



DORCHESTER TOWN COUNCIL



APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK (CORPORATE)

APPLICATION PACK

January 2023

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INTRODUCTION FROM THE MAYOR

I would like to thank you for showing an interest in the position of Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate). This pack gives you a brief overview and introduction to the town and what it has to offer.

Dorchester is a town rich in heritage, with a warm and inclusive community Spirit. It is growing at a fast pace and the Town Council plays a key role in supporting this and its future development in housing, tourism and business. It acts as custodian and guardian of some of the town's most important assets and supports a wide range of local community groups that deliver activity across cultural, heritage, sport and increasingly the environment and the climate challenge



As a Council we are reviewing our vision for Dorchester's future and what that means for services we deliver to meet the town's needs. We are looking to recruit someone with the skills, knowledge and creativity to work with the Senior Management Team and Council to build on what is already in place and take the Council forward during its next phase of development.

We are well set up financially and have a capable and experienced team of staff and 20 Councillors who between them have over 300 years shared experience of serving within local councils.

I encourage you to apply for the job – you will be challenged and rewarded in equal measure.

Councillor Janet Hewitt
Mayor of Dorchester

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE JOB

Following the appointment of a new Town Clerk there has been a review of the senior management team. In place of a single Deputy Town Clerk two senior posts of Assistant Town Clerk have been created – this job and an Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services).

You will manage the office team who are an experienced and highly capable team.

If you are appointed you will find no major issues. Our services are capably and safely delivered and well regarded; our accounts are closed in the first week of April and show a strong financial position; our Member-officer relationships are sound and firmly based on mutual respect. Dorchester never stands still and you will have a fulfilling and varied workload giving consideration to and implementing decisions of the Council.

The Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) position is all about delivering services and working with the Council's Management Committee to develop new ideas and improvements. You will also be the officer responsible for performance management, risk management and human resources. You will also be expected to play a part in the town's civic and ceremonial activities and events.

Further detailed information about the job can be found in the job description and person specification which are both included in this pack.



Photo - Dorchester Borough Gardens

THE TOWN

Dorchester is an ancient and historic settlement that has been serving a rural hinterland for over 2,000 years. The Romans established Durnovaria as one of only 13 Civitas in Britain and developed the town as a trading centre with a local forum; Dornwercestre was an important administrative centre in Saxon Wessex, with both a mint and market, while Edward I formally recognised Dorchester as the County Town of Dorset in 1305 and Charles I created the Mayoralty in 1629. Both the supporters of Monmouth in 1685 and the Tolpuddle Martyrs in 1834 suffered their justice here. Hardy wrote about Casterbridge and Frink commemorated the town's Catholic martyrs. Our heritage is important to us and the Town Council recently created a tourism partnership to better exploit our tourism potential. The Town Council also values its civic history, with a number of formal civic events playing an important part in the town and Council's annual calendar.

Dorchester is also a very modern town. The Duchy of Cornwall's development at Poundbury, coupled with Brewery Square on the old Eldridge Pope site in the town centre, has seen the town's population grow from 15,000 at the end of the 1980's to 20,000 today, and is expected to reach 23,000 within the next five years. But these sites are filling up and the next Dorset Council Local Plan might well contain new and controversial plans to increase the town's population further by building across the water meadows to the north. The Town Council is strongly opposed to this.

Employment is predominantly in public sector administration and public health, and the town provides a large amount of employment for a wide rural hinterland, exceptionally delivering a job/resident ratio of 1:1, much higher than most other towns. However the pandemic has challenged the need for many office workers to commute to Dorchester and this, coupled with a shift towards online retail, is presenting significant challenges for our town centre. The Town Council is developing its vision of what a future town centre will look like, with a view to having it included in the new Local Plan.

Entertainment, the arts, and sports are well represented in the town with many active teams and groups satisfying the diverse interests of residents of all ages. The recreational offer includes outdoor spaces such as the Council run Victorian pleasure gardens (the Borough Gardens), the Neolithic and Roman amphitheatre Maumbury Rings, a river walk and nature reserve that form a natural northern boundary to the town, all amid the many large and small playing fields; we also have many play areas and a wonderful skate park in the town. In recent years the Council has successfully enabled the town's Football and Cricket Clubs to manage the sites provided for them, and has just completed the transfer of the Municipal Buildings to Dorchester Arts to be run as a performance and community arts venue. At the same time the Council has taken on the management of The Great Field, a new outdoor parkland space created by the Duchy of Cornwall at Poundbury. Three cemeteries and six allotment sites complete our outdoor offer.



THE COUNCIL

Dorchester Town Council is one of England's larger parish authorities with a precept of over £1.5 Million and Band D Council Tax at £202.

There are 20 councillors representing five wards. Eighteen stood in May 2019 as Liberal Democrats and 2 as Independents, but there are no declared political groups on the Council. The Council operates a streamlined Committee structure, with Council, Policy and Management Committee meeting in odd months while Planning & Environment Committee meets every month. There are two joint bodies (Markets, Heritage) with Dorset Council, while Task and Finish Groups are created as and when the need arises. The Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) services the Management Committee and Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee with other members of the team supporting the remainder.

The Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate) manages an office team of eight, providing governance and administrative arrangements and developing partnerships. The Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) manages a team of 14, working on our green spaces, cemeteries, play areas and allotments, as well as supporting civic and community events as required. A team of three staff provide facilities management in the Municipal Buildings, under the direction of our partner, Dorchester Arts.

The Council meets in its own Council Chamber within the Municipal Buildings, which have just undergone a major £1.7 Million works programme to safeguard the building, reduce its carbon footprint, provide new office space and improve the experience of visitors to the many arts performances and community events taking place on the site. The Council is also a key promoter and funder of important public realm projects in the town centre and also reinvests in its assets from time to time, an example being new tennis courts in the Borough Gardens. The Council is constantly reviewing its assets.

The Council serves two main functions. It manages a range of discretionary services that are important to the town. Many of these are well established, for example our Borough Gardens and three cemeteries, but we are taking on new services, either as a result of growth, for example with The Great Field at Poundbury, or because the principal authority for the area, Dorset Council, is in the process of rationalising its services; in recent years this has resulted in the Council becoming the main funder of Dorchester Youth Centre and Dorchester Arts and has also resulted in the Council taking the lead on Tourism Development at an important time when tourism is becoming increasingly important to the town's economy.

The second function is as a champion of the needs of the town. As a matter of course we have always commented on routine development control applications and operational highways matters but the Council has increasingly taken an active part in public realm projects, promotes the Climate Agenda with partners, seeks opportunities to provide affordable housing, sponsors discussion between the disparate members of our community sector and supports them to deliver projects, acts as a sounding board for key agencies operating in the town and most recently we are challenging the Planning Authority on its Local Plan policies that affect the town and wider area.

More information regarding our activities can be found on our website, www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk particularly in our What's New and Committee Agenda tabs.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Assistant Town Clerk (Corporate)
Full Time:	37 hours per week
Salary:	SCP 37-39 – (subject to a bar at SCP 38 until CiLCA obtained)
Responsible to:	Town Clerk

1. **Job Purpose**

- 1.1 To be responsible for the operational management of the Council's services including the management of staff and contractors
- 1.2 In conjunction with the Town Clerk to manage the delivery of significant capital projects involving the Council's building and land assets.
- 1.3 To develop the promotion of services to, and liaison with, young people, in order to strengthen the knowledge of young people regarding the Council's role.
- 1.4 To act on the instructions of the Council through its Committee or corporate planning process to develop service provision.
- 1.5 To report progress on Corporate Plan initiatives and on ongoing service delivery to the Management Committee and its Panels, including the reporting of performance data and the risk register.
- 1.6 In liaison with the Assistant Town Clerk (Outdoor Services) to fulfil the duties of the Town Clerk during his absence, and to carry out other duties appropriate to the grade of the job.

2. **Specific Duties**

- 2.1 To support the Town Clerk in his or her role as principal advisor to the Council through attending Council, Committee, Sub-Committee and Panel meetings as required.
- 2.2 To be responsible for such committees of the Council as may be required including the preparation of agenda, attendance at meetings, the drafting of minutes and action arising and, in addition, attending meetings of such other bodies, organisations or groups as may reasonably be required.
- 2.3 To act as the Clerk to the Dorchester Joint Heritage Committee.
- 2.4 To be responsible for delivering the Council's agreed Performance Management system, including the preparation, implementation and monitoring of service plans.

- 2.5 To act as lead officer for the Council's risk management activities.
- 2.6 To act as lead officer for the Council's human resources function, including the issuing of contracts, new and revised staffing policies, being either the 'investigating' or 'hearings' officer in respect of grievance or disciplinary proceedings etc.
- 2.7 To undertake staff appraisals of those staff indicated in the staffing structure.
- 2.8 To assist the Town Clerk with any duties deemed necessary for the smooth running of the Council.
- 2.9 To arrange a full summer events programme in the Borough Gardens / Maumbury Rings.
- 2.10 To assist as required in the organisation of civic and/or ceremonial events.
- 2.11 Such other ad hoc duties as required appropriate to the grading of the post.

3. **Summary**

- 3.1 The salary paid is commensurate with ability and experience and reflects the seniority and expectations of the position held.
- 3.2 The salary paid reflects the requirement to attend evening and weekend meetings and events. Time off in lieu at basic rate will be available in respect of these duties.
- 3.3 It is expected that the appointee will attend all civic functions and other events of the Town Council as requested by the Town Clerk as part of their contract.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Quality	Essential	Desirable
1. Qualifications	Educated to GCSE Level or equivalent with minimum of English and Maths GCSE (Grade C). CiLCA or willing to study for CiLCA in the first year	A degree or equivalent professional qualification in a related subject.
2. Related experience including voluntary work	Management experience. Working experience of producing letters and reports. Experience of dealing with the public by telephone and in person. Experience of working on own initiative and as part of a team. Experience of work within Local Government Committee & Member services. Experience of managing capital building projects	Experience of implementing large projects. Experience of managing staff. Writing tender specifications
3. Skills and Abilities	Good written and oral communication skills with the ability to communicate effectively with others at all levels both internally and externally. Good administrative and organisational skills. Able to operate office systems and procedures. Able to organise own work. Able to meet strict deadlines. Able to write Minutes and Reports Presentation and communication skills Excellent working knowledge of Committee systems and procedures. Broad-based experience of central administration functions.	Able to work in a logical manner. Knowledge of basic IT systems. Experience of organising civic events. Experience of being either the 'investigating' or 'hearings' officer in respect of grievance or disciplinary proceedings etc. Knowledge of capital project management.

