

# ***BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL***

## **AGENDA**

**for the meeting to be held on 3 September 2013 in Binegar Memorial Hall at 7 30 pm**

1	<b>Apologies for absence and declarations of interests</b>	
2	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b> To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2013	
3	<b>Matters arising from the Minutes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Cover for Clerk's absence (Min 3.1 refers)</li> <li>2 Somerset County Council weed sprayer proposal (Min. 3.3 refers)</li> <li>3 Erection of notice board at Binegar Green (Min. 3.4 refers)</li> <li>5 Tree condition assessments: cemetery and playing field (Min. 3.6 refers)</li> <li>6 Incursion on Council land at Emborough (Min 3.7 refers)</li> <li>7 Proposal for a community defibrillator (Min. 7 refers)</li> <li>8 Community gardening/Binegar Bottom planting proposals (Mins 10.1 &amp; 14.1 refer)</li> <li>9 Electricity backing board replacement (Min. 13 refers)</li> </ul>	GH HS PB DS RH CL GH DS
4	<b>Binegar Scouts</b> To welcome Scout Leader Sandra Pennyfather to address the meeting	
5	<b>Local government reports</b> To receive reports from County or District Councillors in attendance	
6	<b>Police report</b> To receive a report of recent incidents	
7	<b>Confidential matters</b> The Council is asked to consider whether a resolution should be passed to exclude the press and public from the meeting during discussion of the confidential item because information about an individual is likely to be disclosed	
8	<b>Planning issues</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 2012/3033 Emborough Grove – appeal against refusal of planning consent</li> <li>2 The Batch, Neville's Batch – to receive an update</li> </ul>	RH GH
9	<b>Financial matters</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Annual return</li> <li>2 Financial report</li> <li>3 To approve payments to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Playsafe Ltd. for annual playground inspection: £128.40</li> <li>(b) P N Milverton (Construction) Ltd. for Binegar Green notice board: £117.60</li> <li>(c) EDF Energy for electricity supply 3 May – 27 June: £25.01</li> <li>(d) P Blatchford for book <i>Arnold Baker Local Council Administration</i>: £60.00</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	GH RH

10	<b>Parish records</b> To note the current position	GH
11	<b>Structure style and standards for Parish Council agendas and Minutes</b> 1 To consider a report from Jude on agendas (attached) 2 To consider and approve a report from Gus, Philip and Richard on Minutes (attached)	
12	<b>Somerset County Council: Chairman's Award for Services to the Community</b> To consider a nomination	GH
13	<b>Parish Council website</b> To consider a process for adding content	RH
14	<b>Binegar Cemetery</b> 1 To consider a request to reserve a plot for burial 2 To agree a request for the burial of Miss Chloe May Wilcox 3 To consider a suggestion from the Parochial Church Council for land to extend the cemetery	GH
15	<b>Events attended</b> To receive reports of events attended by Councillors	All
16	<b>Binegar Playing Fields Group</b> 1 To receive and consider the Minutes of the Group's 23 July and 13 August meetings	PB
18	<b>Highways and rights of way</b> 1 Report from the Parish Paths Liaison Officer 2 Binegar Bottom/Roemead Lane drainage and ditch – progress report from Philip 3 Kings Lane: to note reported potholes had been filled 4 Reports from members of highway matters requiring attention	PB PB All
19	<b>Correspondence</b> To note correspondence received	PB
20	<b>Items for the next or a future agenda</b> Village Agent update from Jackie Smith (October) Grass cutting contract 2014 (November)	
21	<b>Next meeting</b> To note the next meeting will be held on <b>1 October 2013</b> at 7 30 pm in the Memorial Hall.	

#### Forward agenda: items for future meetings

Oct	<b>Parish Council asset register 2013</b> To receive and approve	RH
Nov	<b>Standing Orders</b> To consider and approve recommended revisions	GH
Nov	<b>Employee annual performance appraisal</b> To consider	GH

# ***BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL***

## Style guide for agendas (item 11.1)

### 1 Guidance about agendas

There is guidance about agendas from the *National Association of Local Councils* (NALC) and Binegar Parish Council's Standing Orders. A summary is attached.

### 2 Agendas and good communications

NALC stresses that routine documents like agendas are part of good communications. They need to be understood by everyone. They are a vital way - one of the few ways - of telling the community what the Council is doing, what decisions are being made on its behalf and involving local people.

