



LCC REPORT FOR
BRANCASTER PARISH COUNCIL
GRADING EVALUATION FOR PARISH CLERK VACANCY
APRIL 2026

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LCC Associate: Stephen Butt

Local Council Consultancy (LCC)
Collar Factory, Suite 2.03
112 St. Augustine Street
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 1QN

Email: consultancy@localcouncilconsultancy.co.uk

Website: www.localcouncilconsultancy.co.uk

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PART 1 – INTRODUCTORY NOTES

1. BRIEF

This report was commissioned by Brancaster Parish Council in April 2026 and undertaken by Stephen Butt, an independent associate of Local Council Consultancy.

The purpose of the commission was to provide a formal job evaluation of the vacant post of Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer in accordance with the NJC job evaluation framework endorsed by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

2. LEGAL & DATA MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Any personal data processed during the research stages of this review has been securely stored and will be deleted upon completion of the project.

The email address stephen.butt@localcouncilconsultancy.co.uk, a domain managed by the Society of Local Council Clerks, has been used for all communications relating to this project.

No personal telephone numbers have been recorded. Telephone numbers or email addresses used are either publicly available on the Council's website or have been provided by the individual(s) concerned.

The associate, Stephen Butt, is an independent freelance consultant acting impartially and is not employed by any local council or by any commercial or business organisation providing services to local government.

3. THE NJC ASSESSMENT MODEL

Local Council Consultancy uses the assessment model created by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC). This was published in 2005 as the National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service for Local Council Clerks in England and Wales. Structured partly on existing Local Government Green Book principles, its purpose is to provide a framework for setting parish and town clerk salaries. It also provides a foundation for encouraging professionalism and career development within the sector.

A fundamental consideration when reviewing local council grading structures is that every council operates differently with its own services and staffing needs. Job roles, even those that appear similar in title or responsibility, cannot be directly compared between councils. Each parish has distinct priorities and service requirements that determine the number of staff and the specific roles needed to deliver services effectively and meet local objectives.

Although no single framework can offer a comprehensive set of relevant benchmarks for such a diverse sector, many councils have adopted the NJC Agreement. It is generally regarded as the best available framework for building a grading structure, setting pay scales, and providing a basis for fair and objective assessments.

The NJC process has two stages:

- A council profile to determine the operational size of the Council in terms of the scale and type of activities, amenities, and services.
- Identifying the skills and responsibilities required to manage the Council's operations, maintain strong governance, and fulfil the council's aims and commitments.

Assessment criteria

Six basic criteria are used by the NJC model to determine the operational size of the Council (from 'small parish' to 'large town') in terms of the scale of activities, amenities, and services:

Criteria	LC1 Small Parish	LC2 Medium Parish	LC3 Large Parish/Small Town	LC4 Large Town
Salary range	SCP 6-17	SCP 18-32	SCP 33-45	SCP 46-62
Meetings annually	1-6	6-12	12	12+
Committees	0	Few	1-4	5+
Staff	0	Few	1-20	20+
Devolved functions	None	Few	Some	Many
Statutory functions	None	Several	Most	Most
Budget & precept	<25K	25K-250K	250K-750K	750K+

To refine the profile, this report has considered, where relevant, the following additional information which may influence grading:

- The Council's property portfolio, assets, and number and scale of amenities.
- Community events managed by the Council.
- Major projects planned and in progress.
- Working parties, trusts, advisory and liaison groups attended by councillors or staff.
- The population of the parish (recent census figures).

Each of the four salary bands (LC1-LC4) is divided into three groups (Below Substantive, Substantive, and Above Substantive) which are further divided into SCP (Spinal Column Points) ranges:

Scale	SCP Range		
	Below substantive	Substantive	Above substantive
LC1	6	7-12	13-17
LC2	18-23	24-28	29-32
LC3	33-36	37-41	42-45
LC4	46-49	50-54	55-62

To set the Clerk's role within the appropriate pay scale group, the following areas of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities necessary to fulfil the requirements of the Council's administration, governance and service delivery are assessed:

- Knowledge relevant to the post.
- Mental (thinking) skills.
- Interpersonal and communication skills.
- Initiative and independence.
- Responsibility for people (including other staff, councillors and members of the public).
- Responsibility for employee supervision and direction.
- Responsibility for financial resources.
- Responsibility for physical resources.