	<p>Experience and knowledge of Human Resources including contract writing and implementing staffing policies</p> <p>Experience of undertaking staff appraisals</p> <p>Able to write and update Council Policies</p> <p>Experience of implementing and monitoring Risk Management Systems</p>	
4. Knowledge	<p>IT literate with working knowledge of Microsoft Office</p> <p>Working knowledge of office equipment.</p>	<p>Knowledge of Canva design software.</p> <p>Knowledge of the heritage of Dorchester</p>
5. Personal Qualities	<p>Able to grasp new concepts quickly.</p> <p>Determined to make things happen.</p> <p>Able to foster good relations at all levels.</p> <p>Good decision maker.</p> <p>Able to establish effective teamwork.</p> <p>Personal warmth and friendly responsive approach to staff and members of the public at all levels.</p> <p>Able to work effectively under pressure.</p> <p>Self-reliant, open and honest.</p> <p>Practical and common sense approach to problem solving.</p> <p>Good telephone manner.</p> <p>Trustworthy with confidential information.</p> <p>Capable of anticipating problems and showing initiative to solve them.</p> <p>Receptive to change and new ideas.</p> <p>Methodical and thorough approach.</p> <p>Able to be proactive.</p>	<p>Able to contribute to the development of the Council.</p>
6. Other requirements	<p>Willing to undertake some evening and weekend work.</p>	

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Salary

The salary will be within the scale SCP37 to SCP39 with a bar at SCP38 until CiLCA obtained. 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.

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 Town Clerk 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.

Relocation

The Council is willing to consider the payment of relocation expenses in accordance with the Councils scheme for expenses if the successful candidate needs to move to a principal home within reasonable daily travelling distance of Dorchester.

Probation

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 one membership fee for staff whose duties require them to be a member of a professional body.

Working Week

The normal working week is 37 hours. Time off in lieu at plain time rate is available for attendance at meetings or events which take place in the evenings or at weekends.

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 consent of the Council.

Annual Leave

In accordance with the national conditions of service, but the Council awards additional annual leave after staff have continuous public service for 10 years and this is further augmented after 15 years' service up to a maximum of 32 days (including the two statutory days). Plus eight public holidays.

Period of Notice

At least three months written notice is required on either side to terminate the employment.

Pension

Employees of the Council will be auto-enrolled into the Dorset Pension Fund.

Employee Development Scheme

On appointment the successful candidate will be entitled to:

- a monthly meeting during the probationary period with the Town Clerk to explore the direction of work and personal development;
- at the completion of the probationary period 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.

After satisfactory completion of the 6 months probationary period the successful candidate will be afforded a formal Performance Review Meeting 18th months after joining the Council conducted by the Town Clerk.

Health and Safety

Dorchester 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.

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, religion or belief, political persuasion or colour.

Car Allowance

A casual user car allowance at the current rate will be payable to the post holder for necessary use of their own vehicle for work.

HOW TO APPLY

Please visit www.dorchester-tc.gov.uk where an application form can be downloaded.

Please:-

- Download a copy of the application form and save it to your computer with a personal file name.
- Complete the application form.
- Keep a copy for yourself.
- Submit your completed application to enquiries@dorchester-tc.gov.uk

Receipt of your completed application form will be acknowledged via email.

Alternatively a paper copy of your application can be printed and posted to the Town Council Offices, 19 North Square, Dorchester, DT1 1JF

Please see the recruitment process timetable for key dates. Closing date is midnight on 10 February 2023

If you would like more information or an informal chat to learn more about the Council or the job before deciding whether to apply, feel free to contact the Town Clerk – Steve Newman either by email at s.newman@dorchester-tc.gov.uk or by telephone on 01305 266861.

SELECTION PROCESS AND TIMETABLE

All applications will be acknowledged and considered by the selection panel. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to participate in an online verbal and numerical reasoning assessment followed by face to face interview in Dorchester on 1 March 2023.

Interviews will last around an hour and will include a presentation to be prepared prior to the interview.

The selection panel will make a decision as soon as possible after the interviews with candidates being notified as soon as possible once a decision has been made.

Activity	Date
Post advertised	11 January 2023
Closing date	10 February 2023
Shortlisting	13/14/15 February 2023
Shortlisted applicants advised	16 February 2023
Shortlisted applicants provided with online verbal and numerical reasoning assessment	17 February 2023
OPQ completed by applicants by midnight on	26 February 2023
Interviews	1 March 2023

Thank you for your interest in Dorchester Town Council and good luck should you decide to apply.