



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 uncontested elections there is currently a vacancy on the Parish Council. This vacancy will be filled by co-option at the May 2023 full council meeting (also known as the Annual Parish Council Meeting). Co-option will take place according to [SPC's Casual Vacancy Policy](#).

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 2023/24). 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 – and is independent of - 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), who will be elected on 4 May 2023.

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. 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 or on 01225 873300. If not at their desk they will get back to you as soon as possible. Please be aware there may be a delay if the Clerk is on annual leave.

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 in the Avon Room at Saltford Hall (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'. Please see the [Meetings – Agendas and Minutes](#) page of SPC's website, which [includes Public Engagement Guidelines](#).
- Meeting dates are advertised widely and with good notice on the [website](#) and noticeboard. Meeting dates are agreed annually at the May meeting.
- 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 (in recent years this has been part of a jointly hosted 'Big Thank You' event with the SCA).

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

SPC Committees and working groups

Councillors sit on various SPC committees, including:

- Planning Committee
- Staffing Committee
- Churchyard and allotments (Safety and Management) working group
- Transport Working party
- Local River side working group

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)

- Salford Environment Group, Salford Business Network
- Salford Fair Trade Group.

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

Events

Councillors are invited to attend events throughout the year. Attendance is not obligatory, though is welcomed. Events might include:

- Annual Parish Walk (this year it is on the evening of Weds 14 June, to Kelston Roundhill)
- 'Meet Your Community Police Officers' (usually in the autumn at Salford Hall)
- Remembrance Sunday (Chair attends the service, other Cllrs present at the War Memorial)
- 'Big Thank You' and 'Annual Parish Meeting' (as above, planned for 1 March 2024 at Salford Hall)
- B&NES Council at times holds events that a member of the Parish Council is invited to attend as a representative of SPC.

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.

Salford 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. Salford Parish Council continues to strive for the best value for money for all of the Salford community.

Councillors approve spend at the monthly meetings. The Schedule of Expenditure is approved at meetings, this lists regular monthly payments i.e. phonerline, 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 2022 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. SPC's external audit report received in September 2022 similarly confirmed that everything was in accordance with proper practices and no matters had come to their attention to give concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The ['Audits'](#) section of the finance page on SPC's 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 Saltford. Please read our [Grants](#) webpage which includes copies of SPC's 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. Saltford 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.

There is a comprehensive section about [Planning](#) on SPC's webpage, including an explanation of the role that Parish Councils have in the planning process.

Communications

SPC communicates to residents via:

- The Saltford Parish Council website: This includes agendas, minutes, financial information.
- Social media: Used as an 'electronic noticeboard' (not a discussion forum), 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 Saltford)
- 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 and a free quarterly page in 'The Week In'

To stay up-to-date on Saltford 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.

SPC regularly reviews its [Social Media and Communications Policy](#).

April 2023