

## **Saltford Parish Council – Overview**

Saltford Parish Council (SPC) serves the interests of the community and, as a statutory public body, is the only organisation in Saltford that must be consulted by law and have its views considered. Our governance procedures are enshrined by law.

Saltford Parish Council serves and represent the interests of the whole community. It is the first tier of local government and meets monthly (bar August) to address its responsibilities and to respond to statutory consultations.

Saltford Parish Council is a corporate body, and a legal entity, separate from that of its elected members.

### **Parish Council**

SPC is the part of local government closest to the residents of Saltford. SPC is made up of 11 Councillors who are best placed to engage with residents and find out what the real local issues are and how to overcome them.

Following recent resignations, there are currently two vacancies on the Parish Council. These vacancies will be filled by co-option at the March 2021 full council meeting (rather than via public election).

Saltford Parish Council's Councillors are supported by the Parish Clerk, a part-time paid member of staff. Council responsibilities are carried out by the Councillors and staff individually and collectively. All Councillors are available to listen to resident concerns. Residents can contact Councillors and the Clerk using information on the Saltford Parish Council website.

Councillors do not receive a salary or allowances. The Council Chair receives a small honorarium in place of expenses (£300 p.a. budgeted for 2021/22). Councillors can claim appropriate expenses i.e. for travel to external meetings or printing documents.

The Parish Council operates within its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, as well as other adopted policies and agreed procedures.

Saltford Parish Council falls within the unitary authority of Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES). Saltford has two elected B&NES Ward Councillors (details on the B&NES Council website).

### **The Parish Clerk and SPC Office**

The Parish Clerk supports the Councillors to carry out their responsibilities. The Parish Clerk is also the council's Responsible Financial Officer or 'Proper Officer'.

The Clerk works part-time and working hours and location vary. Restrictions pending, if you would like to meet the Parish Clerk at the SPC office (located at the back of Saltford Library and Post Office) please arrange in advance.

You can contact the Clerk at [clerk@saltfordparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@saltfordparishcouncil.gov.uk) or on 01225 873300

### **Saltford Parish Council Meetings**

- All SPC Councillors are summoned to a monthly public meeting, which usually takes place the first Tuesday of each month, starting at 7:15pm either via Zoom or at Saltford Hall once restrictions allow (excluding August).

- SPC meetings are open to the public. The public are welcome to attend and speak at meetings on any item on the agenda during 'Public time'. See [here](#) for more information.

- Meeting dates are advertised widely and with good notice.
- The agenda for the meeting generally is displayed on the SPC website the Thursday before the meeting takes place. Draft minutes are available on the website c. 1 week after the meeting.
- SPC also holds public Planning Committee, Staffing Committee meetings and Extraordinary meetings when required. SPC usually has a Planning Committee meeting on the first Tuesday of August (as full council does not meet in August).
- The Annual Parish Meeting takes place in April or May.

Each year in May, the Chair and Vice-Chair are elected by other SPC Councillors at the Annual Parish Council meeting.

Councillors sit on various SPC committees, including:

- Planning Committee
- Staffing Committee
- Churchyard Safety and Management
- Transport Working party

### **External meetings attended by SPC Cllrs and the Clerk**

Councillors and the Clerk also attend meetings held by external organisations as 'link members'. Information from these meetings are passed back to all Councillors at the monthly meeting.

Currently, Councillors and the Clerk attend meetings held by the following groups and organisations:

- Parish Liaison meetings

Keynsham Area Forum

- ALCA (Avon Local Councils Association) B&NES Area Group
- Saltford Community Association
- Saltford Sports Club
- River Avon Users Consultative Committee (RAUCC)
- Saltford Environment Group, Saltford Business Network
- Saltford Fair Trade Group.

Councillors also attend one-off meetings, events and relevant training sessions.

### **Budget and Precept**

Parish councils raise money from people in the parish by levying a parish precept which is collected as part of your property rates (B&NES council tax). Please see the SPC website under 'precept' for rates for the current year.

Saltford Parish Councillors spend the precept to provide services which they judge to be of importance to the parish community. SPC is transparent with all its spend, and follows its 'Financial Regulations' to ensure that it is managing its income and spend according to set procedures at all times. Saltford Parish Council continues to strive for the best value for money for all of the Saltford community.

Councillors approve spend at the monthly meetings. The Schedule of Expenditure is approved at meetings, this lists regular monthly payments i.e. phonenumber, Clerk's salary etc. Additional (often 'one off') spend i.e. grants, annual insurance and subscriptions, contracts etc are agreed at meetings. An overview of the current income and spend is shown on the Monthly Financial Report.

As a Parish Council our accounts must be published, audited and open to public inspection. In May 2020 Auditing Solutions carried out the internal audit and signed off the Internal Audit Certificate for the year's AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return). The internal auditors assigned positive assurances in all areas, with no issues arising warranting formal comment or recommendation.

The 'Annual Returns' page of the SPC website shows SPC's Annual Accounting Statements as well as other financial information. Minutes from full SPC meetings record the monthly financial report and schedule of expenditure approved by Councillors, this information can be found on the SPC website.

### **Financial Assistance Grants**

The Parish Council sets aside a small amount of money each year for financial assistance grants that local groups can apply for to support an initiative or development that would benefit the residents of Salford. Please read our Grant Application Guide and Grant Application Policy to find out more about criteria, conditions and the application process.

### **Planning**

B&NES Council is the planning authority. Salford Parish Council is invited by B&NES to submit a consultation response to any planning application made in the parish. SPC's response is taken into consideration when B&NES makes a decision to permit or refuse planning permission.

'Planning Matters' is an item on every SPC meeting agenda. This agenda item not only includes Planning Applications but also Decisions and Appeals, Planning Contraventions, and Planning Items of Urgent Information.

### **Communications**

SPC communicates to residents via:

- The Salford Parish Council website: This includes agendas, minutes, financial information.
- Social media: This feeds into our website, SPC is on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Bi-monthly page in S.C.A.N magazine (delivered to every house in Salford)
- E-newsletter to its subscribers every two months, click [here](#) to join the mailing list
- Information is also displayed on the SPC noticeboard by the parade of shops.
- Press releases.

To stay up-to-date on Salford Parish Council matters, please follow our social media accounts, visit the 'News' page of our website, check out our news in copies of S.C.A.N and come along to SPC public meetings.

**January 2021**