

# **BEKESBOURNE WITH PATRIXBOURNE PARISH COUNCIL**

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Bekesbourne  
Kent  
CT4 5EG  
[www.bekesbournewithpatrixbourne.co.uk](http://www.bekesbournewithpatrixbourne.co.uk)

## **COUNCILLOR INDUCTION PACK**

### **WELCOME**

Welcome to Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council – I look forward to working with you during your term of office!

The contents of this pack form the basis of your induction to Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council.

We provide a dedicated Gmail email account which must be used for all Parish Council related correspondence. All correspondence will be sent to that address, including your summons' to meetings (agendas). Our Councillor Email and Communications Policy gives guidance on the use of our email accounts.

The login details of your Councillor email (if not already setup) will be sent to your personal email address.

The information in the remainder of this document is divided into sections. The latest versions of the documents and policies referred to throughout this pack are included at the back and are also available on the Parish Council's website:

[www.bekesbournewithpatrixbourne.co.uk](http://www.bekesbournewithpatrixbourne.co.uk)

### **THE COUNCIL**

Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council is a small Local Council. We provide services including:

- Play Areas at the recreation ground
- Street Furniture: The old phone box on School Lane, which is now a well loved community feature, with changing themes.
- Custodian Trustee to Bekesbourne Village Hall
- Allotment land in Aspinall Close

For our Powers and Duties, please refer to the document provided at the back of this pack.

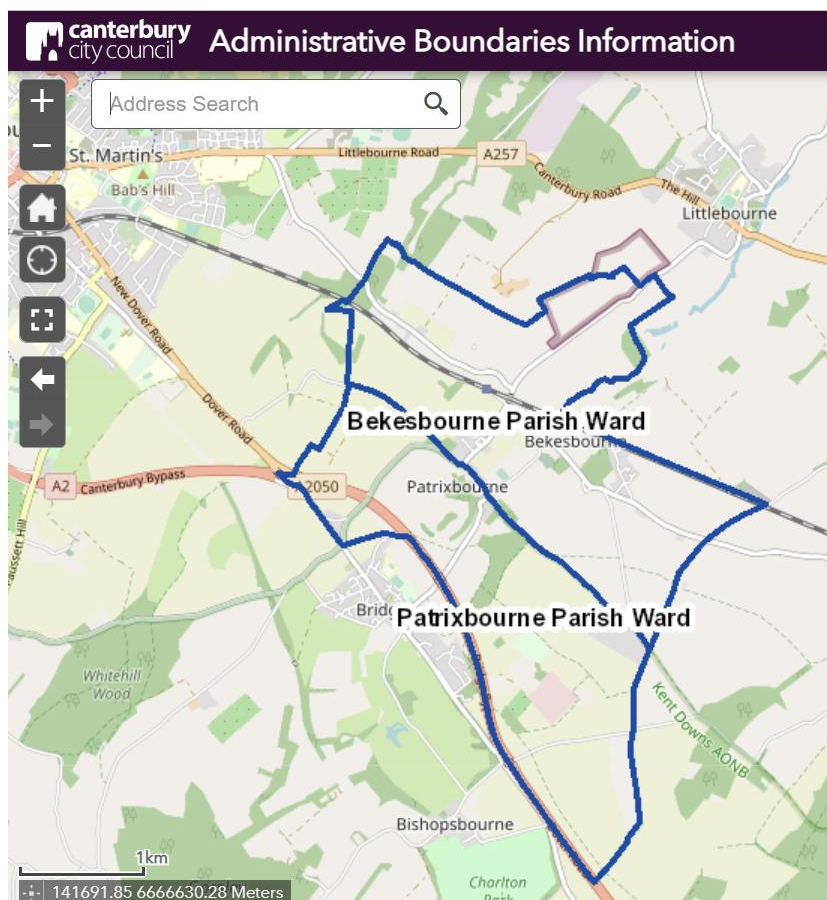
Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council does not have responsibility for the following services:

- Highways, including parking, and public rights of way
- Bins and waste collection
- Street cleaning, including maintenance of verges
- Housing issues
- Health and social services
- Schools and education
- Libraries

For services such as these, please refer to the section at the back of this pack on Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council.

