



STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

APPLICATION PACK – COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Job Title: Communications Officer
Grade: SCP 18 - 23 - £30,559 – £33,366)
Location: Town Council Offices / Hybrid working as required
Hours: 37 hours per week (full-time) with occasional requirements for meetings outside of these hours.
Responsible to: Stroud Town Council via Communications and Engagement Officer
Contract Type: Permanent

Purpose of job

The Town Council is looking for an enthusiastic and committed individual to join our office team. The role will work with the Communications and Engagement Officer to deliver communications for the Town Council.

Working for Stroud Town Council

The Communications Officer will lead on delivering the Council's Communications and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan. Working across all areas the post will support the council's strategic priorities. The role will report to the Communications and Engagement Officer, but will work across all teams to support the development of all council projects.

Applications should be returned as soon as possible – applications will be reviewed and assessed on receipt.

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Brief History of Stroud

The first parish of Stroud, a settlement based on the production of woollen cloth, was recognised in 1304. Currently, it has a population of around 13,500 and an electorate of just over 10,000. Stroud is seen as a very friendly, tolerant community, accepting a wide range of views. We have a history of non-conformism, dissent and direct action. The environment and sustainability are priorities for many residents.

The parish, approximately 2.5 miles long and 0.75 miles wide, includes the town centre trading and market area, established residential communities amongst the surrounding hills and valleys, and mostly new-build settlements along the canal, which is currently undergoing restoration. The parish's division into six wards reflects, to a reasonably accurate degree, these differing settings. There is a railway station with good connections to London, Swindon, Cheltenham and Gloucester and a reasonable range of bus services. A fine network of footpaths also permeates the parish, but density of motor traffic can hinder movement around town by vehicle and there are limited safe cycle routes.

There is a strong creative element in the town and surrounding area, which provides a base for several arts festivals, some of which have achieved national acclaim. The town centre supports a long established twice-weekly market in the medieval Shambles and an award-winning weekly Farmers' Market, which draw in visitors from some distance.

In 2018 Stroud Town Council was one of the first local councils in the UK to declare a climate emergency and set a target of being carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council

The council was formed in 1990. We have 18 councillors representing 6 wards. There are elections every four years, the most recent elections were in May 2024.

We have offices close to the town centre with a double fronted window used for displays and notices. The main committees are Consultations and Highways (planning), Finance and Policy, Community, Environment and Regeneration.

The Council staff work in two teams headed by the CEO (Town Clerk). The office team comprises a Deputy CEO (Deputy Clerk), Assistant Clerk, Administration Officer and Finance Assistant, Senior Finance Administrator, Community Development Officer, Community Development Support Officer, Business Administration Apprentice, Programme Manager, Communications and Engagement Officer and a cleaner. The Green Spaces team comprises three full-time Rangers and a part-time Assistant led by the Green Spaces Manager.

The Green Spaces team are responsible for the day-to-day management of the green and open spaces around the town. These include two town centre gardens, two cemeteries (one active and one closed), five play areas, two closed churchyards and a number of amenity spaces. Some activities are currently contracted out, for example large areas of grass cutting and grave digging.

The Council owns five allotment sites providing just under 200 plots. Each site is managed on our behalf by a plot-holder association.

Amongst the Council's ongoing projects are revamping a significant Victorian building for community use and developing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the town. We have recently agreed to transfer ownership of a range of assets from Stroud District Council, including in 2019 the Stroud Subscription Rooms.

Stroud Town Council is a larger town council that is committed to improving the quality of life of all members of its community. The council provides core support to a range of partner organisations involved in regeneration and meeting key social needs of its residents, as well as supporting arts development in the town.

We have shown long-term commitment to improving the environment, for example, by taking on the management of parks and green spaces in the town, increasing the number of open spaces with public access and improving the quality of children's play areas. We have an established reputation for taking a leading role in community development. We sustain four community grants programmes and a number of service level agreements with voluntary and community sector organisations.

We are a Quality council and have adopted the General Power of Competence. We have an annual expenditure budget of about £1m of which the precept makes up around 94%. The balance largely comes from grants, cemetery income and rent.

Application Process

The completed application form together with a covering letter must be sent to the Town Council by email to: clerk@stroudtown.gov.uk

You must include in your application information which:

- Sets out how you meet the person specification
- Gives clear examples of your previous achievements which link directly to the areas of responsibility in this post
- Demonstrates the qualities you would bring to the role of Communications Officer.

A CV is **not** required and any submitted will be disregarded.

Your application should be returned by email as soon as possible.

Canvassing of any Member or Officer involved in the selection process will disqualify you from being appointed.

If you would like further information before submitting your application please contact the Deputy CEO (Deputy Town Clerk), Kate Montgomery, on 01453 762817 or kate.montgomery@stroudtown.gov.uk for an informal discussion.

Selection Process

31st Jan – Closing date for applications

3rd Feb – Shortlisting

10th Feb – Interviews

Early April – start date (depending on notice period required)

Candidates who are to be invited to an interview will be notified by telephone or email as soon as possible. Those who have not been shortlisted will be contacted by email shortly after this. Due to the volume of applications received it will not be possible to offer feedback on applications.

The appointment will be made by the Appointment Panel, which will consist of CEO (Town Clerk) or Deputy CEO (Deputy Clerk), the Communications and Engagement Officer and at least one member of the Personnel Committee.

1. Interview

Shortlisted candidates will be required to attend an interview at a time to be allocated individually. As part of the interview candidates will be asked to give a short presentation on a relevant topic. Candidates should allow up to one and a half hours for the interview.

