

## Parish Council powers

The powers which have been vested in parish, town and community councils by Acts of Parliament are summarised here as a guide to councillors and others. Each description is brief and intended to be a general indication. Like all powers given to public bodies the powers of local councils are defined in detail in legislation and these details may include the requirements to obtain consent of another body (for example the approval of the county council for the provision of a car park). Local councils must exercise their powers subject to the provisions of general law (for example planning consent is necessary for a sports pavilion). Information on all these details should be available from the Parish Clerk.

The powers are listed alphabetically. Where a power is marked with an asterisk the council may, in addition to exercising the power itself, help another body to act by giving financial assistance.

**Allotments:** provision and maintenance of allotments for cultivation.

**Arts\*:** developing and improving knowledge of arts and the crafts which serve the arts.

**Baths:** provision of baths and wash-houses (which in modern terms may mean a launderette.)

**Borrowing:** Parish, town or community councils can borrow money for up to 25 years with loan sanction consent. The council must have loan sanction before borrowing.

**Cemeteries\*:** provision and maintenance of burial grounds, cemeteries or crematoria.

**Churchyards:** power to contribute to the cost of a churchyard in use and the duty to maintain any closed churchyard where the duty has been transferred by the Church of England.

**Clocks\*:** provision and maintenance of public clocks, on churches or elsewhere/.

**Commons:** power to protect any finally registered common which has no registered owner.

**Entertainments\*:** provision of any form of entertainment and any premises for giving entertainments. (This includes maintaining bands or orchestras and providing for dancing.)

**Halls\*:** provision of buildings for public meetings and functions, for indoor sports or physical recreation, or for the use of clubs or societies having recreational, social or athletic objects.

**Legal Proceedings:** power to prosecute and defend any legal proceedings in the interest of the inhabitants. Power to take part in any public local enquiry.

**Lighting:** provision and maintenance of any footway lighting which lights roads or pavements providing the columns are not above a specified height.

**Litter\*:** provision of litter bins in streets and support for anti-litter campaigns.

**Mortuaries:** provision of mortuaries and post mortem rooms.

**Open Spaces:** provision and management of public open spaces, pleasure grounds and public walks.

**Parking Places:** provision and management of car and cycle parks.

**Parks:** provision and maintenance of public parks and appropriate facilities.

**Planning:** local councils have a right to be notified of any planning application affecting their area and to make comments which the planning authority must take into account.

**Playing Fields\*:** provision and maintenance of land for any kind of outdoor recreation, including boating pools.

**Ponds\*:** power to deal with ponds, pools, or other places containing filth or matter prejudicial to health.

**Post & Telephones:** power to guarantee the postal or telephone authorities against a loss on a facility.

**Public Lavatories:** provision and maintenance of public lavatories.

**Rights of Way:** maintenance of public footpaths and bridleways.

**Roadside Verges:** power to plant and maintain roadside verges.

**Seats\*:** provision and maintenance of public seats on the highway.

**Shelters\*:** provision and maintenance of shelters for general public use and also particularly for bus passengers.

**Signs:** power to erect signs which warn of dangers or announce a place name, or indicate a bus stop.

**Swimming\*:** provision of indoor or outdoor swimming pools or bathing places.

**Tourism:** provision of facilities for conferences and encouragement of recreational and business tourism.

**Village Greens\*:** powers to maintain the village or town green.

**General Expenditure Power:** in any situation not covered by one of the specific powers described above a council may spend money on any purpose which in its opinion is of direct benefit to its area or to the inhabitants. The total expenditure by the council under this general power (often referred to as Section 137 expenditure) must not exceed the sum directed by Central Government – for the 2011/12 financial year it was set at £6.55 per local government elector in the Parish.