

BROCKENHURST PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council Office
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General information on Brockenhurst Parish Council

Parish Council meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month, except August and December, and the Annual Parish Meeting is on the fourth Tuesday in April. Meetings are at 7.00 pm in the Craft Room at the Village Hall and the Annual Parish Meeting is at 7.30 in the Forest Hall. Brockenhurst is a warded parish with ten councillors in the Brockenhurst ward and one representing Wootton ward. Having stood for election (whether an election actually takes place or not) you become a councillor four days after the election

Councillors must complete a Register of Members' Interests, which makes publicly available information such as land holdings and interests within the parish, details of employment, membership of organisations, share holdings etc. As part of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office which is completed at the beginning of the Annual Meeting (the first meeting after the election, in May, 14th in 2019 due to the date of the election) a councillor agrees to accept the Parish Council Code of Conduct which governs their actions as a councillor. In the case of a co-opted councillor this declaration is made at their first Council meeting. Full details of the Code of Conduct, and the forms to be completed, are available in the Parish Council office. **If you do not accept the Code of Conduct you are not eligible to stand as a councillor, so please ensure you are familiar with its requirements before you put in your nomination.** Some of the other reasons for ineligibility for being a member of the council are bankruptcy or compounding with creditors, criminal conviction resulting in a prison sentence of more than three months or corrupt or illegal practice.

The Annual Parish Meeting is not a Parish Council meeting as such, it is a meeting of the Electorate. No decisions are taken at that meeting although opinion can be canvassed on forthcoming projects or situations. These opinions are not binding upon the Parish Council.

All Parish Council meetings and Committee meetings are open to members of the Public and to the Press. A period is set aside at the beginning of each main meeting for members of the public to address the councillors with matters of concern to them. Members of the public can also address the councillors at any committee meeting as well.

The Parish Council operates a committee system, the three main ones being Amenities and Infrastructure, Personnel and Resources, and Planning. A & I and P & R Committees meet three times a year, Planning meets once a month, all usually in the evenings. Other committees are formed as and when they are needed. Committee meetings are held in the meeting room at our offices usually on Tuesday evenings. Planning meetings are generally on the fourth Tuesday of each month although the date is subject to change due to circumstances.

Amenities provided by the Parish Council are the allotments, the cemetery, the War Memorial garden and the children's playground, along with the many and various seats and benches around the village. The Committee meetings are in early February, June and October.

The Personnel and Resources Committee is responsible for financial control and oversight, with independent Internal Audit being undertaken each year, and for all employment and expenditure matters. The full council is required to sign off the Annual Return each year, prior to its examination by the External Auditor. P & R meetings are held in early March, July and November. The November meeting sets the budget and precept requirement for the forthcoming financial year, which runs from April to March.

The Planning Committee meets monthly to give an opinion on planning applications within the Parish.

The Events Committee is run in collaboration with the Business Association and its major task is to organise the Christmas Fun Evening and the Pancake Races each year.

A week prior to each main council meeting or committee meeting you will receive, usually by email, agenda papers which include the summons to attend. Please let the Clerk know if you do not receive them.

The Parish Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Council and therefore its legal representative. In many councils, including Brockenhurst, the role of Responsible Finance Officer is also held by the Clerk. The position entails legal and financial aspects, as well as the administrative work of the Parish Council. We maintain close links with the District Council, Hampshire County Council, particularly in their capacity as the Highway Authority, and with New Forest National Park, particularly as the Planning Authority.

We publish a Directory of the village annually and a newsletter delivered electronically or physically to every household approx. three times each year.

It is recommended that Councillors take advantage of the many training sessions which are available to them through the Hampshire Association of Local Councils.

The Parish Council is also the owner of four flats at Homeforde House which arise from a bequest in 1993 from Miss Nalder to provide housing for needy residents who would otherwise have to move away. Three flats were purchased with the initial bequest and a fourth one in January 2014. In June 2017 the Nalder Bequest Fund was registered as a Charity. Administration is carried out by the New Forest Villages Housing Association. We have a Nalder Committee which makes the policy recommendations regarding the flats and which normally meets once or twice a year. These recommendations are then considered for adoption by the Parish Council acting in its capacity as Sole Trustee of the Charity.

Please contact the Parish Clerk, Mary Pattison, on 622829 for any further information on the work of the Parish Council.

February 2019