A NALC agenda tends to explain items, for example, disclosure of interests, to a degree that is unnecessary for Councillors but right for a member of the public to understand.

### 3 Suggested standards and structure

NALC's guide covers councils large and small. While right for larger councils, it is probably too formal for a small Parish Council like Binegar. Its principles, however, are applicable and the following standards and structure is proposed:

#### **3.1 General standards**

- Publish agendas 5-7 clear days in advance of meetings<sup>1</sup>
- Email the statutory 'summons' of Councillors to the meeting attaching the agenda
- Format the agenda in the house style
- Prepare a draft agenda in advance of publication to involve the Chair in planning
- Work out a timetable for the meeting so the Chair can give sufficient time to all items
- Have spare copies of the agenda for any members of the public

#### **3.2 Agenda management standards**

- Title the agenda page with the Council's name, then
- Head the page clearly "Agenda for the meeting to be held on (date) at (venue) at (time)"
- Number agenda items consecutively
- For clarity, divide the agenda between procedural and business items
- Procedural items include disclosures of interests, previous minutes, apologies for absence, and chair's announcements,
- Chair's announcements can cover public questions, comments or representations, appointments to committees, members' questions when appropriate
- Business items may recur – always include a reference to the previous minute
- Give each item a clear heading that indicates what the agenda item is about and a brief indication of what the Council is going to consider
- Where an item is supported by a report, refer to it on the agenda

### 4 Sample agendas

Samples of an ordinary agenda and the annual parish council meeting agenda using these standards are attached.

Jude Robbins

August 2013

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<sup>1</sup> These exclude the day of notice, the day of the meeting, weekends and bank holidays.

# Guidance about agendas

## 1 National Association of Local Councils (NALC) advice

### 1.1 Good practice

NALC suggests a number of standards:

#### General standards

- Publish agendas 5-7 clear days in advance of meetings<sup>2</sup>
- The agenda (or covering letter) is the statutory 'summons' of Councillors to the meeting
- Reflect Standing Orders on the conduct and process of meetings in the agenda
- Format all documents in a house style
- For sub-committees, list the names of members and indicate the chair
- Before the agenda list of items, include any notes e.g. arrangements for public speakers
- Have spare copies of the agenda for any members of the public

#### Agenda management standards

- Title the agenda page with the Council's name, then
- Head the page in bold "Agenda for the meeting to be held on (date) at (venue) at (time)"
- Number agenda items consecutively
- For clarity, divide the agenda between procedural and business items
- Procedural items include disclosures of interests, previous minutes, apologies for absence, chair's announcements, public questions, comments or representations, appointments to committees, members' questions to the chair (if part of Standing Orders)
- Business items may recur – always include a reference to the previous minute
- Give each item a clear heading that indicates what the agenda item is about and a brief indication of what the Council is going to consider
- Where an item is supported by a report, the agenda should refer to it and vice-versa
- Prepare a draft agenda in advance of the publication date so the Chair can be involved in planning. The Chair is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting.
- Work out a timetable for the meeting so the Chair can give sufficient time to all items

## 2 Binegar Parish Council Standing Orders

Regarding agendas, the Standing Orders are specific about the following:

- Publish agendas 3 clear days in advance of meetings<sup>3</sup> (1b)
- Members of the public may make representations etc on any item of business, the protocol and time for speaking stated in advance at the Chair's discretion (1d)
- The order of the agenda at the annual meeting of the Council are specified in 2k
- Motions must be put forward on the agenda at least one week before the meeting (5a)
- Motions included on an agenda shall be considered in the order they appear unless changed at the Chair's discretion for expedience (5b)
- Members may ask questions about any item by giving 6 days' notice (7a)
- Questions unrelated to agenda items may only be asked in the time for questions (7b)

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<sup>2</sup> These exclude the day of notice, the day of the meeting, weekends and bank holidays.

<sup>3</sup> This is a statutory part of the Standing Orders.