### AREA

Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council covers the parish area as outlined in blue on the map of the wards below. We are part of the Little Stour and Adisham Ward.



## COUNCILLORS

There are nine Councillor seats on the Parish Council.

Councillor details will be added to our website.

We **do not** publish other contact details such as telephone numbers or addresses, these are provided for internal use only by staff.

The next routine elections for Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council will take place in May 2027.

## COMMITTEES

You may often hear reference to the Village Hall management Committee (VHMC) and the Recreation Ground management Committee (RGMC). These are not committees of the Parish Council but are separate independent registered charities, responsible for the management of both the recreation ground and pavilion and the village hall respectively.

## REPRESENTITIVES

The Parish Council nominate representatives on the following groups annually:

- RGMC
- VHMC
- A257 traffic Management Group
- Rivergorup

The representatives are required to report back at Parish Council meetings. They must ensure they do not make decisions at group meetings without discussion with the Parish Council.

## STAFF

Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council currently employs 1 members of staff:

Name	Role	Working Days	Working Hours	Email	Telephone
Nicola Purcell	Parish Clerk Proper Officer Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)	Flexible but try to work mainly on:  Monday Tuesday Thursday	Varied- 10 per week	<a href="mailto:clerk.bwp@outlook.com">clerk.bwp@outlook.com</a>	07553763102

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

All Councillors must abide by the Council's Code of Conduct, which is designed to protect the democratic role, encourage good conduct, and safeguard the public's trust in local government. Please read and familiarise yourself with the Code of Conduct, a copy of which is provided within this pack and can also be viewed online on our website.

To legally act as a Councillor, you are required to complete the Acceptance of Office form. This must be completed before the first meeting.

## **REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

All Councillors must, as soon as possible within 28 days of election/co-option complete and return the Register of Interests form (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests). Guidance notes are included on the form of how to complete it. All forms must be returned to the Parish Clerk who will retain a copy and return them to Canterbury City Council. If you have any questions, then please contact Canterbury City Council directly.

## **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

It is imperative that at the start of each council meeting you declare any interests in items on the agenda.

This does not preclude you from declaring interests at other points during the meeting if it becomes clear that you may have a conflict of interests.

For further information please read the *Department for Communities and Local Government's guide 'Openness and Transparency on personal interests – a guide for Councillors'* which can be found in the back of this pack.

## **BRIEFINGS AND GUIDANCE**

The Parish Council is a member of the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC).

KALC is an independent membership organisation, that requires an annual subscription, which includes many local councils (parish, community, town councils and parish meetings)

KALC are affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). KALC works to support councils by giving members legal and technical advice, information, and training relevant to their work and generally to support their work and governance. Advice is accessed by the Parish Clerk as required.

Please consider attending training courses. The cost of attending, together with any reasonable expenses (e.g. travel) is covered by Bekesbourne with Patribourne Parish Council which has a provision in the budget for this.

## **POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS**

The Clerk has started the process of updating its governance policies and procedures which you will find in this pack.

Copies of the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and other, current policies are included in this pack, but can also be viewed online on the Parish Council website.

Documents are routinely reviewed every year at the Annual Council meeting in May. If new documents are produced, then you will be sent copies to review prior to adoption at a Parish Council meeting.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **The Parish Council**

Parish Councillors are elected by the electors of the Parish, under section 16 (2) of the Local Government Act 1972, every four years. A councillor may also be returned by bye-election, co-option, appointment by the city council or by return after a successful election petition. All Councillors are required to complete a declaration of Acceptance of Office and to provide a written undertaking that they accept the Council's Code of Conduct.

Individual Councillors work together to serve the community and to help the Council to make decisions on behalf of the local community. Councillors contribute to the work of the council by suggesting ideas, engaging in constructive debate and by responding to the needs and views of the community representing their constituents. Councillors comment on proposals to ensure the best outcome and vote to enable the council to make decisions. Councillors must accept the decisions of the Council as a whole even if they do not agree with it. In such circumstances a Councillor may ask for a vote against a resolution to be recorded. Councillors are required to behave in an ethical.

