

Toft Newton Parish Council

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HOMEWORKING POLICY

Policy

Toft Newton Parish Council recognises the advantages of home-based working, while it doesn't suit everyone, and some job roles may not be appropriate to undertake at home, such as Playground Warden which is a site based role, however, the Clerk's role is home based.

This policy describes the working arrangements and expectations that apply to posts that are based at home.

Scope of this policy

While this policy applies to all staff who are home-based, it can be adapted to included Councillors, should any Parish Councillors need support with establishing a work-base at their home.

Safe working environment

Health and safety for home-based staff applies in the same way as office-based staff, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that you work in a safe manner and that you follow all health and safety instructions issued by us.

You must complete and submit a home-based risk assessment to the Chair of the Personnel Committee. There is a process that staff should use to identify any possible hazards in your home working area, including a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) / workplace assessment produced by Clear Councils, which is stored on the Zoho WorkDrive. Following completion of this DSE assessment, measures may need to be taken to control any risks identified. This checklist should be completed annually, or more frequently if there are any changes to your arrangements such as new equipment or changes to your home-office space.

You must complete and submit the DSE risk assessment and ensure that this remains up-to-date. If you have any questions about the risk assessment, or if you identify any potential risks when carrying out the assessment, you should refer these to the Chair of the Personnel Committee in the first instance.

Some of the most important considerations include:

- If possible, an area should be set aside from the rest of your living space to ensure that you are able to work from home without distractions,
- Your home office should have adequate space for you to work safely and comfortably,
- Your desk should be large enough to accommodate your equipment and paperwork,
- You should have sufficient storage and your workspace should be organised so equipment is close to hand,
- Your work area should be well lit, with natural lighting if possible,
- Equipment and sockets should be situated to avoid potential trip hazards, and,
- You must also ensure that you visually check the cables of any electronic equipment supplied to you regularly (and at least every 6 months) and report any defects.

We reserve the right to visit you at home at agreed times for work-related purposes, including health and safety matters and to inspect, service or repair equipment (e.g. for PAT testing).

Facilities and equipment

If required Toft Newton Parish Council will provide you with the following equipment for you to work from home and we will maintain and replace these items when necessary, or contribute towards the cost of such equipment, should you wish to keep and be responsible for the future repairs costs or replacements:

- Desk,
- Office chair
- Filing cabinet (which will be lockable for those staff who hold personal data)
- Printer and / or scanner
- Laptop computer

It is your duty to ensure that proper care is taken of the equipment provided to you and to let the Clerk know of any need to maintain or replace the equipment. Should the risk assessment identify any further equipment that is necessary, please discuss this with the Chair of the Personnel Committee.

All equipment provided and owned by Toft Newton Parish Council is for you to work safely and effectively at home and cannot be used for personal use by you or your family.

All equipment will belong to the Council and you will be required to return it to us promptly should you leave our employment. If we are unable to make suitable arrangements, we may collect the equipment and any documents before your last day.

Hours of work

As a home-based worker, your contract of employment will specify the number of hours when we expect you to be at work and contactable by telephone or e-mail.

You must be mindful to take adequate rest breaks which should be, as a minimum:

- A daily rest break of at least 11 continuous hours, i.e. the time between stopping Toft Newton Parish Council related work one day and beginning work the next day, and,
- At least one complete day each week when no work is done.

Potential conflicts of interest

During your hours of work, the council expects that your work environment enables you to work effectively and that you are not distracted by domestic matters. It is not appropriate to combine homeworking with caring for a dependant.

If there is an emergency and you need to attend to a non-work matter, then you should notify the Chair of the Parish Council, as per detailed in the Emergency Dependant Leave Policy.

Data protection

As a home-worker you are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with the council secure at all times. Specifically, homeworkers are under a duty to:

- Keep filing cabinets and drawers locked when they are not being used,
- Keep all documentation belonging to us in the locked filing cabinet at all times except when in use,
- Set up and use a unique password for the laptop computer, and,
- Ensure that documents are saved to the server rather than the laptop computer's hard drive.

If you have a telephone conversation where you are discussing confidential work matters, you should ensure that such calls take place in privacy to avoid inadvertent breach of confidentiality.

Visits to work premises

On occasions you will need to attend Toft Newton Village Hall for Parish Council's bi-monthly meetings, and on a less frequent basis, training, performance assessment meetings, team briefings etc. The dates and times of such visits will be agreed in advance.

Insurance, mortgage or rental agreements

Whilst our Employer's Liability Insurance extends to home-based staff, and any council equipment installed in your home will also be covered, you should ensure that any agreement with your landlord or mortgage lender allows you to work from home, and that your house buildings and contents insurance will not be invalidated by you working from home.

Reviews

Toft Newton Parish Council will review this policy as per the schedule below, or sooner if changes to local or national guidance or legislation require a revision to take place sooner.

Previous versions of this policy will be retained on the Zoho WorkDrive and will have a version number appended to their file name.

Approved by Toft Newton Parish Council on:	7 th July 2026
First review due:	September 2027
Then review:	Annually
