior Ranger was promoted, following an open recruitment process, from his previous role as Ranger. However, the council is forced to recruit new staff who already have at least some of the essential skills given that the demands of the job are not practical to defer.

The council now believes it is ready to invest in the future of, preferably, a Croxley young adult who seeks to follow a career in land and amenity management. According to the government website (<https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers/benefits-of-hiring-apprentice>) hiring an apprentice is a productive and effective way to grow talent and develop a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce.

Other benefits of working with apprentices are asserted to include the ability to adapt their training according to the needs of the organisation; the apprentices are motivated to learn new skills; and the employer can expand and upskill its workforce.

An apprentice is a full-time employee of the council and is required to spend 20%, 1 day per week, engaged in a recognised training programme. Providers include Oaklands College, St Albans and Capel Manor College, Enfield.

The estimated basic salary cost to the council is £4.81 per hour for the first year, applicable to 16-18 year olds, and at least the national minimum wage thereafter. All other T&Cs should be completely aligned to those offered to other employees.

A draft job description and person specification is included at appendix B.

#### **Risks**

The proposal has several risks that should not be ignored

Financial: Increasing staff numbers increases costs that need to be justifiable. However in the short to medium term it is not necessary for the action to affect the precept paid by residents as the council has significant accumulated general reserves and the Clerk agrees that it would be a legitimate use of those reserves to fund new posts of this nature, for at least as long as it takes for the country to recover from the current economic turmoil.

Operational: it may not be possible to recruit the posts from local candidates, or, indeed at all, as there is effective full employment in the country (1.3M vacancies; 1.5M unemployed).

Tel: 01923 710250  
Fax: 01923 896425  
info@croxleygreen-pc.gov.uk  
www.croxleygreen-pc.gov.uk



Community Way  
Croxley Green  
Rickmansworth  
Hertfordshire WD3 3SU

Supervision: Taking on new staff will, necessarily, increase the load on the Clerk and the Senior Ranger. However the benefit of making these appointments outweighs the short term adjustment.

Reputational: increasing the profile of the council, as would be an impact of this proposal, is an opportunity for those opposed to the council and those who like to make mischief to object. However, the first of the posts answers some legitimate concerns that residents are not aware of what the council does and, being able to offer more events without material incremental cost to the precept, represents visible value added. The second post is, simply, the right thing to do – to offer a valuable training programme leading to a recognised qualification for a local resident.

### **Recommendations**

This committee

- 1 approves the proposal to recruit two new employees.
- 2 recommends the proposal to Full Council for approval

**Cllr Nigel Cole**

**September 2022**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

Events & Communications Officer

Salary Scale: TBA

Terms and conditions:

- Part-time 8 days per month
- Hours/Days of work flexible, to be agreed with the Clerk to the Council
- Holidays 28 days per annum pro rata
- Local Government Pension Scheme

Overall Responsibility

To support the Clerk to the Council and councillors with the planning, preparation and delivery of community events and publicity of parish council events and activities.

Specific Responsibilities

The Council's Events & Communications Officer will:

- Develop and deliver parish events and initiatives in conjunction with the Clerk
- Efficiently manage all administration associated with events and initiatives, including scheduling meetings and taking minutes at working groups
- Monitor expenditure on individual events and initiatives and liaise with sponsors
- Effectively plan tasks to ensure smooth delivery of events, including obtaining necessary permissions, drafting risk assessments, liaising with councillors, staff, and community groups and ensuring insurance cover is in place
- Production of attractive publicity materials for events, including fliers, posters and press releases
- Be responsible for organising the maintenance, transport and safe use of equipment for events such as the PA system, gazebo, hi vis vests, banners and flags
- Maintain and update the parish website and social media pages
- Provide reports as required to relevant committee and council meetings
- Provide administrative support and general office cover within the Parish Office.
- Undertake any other duties as required by the Clerk consistent with the level and scope of the post.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential	Desirable
<b>Education/Qualification</b>		
Good standard of general education to GCSE level or equivalent (including Maths and English at grade C/5 or above)	✓	
Degree or professional qualification in a relevant field		✓
Driving Licence		✓
<b>Skills and Knowledge</b>		
Excellent organisational skills, possibly including basic project management skills	✓	
Excellent verbal and written skills	✓	
Excellent IT skills including use of Outlook software for email, scheduling and record keeping	✓	
Good knowledge of social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter	✓	
Understanding of Health & Safety legislation and principles of GDPR	✓	
Knowledge of Google Workspace, desktop publishing software, and a scheduling/survey tool such as MailChimp		✓
<b>Previous Experience</b>		
Experience of planning and delivering small scale events	✓	
Experience of dealing with a wide range of people, including the media, community/special interest groups and general public	✓	
Experience preparing risk assessments and other health and safety compliance documentation for events and initiatives	✓	
Experience of working with elected members		✓
<b>Attitudes and Disposition</b>		
Able to work on own initiative and cope under pressure	✓	
Positive attitude and practical collaborative approach to problem solving	✓	
Friendly disposition. A team player.	✓	
Willing to work outside normal working hours	✓	
Committed to delivering a net zero carbon agenda for the council		✓
Committed to continuous personal development		✓

## **APPENDIX B**

### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

#### **Apprentice Ranger Overall Responsibility**

As an apprentice, you will be trained to develop the skills and knowledge to work as a Ranger, learning how to maintain Croxley Green's open spaces to high standards.

The apprenticeship programme involves on the job training and classroom based sessions with a training provider.

You will attend regular meetings with your work supervisor, have your work observed to monitor progress and attend training sessions as required.

#### **Specific duties**

Assist in the maintenance of Croxley Green open spaces, including The Green and Stone's Orchard to high standards

Complete college study/assignments/ tasks and achieve the apprenticeship qualification within the set timescale.

Work in a safe, efficient and effective manner at all times

Develop the skills and confidence to engage with users e.g Customer service, dealing with enquiries and learning how to work with volunteers and community groups.

Assist in the running and clear up of community events.

Be trained to carry out risk assessments, maintain appropriate records, and ensure all work is carried out in line with Health and Safety requirements.

Undertake appropriate training as and when required in order to be updated and familiar with grounds maintenance.

Learn how to work positively with other members of the Ranger team, volunteers, police, probation service and other agencies.

Operate and maintain plant / equipment in a safe and competent manner and comply with appropriate Health and Safety legislation

Undertake other duties as determined from time to time which are consistent with an apprenticeship programme.

### PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential	Desirable
<b>Skills and Knowledge</b>		
Ability to understand and follow instructions	✓	
IT Skills		✓
Basic horticultural knowledge and interest		✓
Manual skills ability		✓
<b>Qualifications and Training</b>		
Willingness to train and develop further	✓	
Commitment to work towards a minimum of level 1 Functional Skills in English and Maths	✓	
GCSE Grade C or above in English and Maths or equivalent	✓	
First aid qualification		✓
Any relevant horticultural training, work experience or qualifications		✓
<b>Experience</b>		
Past horticultural experience		✓
Working with the public		✓
Completion of assignments or projects.		✓
<b>Special Requirements</b>		
Lives in or near (3 miles) to Croxley	✓	
Able to meet physical demands of the post: manual dexterity and good hand eye co-ordination	✓	
Able to meet the travel requirements of the post	✓	
Willing and able to work outdoors in all weathers	✓	