The Local Government Act of 1894 created civil Parish Councils effectively excluding the church from local government. Local government was further reformed in 1974 following the Local Government Act of 1972 with the result that Parish Councils had more freedom to operate without consents from central government. A Parish Council is a body corporate under section 14 (3) of the Local Government Act 1972, which means that it is an 'it' in law and that the decisions it takes are the responsibility of the Council as a whole.

The Council is responsible for the services it provides. It establishes policies for action and decides how money will be raised and spent on behalf of the community. It is responsible for spending public money lawfully and achieving the best value for money.

Except in certain circumstances (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960) Council meetings are open to the public.

The Council as a body decides whether to work in partnership with other organisations and it often serves (through representatives) on other bodies.

**An individual Councillor (including the Chair) cannot make a decision on behalf of the council so when working in partnership, Councillors must always remember that they represent the Council as a corporate body.**

### **The Chair**

- Holds a statutory post defined in law
- Is a member of the Council and is elected annually
- Has the authority at meetings and must be obeyed when issuing lawful direction or direction in line with Standing Orders
- The one to welcome speakers and make them 'feel at home'
- Is to make sure the decision is clear for the Parish Clerk to act upon.

### **The Chair should**

- Arrive in good time, adequately briefed and with all the necessary papers in correct order.
- Ensure the meeting is quorate
- Start the meeting on time by declaring it open and end it by clearly stating it closed and the time it ended.
- Know that he/she has no more statutory power than any other Councillor except that of the casting vote.
- Ensure that all points of view have a clear hearing
- Keep the discussion to the point, and that it is relevant and ensure the Council deals with clear issues
- Ensure the Council/Committee acts only within its Terms of Reference and/or legal powers and functions
- Ensure compliance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Council Policies, etc.
- To ensure that where and when appropriate and allowable the Council takes a vote to exclude the public and press from Council meetings.
- Understand the principles of debate and voting (see Standing Orders)
- Remain impartial and not 'guide' Councillors to his/her desired decision.
- Create an atmosphere which encourages participation
- Be in control of the meeting.
- Know that he/she cannot be a committee of one (Hillingdon Case Law)
- Respect and understand the role of the Parish Clerk/RFO and other Officers, and ensure that employment issues (e.g. performance, disciplinary matters) are only raised in Council meetings when appropriate and in line with Council Policy and employment law.
- Co-operate with Officers and Councillors

- Act as a representative of the Council at civic or local events

**The Chair on her/his own has no power to make decisions without the Resolution of the Council.**

**The Chair cannot decide which items should appear on the agenda for meetings.** The Parish Clerk is responsible for the agenda.

The Chair should not need to involve herself/himself in the day-to-day administration of the Council.

### **The Parish Clerk**

The Parish Clerk is employed by the Council, under section 112 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972, to provide administrative support for the Council's activities.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the Parish Clerk**

The Parish Clerk has a wide range of other responsibilities which are set out in their job description. The Parish Clerk recognises that the Council is responsible for decisions and that he/she takes instructions from the Council as a body.

The Parish Clerk is the 'engine' of an effective Parish Council. He or she is the principal executive and adviser and is also the Responsible Financial Officer who is responsible for all financial records of the Council and the careful administration of its finances.

The Parish Clerk is required to give clear guidance to Councillors, including the Chair, before decisions are reached, even when that guidance may be unpalatable. The Parish Clerk has a key role in advising the council, and Councillors, on governance, ethical and procedural matters. They must also liaise with the Monitoring Officer at the city council on ethical issues and the Councillors' Register of Interests.

The Parish Clerk is the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is under a statutory duty to carry out all the functions, and in particular to serve or issue all the notifications required by law of a local authority's Proper Officer. The Parish Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that the instructions of the Council in connection with its function as a Local Authority are carried out.

