



CROMHALL PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20



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What is Cromhall Parish Council?

Cromhall parish council is a legally incorporated body and is the first tier of local government closest to the community. The council has seven councillors who represents the views of its community and as a small parish council receives funding from higher tiers of Local Government via the precept, currently £20,000. Within its limited remit, it has discretionary powers to provide and monitor efficient services and amenities to meet local need; influences other decisions makers and strives to improve the quality of parish life. or provide cost effective local services and amenities. These range from arranging grass cutting, providing litter and dog bins, maintaining bus shelters and providing a play area to having the right to be notified of, and comment upon, planning applications.

Councillors are holders of set-term public office, normally four years, responsible to and acting as advocates of their electorate. They raise issues and contribute to council decision making for the whole parish. With no authority to make individual decisions, councillors provide community leadership through collective decision making. At meetings, they must act with integrity, respect and accountability and can influence and contribute to formal council decisions or resolutions. Councillors are unpaid and receive no allowance for their duties other than travel costs for duties beyond the parish.

How the parish council operates:

The Parish Council will carry out its statutory duties as required by:

- Aiming to meet on a minimum of 10 occasions per annum to deal with the business of the Council, running these meetings within the Standing Orders of the Council. All meetings are open to the public with a period set aside for members of the public to address Council.
- The Council elects a Chairman and Vice-Chairman annually.
- The Council works to its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, which lay down the rules by which we operate and conduct our business. Our Standing Orders are based on a model prepared by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).
- All Parish Councillors are expected to adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct also adopted from NALC.



- The Chair will hold an Annual Parish Meeting in April each year to review the activities of the previous year and give an opportunity for residents to raise issues of concern.

As part of the statutory planning process, South Gloucestershire Council has to consult the Parish Council on planning applications.

Whilst Highways and transport issues are not part of the parish council's area of responsibility, we know they can be extremely important to residents. As a council, we spend a lot of time working on your behalf to inform and influence the appropriate authorities to find solutions.

Parish Council staff

The Parish Council employs one part-time Clerk to the Council or "Proper Officer" for 10 hours per week. The clerk supports the Council and carries out all the functions required by law and is also the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

Main areas of responsibility

Cromhall Parish Council wishes to give parish residents a better understanding of what the Parish Council can do and what it is trying to achieve, either alone or by working with partners such as South Gloucestershire Council. This document aims to outline our plans although there may be occasions when Council has to make decisions contrary to our stated commitments if budget constraints, new legislation or changes in our policies make that necessary. Any changes will, however, be reflected in an updated Plan.

The Parish Council contributes to improving the quality of life for the residents of Cromhall in a number of ways:

- providing a democratic and representative voice for the community and promoting its views
- Providing amenities and services that benefit the community.
- Working in partnership, contribute to improved services to meet the needs of Cromhall's residents.
- Striving to ensure there is a fair share of investment in the parish by regional authorities



The Parish Council has the following responsibilities:

- Management and maintenance of the Townwell children's play area.
- Management of grass cutting of identified verges and village greens.
- Management of three village greens and Hawkers Knapp.
- Maintenance of bus shelters and notice boards in the parish.
- Contributes to the cost of grass cutting at the school playing field.
- The provision of small community grants.
- Submitting comments on all planning applications and change of use applications in the parish as a statutory consultee of the local planning authority.
- Provision of litter and dog fouling bins and their emptying.

Good Governance

Cromhall Parish Council aims to be a competent parish council, which is open and accountable and ensures sound financial management of Parish Council resources.

The Parish Council aims to:

- Be well-informed about the needs and opinions of the parish's residents by consulting them on major issues.
- Encourage Councillors keep abreast of new opportunities and policy.
- Promote public participation in all Parish Council meetings and initiatives.
- Deal with enquiries from members of the public in a professional and efficient manner.
- Be an effective custodian of the Council's property and documents



The Parish Council recognises the role of good communication in building positive relationships with the public and with organisations that provide services in the parish. We will continue to seek to improve established channels of communication and find new ones.

