



ROCKLANDS PARISH COUNCIL - CONSTITUTION

Parish Councils are an essential part of the structure of **local government** and have a vital role in acting on behalf of the communities they represent. They give views, on behalf of the community, on planning applications and other proposals that affect the Parish.

Rocklands Parish Council's **VISION** is to ensure Rocklands continues to be a vibrant rural village with a strong community spirit, where everybody matters. The aim is for Rocklands to be a prosperous, safe and attractive place in which to live and work for the present generation and for generations to come.

The **PURPOSE** of the Council is to work within its statutory powers to maintain and enhance the village's public amenities, and to help the people of Rocklands to improve their quality of life in accordance with the council's vision, and to work in partnership with Breckland District Council and Norfolk County Council. The Council will exercise all its **POWERS & DUTIES** (see below) in accordance with the law and this Constitution, and utilise its limited budget to achieve the greatest good for the community.

Rocklands Parish Council consists of seven councillors elected every four years. Breckland District Council maintains the Register of Electors.

Councillors agree to follow the **Code of Conduct** which is overseen by the Standards Board for England.

The Council's administrative affairs are dealt with by the Parish Clerk who is a part time employee of the Parish Council and will normally also fulfil the role of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

The Council meets in public, holding 6 or 7 meetings a year, on a Tuesday, in Rocklands Village Hall.

Election will be by ballot of the electorate of the Parish.

Where insufficient Councillors have been elected by ballot the Council may nominate at its discretion individuals for **co-option** to the Council so long as the total number of co-opted members does not exceed the number of elected members.

A person shall cease to be a member of the Council when having notified the Chairman in writing of their wish to resign.

At the Annual General Meeting held in May each year they will elect from their number a Chairman and Vice Chairman to serve for the ensuing twelve months.

The Council operates a freedom of information policy and publishes its agendas and minutes on the parish notice board and website. Any member of the public can inspect Council papers and attend Council or committee meetings. They may also inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

The Constitution may be altered and additional clauses added by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the Council present.

POWERS & DUTIES

Parish councils have the power to tax their residents to support their operations and to carry out local projects. Although there is no limit to the amount that can be raised, the money can only be raised for a limited number of purposes, defined in the 1894 Act and subsequent legislation. The "General Power of Competence" is a power awarded in 2012 to eligible councils. The exercise of powers is at the discretion of the council, but they are legally obliged to exercise duties.

Powers to provide facilities

Parish councils have powers to provide some facilities themselves, or they can contribute towards their provision by others. There are large variations in the services provided by parishes, but they can include the following:

- Support and encouragement of arts and crafts
- Provision of village halls
- Provision and maintenance of recreation grounds, parks, children's play areas, playing fields and swimming baths
- Provision and maintenance of cemeteries and crematoria
- Maintenance of closed churchyards
- Cleaning and drainage of ponds, watercourses and ditches
- Control of litter
- Provision and maintenance of public toilets
- Creation and maintenance of footpaths and bridleways
- Provision of cycle and motorcycle parking
- Acquisition and maintenance of rights of way
- Provision and maintenance of public clocks
- Maintenance of war memorials
- Encouragement of tourism
- Provision/maintenance of defibrillators

They may also provide the following, subject to the consent of the county council or unitary authority of the area in which they lie:

- Bus shelters
- Signposting of footpaths
- Lighting of footpaths
- Off-street car parks
- Provision, maintenance and protection of roadside verges

Representative powers

Parish councils must be notified by the district or county council of:

- All planning applications in their areas
- Intention to provide a burial ground in the parish
- Proposals to carry out sewerage works
- Footpath and bridleway (more generally, 'rights of way') surveys
- Intention to make byelaws in relation to hackney carriages, music and dancing, promenades, sea shore and street naming

Miscellaneous powers

In some cases, parish councils exercise the following powers:

- Creation of a neighbourhood plan
- Guardianship of common land
- Withholding of consent to stop up unclassified highways and footpaths
- Consultation on appointment of governors of primary schools
- Appointing trustees of local charities