The Parish Clerk's role is wide-ranging:

- Office Manager
- Legal Officer
- Chief Financial Officer
- Property/Venue Manager
- Project Manager
- Webmaster/IT Manager
- Liaison Officer with other Authorities and Bodies

**A Council should not consider the Parish Clerk to be "simply" secretary/Clerk but instead a hands-on multi-skilled manager.**

### **COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Agendas are sent out via email and published on the Parish Council's website and placed on the noticeboard (at the entrance to the recreation ground) usually one week before a meeting. We do not produce hard copies of meeting documents. Copies of all previous minutes are available on the Parish Council website.

You may sometimes receive a report marked "CONFIDENTIAL" in relation to an item on an agenda. Any information in this report is to be treated as confidential and should not be divulged to anyone who is not a Member of the Council. If you have any doubts, please contact the Parish Clerk who will be able to advise.

If you wish to have an item put on the Agenda for discussion please contact the Parish Clerk in writing no later than 10 clear days prior to the date of the meeting.

**Items that are not on the agenda cannot be discussed and no decision can legally be made unless they are.**

Once documentation has been circulated for a meeting, Councillors are encouraged to email the Parish Clerk or the appropriate Officer for the Committee in advance of the meeting with any questions they may have. This allows for the correct information to be sought to ensure meetings run smoothly.

Unless otherwise agreed, Parish Council meetings are held on the second Monday of alternate months, apart from December when Council break for the month.



A schedule of meetings for the year is provided at the back of this pack. In addition to these meetings an Extraordinary Meeting (urgent) can be called (with the legal 3 clear days' notice) by the Chair of the Council or Clerk.

Extraordinary Meetings usually only have one item on the agenda.

All meetings are held Bekesbourne Village Hall, unless otherwise agreed.

We ask the Councillors arrive at least 15 minutes prior to any meeting, for a prompt start as per the meeting start time on the agenda.

Council meetings are chaired by the Chair.

During a meeting, no person shall obstruct the transaction of business at a meeting or behave offensively or improperly, this includes interruption of other Councillors, when speaking or making proposals.

The Chair of the Council cannot make proposals during a meeting, nor should they attempt to influence the proposals made by Councillors.

There is a 15-minute public session shortly after a meeting begins. It is important to note that this is the public's only opportunity to participate in the meeting, other than at the Chair's discretion.

After each meeting, Minutes are prepared by the Clerk. All minutes are circulated to all Councillors.

The Council agenda, together with the Minutes of the last meeting and of meetings of Committees, form the basis on which the Council conducts its business.

***All Councillors are expected to attend all Council meetings.*** If you cannot attend a Council Meeting, please email the Parish Clerk by 1600pm on the day of the meeting with apologies and a reason for your absence. If you do not attend meetings for a period of 6 months without tendering apologies **with reason**, and your reasons for absence accepted then you cease to continue to be a Councillor.

### **ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting of the Council is held in May. This will be your first meeting.

The agenda for this meeting starts with:

- The election of Chair and Vice Chair for the year
- Confirmation of the Council's Committees
- Appointment of representatives to outside bodies (if the Council wishes)
- Review of Policies

### **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

This is an Annual Meeting of Parishioners of Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne. Every Town and Parish Council throughout England are required by law to hold an Annual Parish Meeting between the dates of 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> June (inclusive). This is not a Council Meeting but a meeting of registered Electors. The meeting is a chance for all Community Groups to give reports on their organisations over the last year; and for registered Electors to speak at. With the exception of the Chair, Councillors attend as members of the public.

### **FINANCE**

The Council's financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March each year.

The Council's main source of income is the precept (money raised for it via Council Tax). For the 2023/2024 financial year the precept was set at £22,213.99. A full copy of the Council's budget for the current year is provided in this pack.

### **PLANNING**

Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council is consulted on all planning applications submitted to Canterbury City Council that fall within the Parish.

Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council recently responded to the Canterbury City Council Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation, (Regulation 19 is later in 2023). The responses to these are published on Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council's website.

### **CONCLUSION**

I hope that you have found this Councillor induction pack useful. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Wishing you all the best for your time on Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council

*Nicola*