**THE ROLE AND POWERS OF A PARISH MEETING**

**1.** A Parish Meeting is a meeting which all electors in a Civil Parish are entitled to attend. It is a form of direct democracy as opposed to the usual pattern of representative democracy. S9(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that a Parish Meeting is “for the purpose of discussing parish affairs and exercising any functions conferred on such meetings by any enactment”. It also sets out in broad terms how such a meeting should function in terms of frequency of meetings, appointment of a Chairman etc. S13(3) provides that the Chairman and the proper officer of the District Council (usually the Monitoring Officer) are Parish Trustees in whom ownership of parish property is vested and who sign contracts with the Parish Meeting.

**2.** A Parish Meeting has a number of statutory powers provided under a range of Acts of Parliament. Among them are powers to:

Hold and administer allotments

 Provide and maintain bus shelters

 Appoint trustees to parish charities

Provide burial grounds and maintain closed churchyards

Be registered as an owner of common land

Light roads and public places

Be a consultee on matters affecting rights of way

Prosecute a person who damages or encroaches on a village green

Maintain and repair war memorials

**3.** Parish Meetings are local government bodies for a number of statutory purposes; for example, they must comply with the Human Rights Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2010.

**4.** S. 39(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1972 provides that a Parish Meeting must meet its own expenses, usually by precepting on Council Tax collected by a District Council. It can only precept for expenditure relating to specific functions and powers conferred by legislation. Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 the accounts of a Parish Meeting are subject to audit in the same way as those of a parish council. They are not local authorities for the purposes of VAT legislation; they must therefore pay VAT on any purchases which carry the tax and cannot claim a refund.

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