2. References

Formal references will be taken up following an offer of employment. Any offer of employment will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references.

3. Expenses

Travelling expenses (mainland UK only) will be paid on the basis of standard class rail travel to Stroud or car mileage at the standard mileage rate currently in force. Only claims in excess of 25 miles in total will be paid.

Any shortlisted candidate who withdraws without good reason will not be reimbursed expenses other than at the discretion of the Council.

4. Candidates with a disability

Any candidate with a disability should please contact the Assistant Clerk, Sheral Gardner, on 01453 762817 or sheral.gardner@stroudtown.gov.uk in confidence so that reasonable adjustments can be made to the recruitment process.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Purpose

To support the delivery of the Town Council's communications strategy, ensuring the effective and consistent dissemination of information to residents, partners, and stakeholders. The role focuses on operational activities, including the creation, coordination, and monitoring of content across various communication platforms, supporting public engagement and promoting the Council's activities and services.

Key Responsibilities

1. Content Creation and Management:

- Develop and produce engaging and accessible content for a range of platforms, including social media, the council's website, newsletters, press releases, and print media.
- Write and edit clear, concise, and accurate communications that reflect the Town Council's priorities, tone, and values.
- Monitor and update website content to ensure information is current and relevant.

2. Social Media and Digital Communications:

- Manage the Council's social media accounts, ensuring regular, professional, and engaging content.
- Develop and implement campaigns to promote Council initiatives, events, and services.
- Monitor digital engagement, respond to enquiries, and provide reports on performance using analytics tools.

3. Media Relations:

- Write press releases and develop relationships with local and regional media outlets.
- Act as the initial point of contact for media enquiries, ensuring timely and accurate responses.
- Monitor press coverage and report to senior officers as appropriate.

4. Community Engagement and Development:

- Support the planning and delivery of public consultations, surveys, and engagement activities.
- Promote Council events and activities to ensure maximum participation and awareness.
- Assist with the production and distribution of newsletters, leaflets, and other promotional materials.
- Support community groups with promotional materials and training as required.

5. Operational Support:

- Assist in maintaining and improving internal communication processes, ensuring consistency of messages.
- Support the delivery of the Council's corporate branding and visual identity across all communications.
- Assist with the organisation of Council events, including promoting and coordinating attendance where necessary.
- Support for multiple teams across Council as required.

6. Monitoring and Reporting:

- Monitor engagement levels, prepare performance reports, and make recommendations to improve communication outcomes.
- Stay up to date with best practice in local government communications, adapting strategies where needed.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential Criteria

1. Qualifications and Experience:

- Educated to A-Level standard or equivalent.
- Relevant experience in a communications, marketing, or public relations role.
- Proven experience of creating and managing content for digital platforms (e.g., websites, social media).

2. Knowledge and Skills:

- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to produce high-quality, accurate content tailored to different audiences.
- Proficiency in managing social media platforms and using analytics tools to monitor engagement.
- Knowledge of website content management systems (CMS) and basic graphic design skills.
- Understanding of data protection laws and processes.
- Strong organisational and time management skills, with the ability to work independently and prioritise workload.
- Proficient in Microsoft Office applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook).

3. Personal Attributes:

- A positive and proactive attitude with a commitment to delivering excellent public service.
- Creative thinker with a keen eye for detail.
- Ability to build effective working relationships with colleagues, partners, and the community.
- A flexible approach to working hours, including occasional evenings or weekends to support Council events.

Desirable Criteria

- A relevant qualification in communications, marketing, public relations, or a related field.
- Experience of local government
- Demonstrable understanding of all aspects of GDPR, accessibility requirements, and equality considerations in communications.
- Experience of working in local government or the public sector.
- Experience with design software (e.g., Canva, Adobe Creative Suite) and email marketing tools.

Additional Information

- The post holder will be required to comply with the Council's policies and procedures, including health and safety and equality and diversity policies.
- A commitment to professional development and staying up to date with trends and innovations in communications will be expected.
- The role may require occasional travel within the local area.

Terms and Conditions

Pay

The salary range is within LC2, spinal column points 18 to 23, depending on qualifications and experience. Salary rates increase in line with the annual increase negotiated annually by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

Contract

The appointment is permanent and full time and is subject to the National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service of Local Council Clerks in England and Wales 2004. There will be a six-month probationary period with three-monthly reviews.

Hours

Whilst the basic working week is 37 hours per week, the postholder may be required to work reasonable additional or irregular hours as necessary to ensure the proper performance of the work of the post without additional payments being made, but time off in lieu is permitted.

Annual Leave

Holiday Entitlement	Days
Annual leave on commencement of employment (22 days + 4 statutory / local extra + 8 Bank Holidays)	34
Additional after 5 years service (4 days)	4

Casual Car User Allowance

If the postholder travels by means of their own car on official duties, the NJC for LGS Casual Users Car Allowance rate will be paid.

Pension

The postholder will be automatically enrolled in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Political Restrictions

The postholder will be expected to maintain political neutrality in relation to the work of the Council.

Code of Conduct

The postholder will be required to observe the requirements of the Council's Code of Conduct for employees and any national provisions in this respect. Any potential conflict of interest which arises during the course of employment should be brought to the attention of the Town Council and entered in the Register of Officers' Interests.

Criminal Convictions

Failure to declare an unspent criminal conviction may lead to an appointment being terminated. The successful candidate must also disclose any subsequent conviction to the Chair of the Council.

Pre – Employment Checks

Any offer of employment will be subject to two satisfactory references being received (one from the present or previous employer) and a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.