

WHAT DO PARISH COUNCILS DO?

Civil Parish Councils were established as the first tier of local government in 1894, transferring many traditional functions of the church to the new institutions. Pirbright Parish Council was inaugurated in 1895 under the chairmanship of Baron Henri de Worms who became Lord Pirbright later that year. Then, as now, concerns were raised about the condition of local roads, speeding traffic, maintenance of the village green, footpaths and ditches. The minutes of April 1901 refer to the Railway's offer to install (gas) lighting under Pirbright and Brookwood arches, if the council would light and maintain it – the clerk replied that the railway should do this. Further references to this occur over the years, so nothing changes!

So, what *do* parish councils do?

- Parish councils act as a forum for the discussion of local matters, passing on issues to and from the borough and county councils where appropriate
- Parish councils raise money via a council tax precept, which is spent on parish projects such as the maintenance of the playground and the village green
- Pirbright Parish Council has worked with the Rural Housing Trust to find a suitable site for the building of 13 affordable houses in Cowbridge Meadow
- Pirbright Parish Council is working with Guildford BC and Surrey CC to improve the lighting and safety of Pirbright Arch
- Pirbright Parish Council has worked with Surrey County Council Highways to implement the road safety scheme in the village
- As managing trustees of Lord Pirbright's Hall and Recreation Ground, the Parish Council has an ongoing maintenance and improvement programme at the Hall and playground. Recent projects have included the widening of the entrance to the car park, installation of a fire alarm, refurbishment of the cloakrooms and installation of new equipment in the playground
- The Parish Council promotes the community and village life, supporting and encouraging the clubs, societies and other institutions
- The Parish Council is currently promoting the Community Action Plan

POWERS & DUTIES OF PARISH COUNCILS

Power	Description	Action by Pirbright Parish Council
Borrowing	Ability to borrow money for up to a maximum of 25 years with loan sanction consent	
*Cemeteries	Provision and maintenance of burial grounds, cemeteries, crematoria, mortuaries etc	
Churchyards	Power to contribute to the costs of a churchyard in use and a duty to maintain any closed churchyard where the duty has been transferred by the Church of England	PPC makes a donation towards the costs of maintaining the churchyard
*Clocks	Provision and maintenance of public clocks, on churches or elsewhere	PPC contributed towards the refurbishment of clocks at Lord Pirbright's Hall and the church
Commons	Power to protect any finally registered common which has no registered owner	PPC works with GBC who own most of our commons. PPC is a member of the Surrey Heathland Project
*Crime Prevention	Installation of equipment and establishment of schemes for the detection or prevention of crime	
*Entertainments	Provision of any form of public entertainment and any premises giving entertainments	PPC contributes to the maintenance of Lord Pirbright's Hall
*Halls	Provision of buildings for public meetings and functions, for indoor sports or physical recreation, or for clubs or societies with recreational, social or athletic objectives	Pirbright Parish Council contributes to the maintenance of Lord Pirbright's Hall. The hall is licensed for entertainment and alcohol sales
Legal proceedings	Power to prosecute and defend any legal proceedings in the interest of the inhabitants	
Lighting	Provision and maintenance of any footway lighting	
*Litter	Provision of litter bins in streets and support for anti-litter campaigns	
Open Spaces	Provision and maintenance of public open spaces, pleasure grounds and public walks	The Parish Council pays for the cutting of the wildflower meadow at Fox Corner Wildlife Area
Parking Places	Provision and management of car parks	PPC maintains car parks on the Green and at LPH
Planning	Parish Councils have a right to be notified of any planning application in the parish and to make comments that the planning authority must take into account	The Parish Council scrutinises and reports back to Guildford Borough Council on all planning applications in the parish
*Playing fields	Provision and maintenance of land for any kind of outdoor recreation	Pirbright Parish Council is responsible for the drainage and mowing of the cricket outfield

*Ponds	Power to deal with ponds, pools etc	Pirbright Parish Council maintains the pond on the Green
Public buildings and village halls	Power to provide buildings for offices and for public meetings and assemblies	Pirbright Parish Council contributes to the maintenance of Lord Pirbright's Hall and also uses the Parish Shop as a contact point and meeting place
Recreation	Power to provide and maintain recreation grounds	Pirbright Parish Council maintains the children's playground in Lord Pirbright's recreation ground
Rights of Way	Maintenance of public footpaths and bridleways	Pirbright Parish Council regularly checks footpaths throughout the parish; the ditches and surface of Blind Lane have been improved
Roadside verges	Power to plant and maintain roadside verges	Pirbright Parish Council includes the cutting of many verges in its mowing contract
*Seats	Provision and maintenance of public seats on the highway	
*Shelters	Provision and maintenance of shelters for general public use and for bus passengers	Pirbright Parish Council maintains and repairs all the bus shelters in the parish
Signs	Power to erect signs which warn of dangers or announce a place name or indicate a bus stop	
*Tourism	Provision of facilities for conferences and encouragement of tourism	
Traffic calming	Contribution towards the cost of traffic calming works provided by highways authorities	PPC has not yet been asked to contribute to any costs of the Safety Scheme
*Transport	Power to contribute to community transport schemes	Pirbright Parish Council donated to the purchase of the Peribus
*Village Green	Powers to maintain the Green	Pirbright Parish Council is responsible for the drainage and cutting the grass on the Green
War Memorials	Power to maintain, repair, protect and adapt	Pirbright Parish Council maintains the memorial in the churchyard
General expenditure	Power to spend money on any purpose not covered by one of the specific powers described above. The total expenditure under this general power must not exceed £5.86 per elector in the parish in the current financial year	The Parish Council pays 50% of the production costs of the newsletter, has donated to the School's computer suite and to the Royal British Legion

*The Council may, in addition to exercising the power itself, help another body to act by giving financial assistance.