Unique Parish Characteristics

A comprehensive council profile should also take account of factors not captured within the stages outlined above. While these elements may be less easily measured, they can have a significant influence on a council's decision-making, priorities and staffing arrangements.

Such factors may include major forthcoming projects, growth arising from devolution, or issues specific to the parish. They could encompass responsibilities for flood defences, the presence of major industries, a strong night-time economy, or the management of heritage and tourism assets.

Relevant qualifications

These may include the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) or equivalent sector-related awards, as well as appropriate qualifications in accountancy and law. Higher-level academic qualifications, such as degrees in Community Governance or related subjects, may also be beneficial.

PART 2 - ASSESSMENT

Council Profile against NJC Criteria

Based on the core indicators of the NJC assessment framework, Brancaster Parish Council most closely aligns with the category of a small parish council. In particular, the Council employs a single member of staff (the Parish Clerk/RFO), does not operate any formal committees with delegated authority, and has responsibility for a limited range of physical assets and services with most amenities managed by external organisations.

The principal evidence supporting this classification is as follows:

- The Clerk is the sole employee of the Council.
- The Council does not operate any formal committees.
- With the exception of street furniture, including some litter and dog waste bins and over fifty streetlamps, the majority of amenities and services are managed by external bodies.
- The Council has not adopted responsibility for any devolved functions.
- The Council does not own or manage buildings such as community halls or public conveniences.

Measured solely against these structural and organisational indicators, the Council aligns most closely with the LC1 classification of the NJC framework.

Contextual Factors Influencing the Assessment

The NJC framework recognises that parish councils do not always sit wholly within a single category. In the case of Brancaster Parish Council, a number of additional factors introduce characteristics more

typically associated with a medium-size parish council, and therefore warrant consideration when evaluating the demands of the Clerk's role.

- Although the Council does not operate formal committees, it is supported by twelve working parties which meet on an *ad hoc* basis to investigate issues and provide advice to the Council. These working parties do not have delegated decision-making powers and do not require the Clerk to prepare formal agendas, minutes, or reports. Consequently, they are not treated as committees for NJC classification purposes. However, the existence of multiple working parties does place additional advisory, liaison, and coordination demands on the Clerk, who is required, when appropriate and timely, to engage with these groups and relay their findings to the Council.
- From a financial perspective, the precept for 2026/27 is £30,000, which falls within the indicative LC2 ('medium parish') band of the NJC framework. In addition, the Council's overall annual turnover exceeds the level suggested by the precept alone, reflecting the management of other income streams and project-related funds. This increases the level of responsibility placed on the Clerk/RFO in relation to financial administration, internal control, reporting, and compliance with proper practices.
- The Council has an adopted Neighbourhood Plan, formally made on 30 November 2015. The Clerk is responsible for monitoring planning applications within the parish to ensure consistency with the policies contained within the Plan. As the Council receives 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, it must determine how this income is allocated and oversee the delivery of any resulting projects. In addition, the Neighbourhood Plan may require review or amendment following the establishment of a new unitary authority and the adoption of a new or revised Local Plan, further adding to the planning-related responsibilities of the role.
- The Council maintains strong and active links with the local community, reflected in the number of working groups and in its mission statement to "protect, enhance and promote the environment of the area of the Parish Council, and to promote the collective interests and well-being of all residents, organisations and businesses of the Parish of Brancaster". The Clerk is therefore required to engage effectively with a wide range of stakeholders, providing procedural advice and support while also ensuring that the Council's policies, priorities, and statutory responsibilities are appropriately upheld.
- The parish has also experienced longstanding disputes relating to common rights. Although many aspects of these matters have now been resolved, their historic and legal complexity means that further Council involvement may be required in the future. While professional legal advice would be sought where necessary, the role would benefit from a Clerk with a basic understanding of these issues in order to manage correspondence, instructions, and governance processes effectively.