The Council will:

- Use the Parish Council website to:
 - provide clear information about the Council and its activities including agendas and minutes.
 - Provide regular news of Council initiatives.
 - ensure up to date Financial information is available.
- Provide an opportunity at Parish Council meeting for public participation.
- Invite representatives of outside agencies to address the Council on key matters of interest.
- Share council activities during the previous twelve months at the Annual Parish Meeting.
- Undertake Governance reviews and implement any approved recommendations.
- Review training needs of both Councillors and staff on an annual basis.
- Attend relevant conferences and meetings.

Community facilities

Play and recreational areas

Although the Parish Council has no specific responsibility for health and wellbeing, our recreational facility helps support activities that promote health and wellbeing of our residents.

- The Parish Council will maintain and provide the Townwell play area for children of all ages keeping it well maintained and safe. It will maintain the present facilities to current standards with weekly inspections and the play area will receive an annual external inspection from appropriately qualified play inspectors.



- The council will continually monitor and develop a planned programme of repairs and replacement to meet community needs.

Protecting Open Space

- The Parish Council will maintain a watching brief on all open spaces in the parish and seek to protect it from inappropriate development.

Road Safety

- The Parish Council will work with Highways, South Gloucestershire Council and other agencies to find ways to reduce speeding across the parish to make the parish a safer place for all residents.

Bus shelters

- The Parish Council will maintain bus shelters at current standards.

Notice boards

- The Parish Council will maintain the parish notice boards around the parish at current standards.

Grass cutting of verges

- The Parish Council will maintain its agreed grass cutting schedule for various named verges in the parish and will review this every three years. Next review date September 2019.

Purchasing policy

- The Parish Council will look at the cost effectiveness and environmental sustainability of all major procurement.

The Parish Council will continue to send representatives to meetings that have a direct bearing on the work of the council and the parish areas.



Financial information for 2019/20

Income

The residents of Cromhall fund the Parish Council through the 'precept'. The precept is the local tax levied by the Parish Council that South Gloucestershire Council collects on our behalf as part of the Council Tax bill.

Each year the council carefully considers the needs of the community for the following year and decides what improvements it can provide to the community. It reviews the income it can generate and expenditure and this informs the level of precept required. For 2019/20 the precept will be £21,000.00.

Expenditure

The budgeted expenditure for the Council in 2019/20 is £24,935.00

The main items of expenditure are:

Office Administration, salaries, contractors and on-going expenditure.

General maintenance including play areas and grass cutting.

Grants to local groups.

New village gates.

Reserves

Cromhall parish council holds unallocated reserves to protect against major problems requiring emergency funding that could affect the Council's business.

Best practice suggests this should amount to 3-12 months of the precept.

Currently the Council holds unallocated reserves of £4,251.72.

The Council also has allocated reserves called earmarked reserves. This money is set aside for various functions such as long-term maintenance including the play area, election costs and for future projects. These reserves are carefully reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain appropriate.

| EARMARKED FUNDS | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Election accruals | £1,900.00 | £1,900.00 |
| Hawkers Knapp | £1,100.00 | £1,100.00 |
| Legal services | £1,000.00 | £1,000.00 |
| Playground contingency | £10,000.00 | £8,000.00 |
| Wall repairs/village gates | £5,000.00 | £7,000.00 |
| Total earmarked reserves | £19,000.00 | £19,000.00 |



Key projects for 2019/20

For 2019/20 Cromhall Parish Council has identified several key projects:

- Working with South Gloucestershire Council to address road safety concerns. Includes
 - Commission project with South Gloucestershire Council to install village gates at a cost of £6300.00.
- Consider options to improve the village green area approaching The Royal Oak.
- Consider options for play area using CIL money amounting to £750.00. This could include new or replacement of equipment or additional seating.
- Consider options for improving bio-diversity within the parish,