## ***BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL***

Agenda for the meeting to be held on (date) at (venue) at (time)

1	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	
2	<b>Disclosures of interests</b> To receive disclosures of interests from Councillors on items on the agenda	
3	<b>Minutes</b> To resolve that the Minutes of the (date) meeting be signed as a correct record	
4	<b>Chair's announcements</b>	
5	<b>Police report</b> To receive a report of recent incidents	
6	<b>Reports from local government</b> To receive reports from District and County Councillors in attendance	
7	<b>Events attended</b> To receive reports of events attended by Councillors	
8	<b>Matters arising from the Minutes</b> 1 First item (Minute n1 refers) 2 Second item (Minute n2 refers)	
9	<b>Planning applications and issues</b> 1 2013/3333 A planning application for a development	
10	<b>Financial matters</b> 1 Payments to be made	
11	<b>Business item 1</b> To receive and consider a report	NN
12	<b>Binegar Playing Fields Group</b> To receive and consider the Minutes of the (month) meeting	
13	<b>Highways and rights of way</b> 1 To receive a report from the Parish Paths Liaison Officer 2 To receive reports of any road or other defects requiring attention	
14	<b>Correspondence</b> To note correspondence received	
15	<b>Items for the next or a future agenda</b>	
16	<b>Next meeting</b> To note the next meeting will be held on (date) at Binegar Memorial Hall at (time)	

## ***BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL***

Agenda for the Annual Meeting to be held on (date) at (venue) at (time)

1	<b>Election of Chair and Vice Chair</b>	
2	<b>Declarations of acceptance of office</b> (election years only) Councillors will deliver their acceptances to the Clerk	
3	<b>Minutes</b> To resolve that the Minutes of the (date) meeting be signed as a correct record	
4	<b>Delegation arrangements</b> To review delegation arrangements to committees, employees and others	
5	<b>Council committees</b> To review terms of reference of committees	
6	<b>Membership of Council committees</b> To receive nominations to existing committees	
7	<b>New committees</b> To confirm terms of reference and numbers of members for new committees and to receive nominations to them	
8	<b>Standing orders and Standing Financial Orders</b> To agree arrangements for review and adoption of these Orders	
9	<b>Inventory of land and assets</b> To agree arrangements for the review of the Council's asset register	
10	<b>Insurance</b> To agree arrangements for the review and confirmation of arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks	
11	<b>Memberships of other bodies</b> To agree arrangements for the review of the Council's and/or employee's memberships of other bodies	
12	<b>Freedom of Information Act, 2000 and Data Protection Act, 1998</b> To agree arrangements for the establishment or review of the Council's procedures for handling requests made under these Acts	
13	<b>Dates of meetings for the year</b> To set dates, times and venues for meetings of the full Council for the year ahead	
14	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	

15	<b>Disclosures of interests</b> To receive disclosures of interests from Councillors on items on the agenda	
16	<b>Chair's announcements</b>	
17	<b>Police report</b> To receive a report of recent incidents	
18	<b>Reports from local government</b> To receive reports from District and County Councillors in attendance	
19	<b>Events attended</b> To receive reports of events attended by Councillors	
20	<b>Matters arising from the Minutes</b> 1 First item (Minute n1 refers) 2 Second item (Minute n2 refers)	
21	<b>Planning applications and issues</b> 1 2013/3333 A planning application for a development	
22	<b>Financial matters</b> 1 Payments to be made	
23	<b>Business item 1</b> To receive and consider a report	NN
24	<b>Binegar Playing Fields Group</b> To receive and consider the Minutes of the (month) meeting	
25	<b>Highways and rights of way</b> 1 To receive a report from the Parish Paths Liaison Officer 2 To receive reports of any road or other defects requiring attention	
26	<b>Correspondence</b> To note correspondence received	
27	<b>Items for the next or a future agenda</b>	
28	<b>Next meeting</b> To note the next meeting will be held on (date) at The Memorial Hall at (time)	

# ***BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL***

## Style guide for Minutes (Item 11.2)

### **1 Guidance available**

There is guidance about minutes from the *National Association of Local Councils* (NALC)<sup>1</sup> and in Binegar Parish Council's Standing Orders.

### **2 NALC guidance**

#### **2.1 Why good communications matters**

The advice has the following introduction:

"How a parish council communicates with the wider world and how that communication is received and perceived is important because confusion can arise over who is talking to whom, about what, and on whose behalf.

"Individual communication back and forth between council members and the Clerk, if not done appropriately, may create confusion, misunderstanding and, occasionally, even hostility.

"As well as reflecting poorly on the parish council, poor communication may create tensions within the council. This has led to complaints to the Standards Board for England and also employment disputes, many of which may have been avoidable if a few simple rules were in place and agreed.