Population Context

Census data over the past three enumeration periods shows a steady decline in the resident population of the civil parish, from 897 in 2001 to 697 in 2021. More recent local indicators suggest that this decline may have stabilised, with some evidence of a modest increase in population since 2021. However, as this has not yet been confirmed through official census data, it is treated as contextual background rather than a determinative factor within this assessment.

Overall Assessment

In summary, while Brancaster Parish Council aligns most closely with the ‘small parish’ classification when assessed against core NJC structural indicators, the scale of financial responsibility, planning-related duties, community engagement, and advisory complexity introduce characteristics more commonly associated with a ‘medium parish council’.

These contextual factors do not displace the Council’s underlying LC1 profile, but they materially influence the assessed demands of the Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer role and are therefore considered in determining an appropriate and proportionate grading recommendation.

PART 3 - RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended NJC Classification and Pay Range

Having regard to the assessment set out above, Brancaster Parish Council is best described as sitting between the indicative NJC classifications of a *small parish council (LC1)* and a *medium parish council (LC2)*.

While the Council aligns most closely with the LC1 category when assessed against core indicators, particularly staffing levels, committee structures, and asset ownership, it also displays a number of characteristics more typically associated with LC2 councils. These include the scale of overall financial responsibility, planning-related duties, the management of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, and a significant degree of community engagement and advisory complexity.

The national NJC benchmarking ranges for the post of Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer across these categories extend from SCP 6 to SCP 32. However, these headline ranges encompass councils with very different levels of organisational and operational complexity, including those managing staffing structures, significantly large asset portfolios, and high levels of service delivery. Such characteristics are not present at Brancaster Parish Council’s current scale of operations.

Determination of an appropriate SCP Range

It is recommended that the post of Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer be graded within a more focused spinal column point range of **SCP 11–20**. This range reflects the assessed weighting of the role, recognising:

- Responsibility for financial administration and governance extending beyond the basic precept.
- The requirement to apply technical knowledge in areas such as planning, compliance, and project oversight.
- The need for independent judgement, initiative, and professional accountability.
- Ongoing advisory and liaison responsibilities arising from active community engagement and working groups.

At the same time, the recommended range avoids the higher spinal column points associated with roles that include the management of multiple staff, extensive delegated service delivery, or substantial property portfolios, none of which currently apply to this Council.

SCP 20 should be regarded as the upper limit of the grade at the Council’s present scale of activity. Progression beyond this point would normally be expected only where there is demonstrable and

sustained growth in the scope, complexity, or responsibilities of the role, supported by a formal review and re-evaluation.

Criteria	LC1 Small Parish	LC2 Medium Parish	LC3 Large Parish/Small Town	LC4 Large Town
Salary range	SCP 6-17	SCP 18-32	SCP 33-45	SCP 46-62
Brancaster PC		SCP 11-20		

Appointment and Progression

In order to attract candidates who meet the competency and responsibility requirements of the role, it is recommended that the position be advertised with a starting salary at SCP 11, with discretion for the Council to appoint at a higher spinal column point within the approved range where a successful candidate can demonstrate relevant qualifications, experience, and competencies.

In line with NJC and Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) good practice, progression within the grade should be subject to a satisfactory annual performance appraisal, and the continued demonstration of the competencies, responsibilities, and professional standards associated with the post.

PART 4 – REFERENCES

National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service for Local Council Clerks in England and Wales, National Joint Council for Government Services (NJC), 2005.

Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration (14th edition), Roger Taylor (Ed), LexisNexis, 2025.

The Practitioners Guide, 2026/2027, (Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England) The Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP), March 2026.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Ministry of Housing and Planning, December 2025 (Draft revision).

Transparency Code for Local Authorities, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, December 2014.

The Clerks' Manual, Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), 2023.

Documents and information provided by Brancaster Parish Council and/or downloaded from the Council's website.

Vacancies listed on the Norfolk Association of Local Councils website - [Vacancies | Norfolk ALC](#)

STEPHEN BUTT
21 APRIL 2026