



The Basics

Balcombe Parish Council:

- is made up of a maximum of **11 Councillors** who normally serve for a **4 year period**
- elects a **Chairman** and a **Vice-chairman**, and appoints a **Responsible Financial Officer**
- employs a **Parish Clerk**, a **Parish Ranger** & **2 Youth Workers**
- is the **lowest & most local tier of government**
- is **limited in its responsibilities & duties**
- sets its own **precept**, currently not capped, which is collected through the **Council Tax**
- can take out **loans & apply for grants**



What does the Parish Council **have** to do?

- hold an annual meeting
- hold at least 3 other meetings each year
- appoint such officers as it believes necessary for the proper discharge of its functions including a responsible financial officer
- make standing orders for the supply of goods & services to the Council



What does the Parish Council **currently** do?

- Holds a monthly meeting (except August)
- Holds an Annual General Meeting and an Annual Parish Meeting
- Has the following working groups:
 - *Youth* • *Facilities & Amenities* • *Oil*
• *Safety & Security* • *Traffic*
- *Neighbourhood Planning* • *Bramble Hall*
• *Rail* • *Planning & Environment*
- Has representatives on the Victory Hall Management Committee & Fete Committee
- Delivers a welcome packs to each new resident
- Supports local organisations where it can
- Maintains and pays for street lighting within the village



What does the Parish Council **currently** do?

- comments on local planning applications to the District & County Councils
- lobbies the District & County Councils concerning infrastructure projects & funding
- operates the snow clearance and gritting plan within the village
- owns & maintains the village green & the sports pavilion on the recreation ground
- leases, maintains & lets out Bramble Hall



What would I have to do?

- you would have to attend meetings. Failure to do so can only be excused if apologies are sent in advance. Failure to do so can result in expulsion.
- you would have to abide by the standards & conduct required by the Code of Conduct & national rules. These can be onerous & failure to act appropriately can lead to a disciplinary hearing & action by the District Council.
- further information is available from the National Association of Local Council's website. The Governance Toolkit is a good place to start & the Clerk will be happy to email you a copy. Or ask a Councillor today!
- you would be expected to join one or more of the Working Groups & to add value to the activities of the Parish Council. Allocation of tasks is usually by choice!



Who does what?

County Councils

responsible for services across the county

- *education • transport • planning • fire & public safety • social care • libraries • waste management • trading standards*

District, Borough & City Councils

cover a smaller areas

- *rubbish collection • recycling • collection of council tax • housing • planning applications*

Parish, Community & Town Councils

operate at the lowest tier of local government

- *allotments • public clocks • bus shelters*
- *community centres • play areas & play equipment • grants to help local organisations*
- *neighbourhood planning • can issue fixed penalty notices for things such as litter, graffiti, fly posting, dog offences*



Working Group

SAFETY & SECURITY

- **liaise with the Police Community Support Officer (Jayne Milne)**
- **attend meetings 3 times a year at Haywards Heath police station, chaired by Jayne Milne**
- **liaise with Carolyn Robertson, Team Leader of Balcombe Neighbourhood Watch**
- **physically check roads in the village for dangerous potholes & report them to West Sussex County Council**
- **deliver “Welcome Packs” to newly arrived residents of Balcombe**
- **sit on the Management Committee of Bramble Hall**



Working Group FACILITIES

- **maintain parish buildings & facilities**
- **make & implement plans for snow & ice**
- **ensure street lighting is maintained**
- **keep finger-posts in good order**
- **maintain footpaths**

When facilities fall outside Balcombe Parish Council control we work closely with other organisations, eg, maintenance of the Recreation Ground by Mid Sussex District Council



Working Group YOUTH

- youth club - ensuring a youth club committee is formed & running; youth workers are employed & have the necessary checks in place; a suitable venue is provided
- playground - liaising with MSDC to ensure that the playground has viable & engaging equipment. This has included the installation of the tarmac markings, new benches & tables for picnicking & the planting of trees
- any other related matters such as securing a suitable location for a skatepark, liaising on grants, surveying young people for needs & liaising with other related organisations such as Sussex Clubs for Young People, MSDC, WSCC etc



Working Group OIL/GAS EXPLORATION

- **undertake such investigations as the Group deems appropriate in connection with any proposed hydrocarbon (oil or gas) exploration or extraction activities within the parish**
- **monitor any hydrocarbon extraction activities within the parish**
- **work with the whole parish council to communicate with Balcombe residents regarding oil activities**
- **make recommendations to the Parish Council on actions that it might take in respect of applications for planning permission or permits to explore for or extract oil or gas within the parish**



Working Group RAIL

- maintain meaningful contact with the right people with respect to: ticketing, revenue protection, car parking, franchise failures, time-tabling, property
- monitor & work with Southern to improve the ticketing service with respect to the ticket office & the ticket machine
- work with Southern to reduce car parking charges (achieved!)
- lobby Southern to deliver their franchise obligations & have an input into the frequency & route of the services into Balcombe
- protect the heritage value of the station architecture



Working Group

TRAFFIC

The Group is responsible for advising the Council on any matter that concerns the impact of motor vehicles on life in Balcombe, & for seeking the implementation of any actions that the Council decides are appropriate

- **SPEED**

A 3 year campaign has resulted in the recent introduction of 50 & 40 mph speed limits on the B 2036 approaching the village from the north

- **PARKING**

An insoluble problem? If parking is prevented in one location, cars are parked elsewhere.

The Council decided that the problems resulting from vehicles parked on Newlands made it a special case. Single yellow lines will soon be painted, banning parking between 11.00 am & 12 noon, Monday to Friday.



Working Group NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

The Group is responsible for developing the Neighbourhood Plan for Balcombe Parish.

- **developing the aims & objectives of our plan**
- **consultation with Balcombe residents at each stage**
- **working with local landowners to identify suitable development sites**
- **identification on infrastructure projects to be developed using CIL monies (Community Infrastructure Levy)**
- **development of the sustainability appraisal**
- **writing the pre-submission plan**
- **writing the final plan**
- **taking the plan to independent examination and ultimately referendum**



Working Group

BRAMBLE HALL

In 2012 the United Reformed Church Synod decided that it no longer needed its building in Bramble Hill, Balcombe, for religious services.

The Parish Council decided that the availability of such a building created a once in a life time opportunity to provide the village with an additional high quality community space. It has leased the building for 3 years, ending 31 March 2016. In the course of the next year the Council may seek to may negotiate a longer term lease of the building, to commence on 1 April 2016.

For the time being the Council maintains the building and hires it out to organisations and individuals for a wide variety of purposes. In additions it is used for meetings of the Parish Council, and as a venue for the various other functions that the Council carries out.