"The protocol suggested below covers communications with the council and between the council and the wider world and can be adapted to suit local circumstances.

"Councils sometimes fall into the trap of assuming that routine documentation is only for the benefit of the council or to meet legal requirements. Agenda and minutes may take different styles but should be understood by all. The agenda and minutes are a vital way of telling your community what the council is doing, what decisions are being made on behalf of the residents and involving local people in the life of their community. This guidance contains some good practice ideas about communication which will help raise standards of governance and provide effective ways of connecting with your community."

#### **2.2 Good practice**

"The minutes of a council or committee are a public record of the decisions of the council and great care should be taken in their format and production. The minutes can be produced in court or other judicial processes as evidence of decisions of the council, and they may form part of the Council archives which must be preserved."

#### **2.3 Objectives**

As brief as is consistent with accuracy

Precise and concise

Self-contained (complete in themselves; understood without reference to other documents)

Decisive (leaving no doubt about the decision made)

Minutes, not hours!

#### **2.4 Recommendation**

We recommend the above guidance and following standards be used for Council Minutes.

Philip Blatchford, Gus Halfhide, Richard Higgins

August 2013



## Standards for Council Minutes

### 1 General standards

Produce minutes in the council's house style/format

Title the first page with the Council's name, then

Head the page clearly "Minutes of the meeting held on (date) at (venue) at (time)"

Indicate the start and end times of the meeting

Start with an alphabetical list (first and family names) of members present (and absent<sup>ii</sup>)

Number minutes consecutively

The order of the minutes will normally follow the order of the agenda

### 2 Standards for each minute

Give each minute a heading that clearly indicates what it is about

Give each minute a narrative or text summarising what took place and the decision

(For routine items, e.g. planning applications, a narrative will not be necessary)

Write the narrative of the minute in:

Reported (or indirect) speech in the past continuous tense

Plain English using full sentences and appropriate grammar

The narrative should:

Make reference to any written reports received

Refer to individual speakers by name **only** where this is significant/necessary

This may include when a member of the public or district councillor speaks

When required, refer to Councillors by first name, use initials in the action column

Only summarise the points made in a debate on a sensitive matter

This might be done as bullet points (one liners)

Avoid abbreviations

Use acronyms only after having written the title in full at the first mention

### 3 Standards for decisions

Highlight decisions (for identification) and the words that show it is a decision, e.g.

**Resolved: 1) That. . .**

**2) That. . .**

Include the full wording for decisions

It is not usually necessary to note mover and seconder<sup>iii</sup>

It is only necessary to record that a vote was taken where a recorded vote is requested

### 4 Standards for declarations of interest

The minute should record clearly:

The name of the councillor

The item in which the councillor has an interest

The nature of the interest

Whether the interest is (a) disclosable pecuniary or (b) other

For (a), that the councillor left the meeting for the duration of that debate

For (b), whether the councillor spoke before withdrawing

### 5 Standards for production, approval and retention of Minutes

Decisions taken at a meeting have immediate effect (they are not dependent on approval)

Produce them quickly with a draft for the Chair to check (not rewrite)

Circulate minutes to members within 10 days of a meeting

Publish the minutes to the public but mark them draft

They do not become valid until signed by the Chair at the next meeting

If changes are made at the next meeting:

Record the wording in the minutes of that meeting

Make long-hand changes to the original minutes signed by the Chair and dated  
Retain signed minutes for the archive and a copy for public inspection

## **6 Standards relating to reports**

Some matters require a report to consider all the facts

These should be distributed with the agenda and published (for transparency)

## **7 Standards relating to exclusion of the public (Binegar Standing Order 1c)**

Record decisions to exclude the public, make clear to which matter the exclusion applied

The motion should read:

“That in view of the special/confidential nature of the business about to be transacted it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded. . .”

State the special reasons

August 2013

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<sup>i</sup> *Governance Toolkit for Parish and Town Councils*, Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors, Society of Local Council Clerks, The Standards Board for England, National Association of Local Councils, Local Government Association, 2009.

<sup>ii</sup> “The minutes of a meeting shall record the names of councillors present and absent (Binegar Standing Order 1n).

<sup>iii</sup> Where motions are submitted in writing in advance by a Councillor, record the names of the proposer and seconder (Binegar Standing Order 5).