

Parish Councillor's Guidance Public Surgeries

Listening • Helping • Representing • Making a difference



The purpose

Public surgeries give residents a chance to raise local concerns, seek advice and ask for help resolving problems.

This guidance is based on NALC guidance on councillor roles, casework and conduct.

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Before the surgery



- Advertise the date, time and venue clearly.
- Provide a private space for confidential discussions.
- Arrange a notebook or secure casework recording system.
- Know the parish council's responsibilities and how to contact the clerk and relevant organisations.

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During the surgery



- Listen carefully and allow residents to explain their concerns.
- Establish the facts, including dates, locations and what action has already been taken.
- Remain impartial and polite, even if someone is angry or upset.
- Manage expectations. Explain what you can do and what you cannot do.
- Record agreed actions and how the resident can be contacted.
- Protect confidentiality. Do not discuss one resident's case with others present.

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After the surgery



- Follow up agreed actions promptly.
- Refer issues to the appropriate council department, organisation or statutory agency.
- Keep the resident informed of progress.
- Store personal information securely and only retain what is necessary.
- Check with the resident before sharing confidential information outside the casework process.

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Parish council or Leeds City Council?



Parish council usually covers:

Local issues and concerns (e.g. parks, open spaces, street furniture, footpaths, community facilities)

Community events and initiatives

Areas within the parish boundary



Usually not the parish council's role:

Planning applications and enforcement

Housing and homelessness

Highways and road issues

Bins and waste collection

Social care and health

Major infrastructure and development

If in doubt, check with your clerk or the relevant council department.

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Confidentiality and data



- Keep personal information secure and only use it for council business.
- Do not share details with others unless you have the resident's consent or a legal reason to do so.
- Follow the council's data protection policy and the law.

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Key principles



- Be respectful, fair and open minded.
- Act within the law and your council's Code of Conduct.
- Be clear about what you can do and what you cannot do.
- Keep good records and follow up.
- Always put the interests of the community first.



A well-run parish council listens, supports residents and helps to build a stronger community.

Based on NALC guidance on councillor roles, casework and conduct.

Check your council's own policies and local arrangements.