



Campaign Pack: Making Training Mandatory for Parish and Town Councillors and Staff

Purpose of This Pack

This pack supports parish and town councils across **Warwickshire and West Midlands, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Staffordshire, and Shropshire** in lobbying Members of Parliament to urge the Government to introduce **mandatory training** for councillors and staff at the local council level.

Parish and town councils are the first tier of local government and play a vital role in community leadership and service delivery. Yet, unlike other tiers of government, training is not compulsory.

This campaign calls for fair, consistent, and professional standards across all levels of local government.

To achieve this, we need our member councils to get behind us. A strong, coordinated response will help ensure that parish and town councils have a clear and respected local voice within Government and can influence the changes our sector needs.

By working together, we can help secure meaningful reform and raise standards across the sector.





Why Mandatory Training Matters

Parish and town councils:

- Manage public funds and assets
- Employ staff
- Enter into legal contracts
- Make statutory decisions
- Represent their communities
- Shape local priorities

Despite this responsibility, training is currently optional.

In contrast, **other tiers of local government already require mandatory training** in areas such as governance, finance, and standards. Parish and town councils deserve the same recognition, support, and professional framework.

Mandatory training would:

- Strengthen governance and leadership
- Improve financial management and compliance
- Reduce costly mistakes and disputes
- Support ethical standards
- Increase public confidence
- Encourage new and diverse candidates
- Improve officer and councillor retention
- Promote consistency across the sector

Training is not a criticism — it is an investment in quality, confidence, and professionalism.

A Unique and Complex Sector



Parish and town councils operate under **different rules, regulations, and powers** compared with principal authorities.

This unique framework includes:

- Specific financial and audit requirements
- Distinct meeting and governance rules
- Local government legislation that applies differently
- Unique employment and contractual arrangements
- Particular standards and codes of conduct

Without proper training, councillors and staff are often required to navigate this complexity through experience alone.

Mandatory training ensures that everyone understands:

- Their legal responsibilities
- Their limits of authority
- Their governance duties
- Their financial obligations
- Their role in representing residents

Well-informed councils make better decisions.



Protecting Public Money and Delivering Value

Parish and town councils are responsible for **taxpayers' money**.

Residents rightly expect:

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Efficiency
- Good value for money

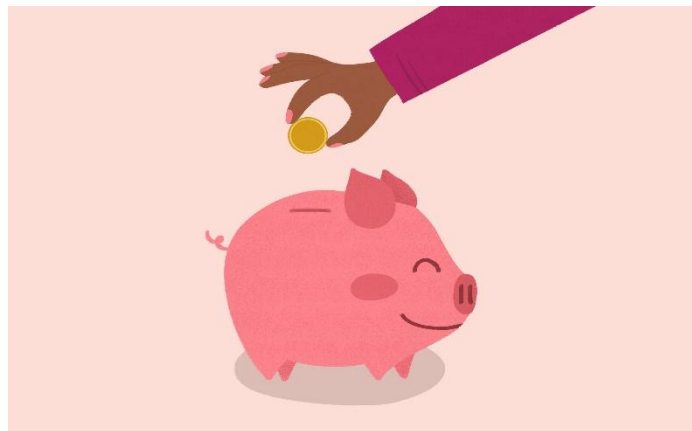
Training helps councils:

- Spend wisely
- Avoid unnecessary legal costs
- Prevent governance failures
- Reduce complaints and disputes
- Improve procurement decisions
- Deliver better services



Better training leads to better decisions — not guesswork.

This protects both councils and the communities they serve.



Why Action Is Needed Now

Local councils are facing:

- Increasing regulation
- Greater scrutiny
- More complex funding arrangements
- Higher public expectations
- Pressure on resources

At the same time, many new councillors and officers take up their roles with limited formal support.

This creates risk for councils and for the public.

A national framework for mandatory training would:

- Raise standards
- Improve consistency
- Strengthen resilience



- Support long-term sustainability

This is a crucial opportunity to influence national policy and secure proper recognition for our sector.

The Importance of Member Support

To achieve change, we need strong backing from our member councils.

When councils act together, we demonstrate that:

- This is a sector-wide priority
- Standards matter
- Professionalism matters
- Communities matter

By supporting this campaign, members help:

- Strengthen our collective voice
- Increase our influence with Government
- Secure long-term improvements
- Raise the reputation of the sector
- Build confidence in parish and town councils

Your support directly helps us make the case for reform and ensures that local councils are heard at national level.



Your Role as a Member of the Council

Every council has an important role to play.

By taking part in this campaign, your council will:

- Demonstrate leadership
- Champion good governance
- Protect public funds
- Strengthen local democracy
- Support sector-wide improvement
- Help shape national policy

A united approach gives our sector credibility and influence.

Recommended Actions for Councils

We encourage councils to:

1. **Add This Campaign to Your Agenda**
Discuss and formally agree on your position.
2. **Pass a Supporting Resolution**
Record your commitment to mandatory training.



3. **Write to Your MP**

Use the template in this pack.

4. **Inform Your County Association**

Let us know when you have written so we can demonstrate collective impact.

5. **Promote Best Practice**

Show your commitment to professionalism locally.

Key Campaign Messages

When engaging with MPs, councils may wish to emphasise that:

- Other tiers of government already have mandatory training
- Parish and town councils operate under unique rules
- Councillors manage public money
- Training improves value for money
- Prevention costs less than correction
- Informed decisions are better decisions
- Professional councils build public trust

This is about raising standards for the benefit of all communities.

This campaign is about **pride**, **professionalism**, and **progress**.

It sends a clear message:

Parish and town councils matter.

Our responsibilities are serious.

Our communities deserve excellence.

With strong member support, we can ensure our sector has a respected voice within Government, help secure meaningful reform, and raise standards for the future.

Every letter matters.

Every council counts.

Every voice strengthens our sector.



We look forward to hearing from you with any responses from MP's, it is really important that you keep your County Association updated.



Dear [MP's Name],

On behalf of [Name of Council], I am writing to urge you to support the introduction of mandatory training for parish and town councillors and staff.

At a meeting on [insert date], [Name of Council] formally resolved to support this initiative and to write to our Member of Parliament to advocate for change.

Parish and town councils are the first tier of local government. We manage public funds, employ staff, deliver services, and make decisions that directly affect our communities. Despite this responsibility, training remains voluntary and inconsistent, unlike in other tiers of government where mandatory training is well established.

Our sector operates under a unique set of rules, regulations, and legislative requirements that differ significantly from those of the principal authorities. Understanding these responsibilities is essential for good governance, legal compliance, and effective leadership. Without proper training, councillors and officers are often required to rely on guesswork rather than informed decision-making.

Mandatory training would strengthen governance, improve financial management, reduce risk, and help ensure that taxpayers' money is used responsibly and effectively. It would also support new councillors and staff, encourage diversity, and raise standards across the sector.

Our council is committed to professionalism and continuous improvement. We believe that a national framework for compulsory training would support parish and town councils in delivering high-quality services and would strengthen public confidence in local democracy.

We respectfully ask that you raise this issue with the relevant Minister and advocate for policy or legislative change to introduce mandatory training for parish and town councillors and staff.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and share our local experience. **Please add the councils own experiences as examples and personalise this letter to make it more meaningful. Invite to MP to come and see the council and attend a meeting.**

Thank you for your continued support for local government and our community.

Yours sincerely,

Name, position & Council