

Powers and Duties of Local Councils

Local Councils have a wide range of powers and duties. The following table sets out the main ones; it is not a complete list of every single power and duty.

Function	Powers & Duties	Statutory Provisions
Allotments	Duty to provide allotments. Power to improve and adapt land for allotments, and to let grazing rights	Small Holding & Allotments Act 1908, ss. 23, 26, and 42
Baths and washhouses	Power to provide public baths and washhouses	Public Health Act 1936, ss. 221, 222, 223 and 227
Burial grounds, cemeteries and crematoria	Power to acquire and maintain Power to provide Power to agree to maintain monuments and memorials Power to contribute towards expenses of cemeteries	Open Spaces Act 1906, Ss 9 and 10; Local Government Act 1972, s. 214; Parish Councils and Burial Authorities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1970, s. 1 Local Government Act 1972, s. 214(6)
Bus shelters	Power to provide and maintain shelters	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1953, s. 4
Bye-laws	Power to make bye-laws in regard to pleasure grounds Cycle parks Baths and washhouses Open spaces and burial grounds Mortuaries and post-mortem rooms	Public Health Act 1875, s. 164 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, s.57(7) Public Health Act 1936, s.223 Open Spaces Act 1906, s.15 Public Health Act 1936, s.198
Clocks	Power to provide public clocks	Parish Councils Act 1957, s.2
Closed churchyards	Powers as to maintenance	Local Government Act 1972, s.215
Common pastures	Powers in relation to providing common pasture	Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908, s.34
Conference facilities	Power to provide and encourage the use of facilities	Local Government Act 1972, s.144
Community centres Conduct	Power to provide and equip buildings for use of clubs having athletic, social or recreational objectives Duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19 Localism Act 2011, s.27
Crime prevention	Powers to install and maintain equipment and establish and maintain a scheme for detection or prevention of crime	Local Government and Rating Act 1997, s.31
	Power to contribute to police services e.g. PCSOs	Police Act 1996, s.92
	Duty on Parish Councils to consider crime reduction in every policy and action	s17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended)
Drainage	Power to deal with ponds and ditches	Public Health Act 1936, s.260
Dogs	Power to make a Dog Control Order Power to take enforcement action against those who commit an offence against a Dog Control Order	Cleaner Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
Entertainment and the arts	Provision of entertainment and support of the arts	Local Government Act 1972, s.145
Flyposting and Graffiti	Power to take enforcement action against those that flypost or graffiti	Cleaner Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

General Power of Competence	Power to do anything that an individual may do (eligible Councils only)	Localism Act 2011, s.1
Gifts	Power to accept	Local Government Act 1972, s.139
Highways	Power to maintain roadside verges, with the consent of the highway authority Power to maintain footpaths and bridleways Power to light roads and public places Provision of litter bins Powers to provide parking places for bicycles and motor-cycles, and other vehicles Power to enter into agreement as to dedication and widening Power to provide roadside seats and shelters Consent of parish council required for ending maintenance of highway at public expense, or for stopping up or diversion of highway Power to complain to highway authority as to unlawful stopping up or obstruction of highway or unlawful encroachment on roadside wastes Power to provide traffic signs and other objects or devices warning of danger Power to plant trees and lay out grass verges etc. and to maintain them	Highways Act 1980 section 96 (5) Highways Act 1980, ss.43,50 Parish Councils Act 1957, s.3; Highways Act 1980, s.301 Litter Act 1983, ss.5,6 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, ss.57,63 Highways Act 1980, ss.30,72 Parish Councils Act 1957, s.1 Highways Act 1980, ss.47,116 Highways Act 1980, s.130 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, s.72 Highways Act 1980, s.96
Investments	Power to participate in schemes of collective investment	Trustee Investments Act 1961, s.11
Land	Power to acquire by agreement, to appropriate, to dispose of Power to accept gifts of land	Local Government Act 1972, ss.124, 126, 127 Local Government Act 1972, s.139
Litter	Provision of receptacles Power to take enforcement action against those that litter	Litter Act 1983, ss.5,6 Cleaner Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
Lotteries	Powers to promote	Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976, s.7
Mortuaries and post mortem rooms Neighbourhood Planning	Powers to provide mortuaries and post mortem rooms Power to create a Neighbourhood Plan and other development mechanisms	Public Health Act 1936, s.198 Localism Act, s.116
Open spaces	Power to acquire land and maintain	Public Health Act 1875, s.164 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9 and 10
Parish documents	Powers to direct as to their custody	Local Government Act 1972, s.226
Public buildings and village hall	Power to provide buildings for public meetings and assemblies	Local Government Act 1972, s.133
Public conveniences	Power to provide	Public Health Act 1936, s.87
Recreation and sports	Power to provide such recreational facilities as thought fit; sports centres, swimming pools, tennis courts dance studios, bowling centres, riding schools etc	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 section 19 (1)

Recreation and sports (cont.)	Power to provide grants to voluntary organisations providing recreational facilities	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 section 19 (3)
Sustainable communities	Able to be represented on a panel of representatives to be consulted on proposals that would contribute to sustainable communities	Sustainable Communities Act 2007
Town and country planning	Right to be notified of planning applications	Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Sched.1, para. 8
Tourism	Power to encourage visitors and provide conference and other facilities	Local Government Act 1972, s.144
Traffic calming	Powers to contribute financially to traffic calming schemes	Highways Act 1980, s.274A
Transport	Powers in relation to car-sharing schemes, taxi fare concessions and information about transport Powers to make grants for bus services	Local Government and Rating Act 1997, s.26, 28 and 29 Transport Act 1985, s.106A
War memorials	Power to maintain, repair, protect and alter war memorials	War Memorials (Local Authorities' Powers) Act 1923, s.1; as extended by Local Government Act 1948, s.133
Water supply	Power to utilise well, spring or stream and to provide facilities for obtaining water from them	Public Health Act 1936, s.125