

## St Dennis Parish Council

### Work from Home Policy

#### Policy brief and purpose

St Dennis Parish Council has designed this policy to make sure that working from home is beneficial to our employees and the organisation. This policy sets out the type of work that maybe carried out away from the main office. The office must still be covered Monday to Friday between 9.30 and 12.30 to maintain accessibility to the public. Home working will only be granted on a short-term basis and where deemed appropriate at the discretion of the Chair and Vice Chair. This must be agreed by Full Council as soon as is practicable. Whilst home working is a type of flexible working amended hours do not apply as part of the arrangement. A flexible working application would need to be applied for in this instance. Home working will only be granted for certain types of work and only for short periods of time.

#### Type of work considered under this policy:

- Policy reviews
- Small projects
- Financial work
- Any written work that it is not considered necessary to be carried out within the office environment.

Employee's must apply in writing to the Chair and Vice Chair for any form of home working, the application will be discussed by them in the first instance, taking into consideration the nature of the work being requested and the impact that it may have on the business of the Parish Council. If the employee requires a change in office hours for any other reason than an application for flexible working should be considered. The Chair and Vice Chair will Confirm if the application for home working has been successful, providing the relevant checks required are completed with no concerns raised.

#### Considerations:

- Is the work suitable to be carried out away from the office?
- What impact will this have on the Parish Council
- Is the employee self-motivated and disciplined enough to complete the work?
- Is the employee able to work without direct supervision?
- What deadlines are required for the work to be carried out.
- What impact will this have on the employee.
- Is the employee suitably trained?
- Has the employee completed at least one years' service?
- Is the employee's performance within the office is at an acceptable level?
- Any findings from the employees last annual review.
- Is the employees home suitable to carry out the work free from distraction with a suitable internet connection?

Any arrangements for home working should meet with the business needs of the Parish Council and the employee's needs, so that it is favourable to both parties. The employee must consult with their landlord / mortgage provider, and insurance company of the intention to work from home to ensure there are no clauses to prevent them from doing so.

St Dennis Parish Council has a duty of care to its employees, to ensure that they have reasonable space and a safe environment, with adequate security and privacy in which to work. As such prior to a decision to work at home being approved, a risk assessment of the employees' home must be undertaken by the Chair and Vice Chair at the convenience of the employee. If however concerns are identified during the risk assessment it is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that the concerns identified are addressed, the Council will determine a timescale for any works that need to be undertaken, this will be dependent on the actions required. If this timescale is not met without reasonable explanation from the employee, St Dennis Parish Council reserves the right to refuse any home working application.

Should the working from home application be approved, the Parish Council will supply a password protected laptop with appropriate internet security on which to carry out the work. The employee will be responsible for supplying light, heat and a suitable internet connection (if required). The laptop will remain the property of the Parish Council and must not be used for the employee's personal use.

If after the approval of a home working application has been approved the employee decides to relocate to other accommodation on a temporary or permanent basis any equipment must be returned to the parish Council office and the application process will start again.

Any work carried out at the home of an employee must be undertaken on the equipment provided, any information sent to councillors must be from the Parish Council official email addresses. The laptop and any files that are required for the purpose of home working are required to be kept in a safe and secure manner by the employee at all times. Any information of a privileged or sensitive nature must not at any time be left unattended or unsecure, any failure to comply with this will result in charges of gross misconduct being brought against the employee. All files and the laptop must be returned to the office as and when the home working task has been completed or when the employee is required to be in the office environment.

To ensure that an employee's performance is monitored during the time of home working appropriate hours will be allocated from the employees contracted hours for the specific duty outlined within the application. If the application is for additional duties to be performed the Council will allocate the number of hours to be awarded when approving the application. If the employee reaches the hours allocated but has not completed the task, a request stating the need for and amount of additional hours along with a progress report must be provided to the Chair and Vice Chair before work continues. Selected councillors from the staffing committee or the clerk may request with reasonable notice to attend the employee's residence to check the progress of the work and ensure that this policy along with the general health and safety policies are being adhered to.

During any home working application that has been approved the employee will be expected to attend the office covering normal opening hours and in accordance with their contract, or when covering holidays and sickness.

In the event of immediate need for work to be carried out at home and providing a current risk assessment is in place, the clerk can under certain circumstances request permission via email to the chair and vice chair. Stating the reason behind the request and the amount of time required, providing this does not exceed the clerks contracted hours the Chair and Vice Chair can give permission, but this must be reported to full council at the earliest convenience for agreement.

Considerations under the above:

- Essential deadlines that need to be met.
- Additional workload.
- Adverse weather forecasts (Snow and ice).
- A busier than usual office environment.

In the event that adverse weather is forecast and for the continuation of the Parish Council business, the clerk will inform the Chair and Vice Chair that there is potential risk. As a precaution, the clerk will ensure that the lap is taken home should it not be possible to safely reach the office to carry out their usual duties.

All employees who are given approval to work from home will be compensated at their normal rate of pay for the hours allocated, the hours must be properly recorded within the time sheet and approved by the chair and vice chair before payment can be authorised made.

Adopted by St Dennis Parish Council

28<sup>th</sup> November 2019

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