

The difference between a ward and a parish councillor

The ward and parish/ town councillors are not an alternative to each other. Where a parish council exists, residents normally have both.

Ward councillors

- Represent residents at LCC (our cllrs represent Garforth, Swillington and Great & Little Preston Swillington, Great Preston, Little Preston, Skelton Gate, and the eastern half of Austhorpe.
- Vote on city wide budgets, policies and planning matters
- Raise issues with council departments
- Campaign and lobby for local improvements
- Help residents navigate council services

NB they have influence rather than control over local services and do other work that is not highly visible

Parish councillors

- Have their own legal powers
- Their own budget
- They focus solely on their community
- Have a dedicated mechanism for organising and supporting community events
- Formal responses to Council development and planning applications
- Hold monthly meetings in their area open to the public
- Can directly spend money on local projects and services
 - Grants
 - Caretaker schemes
 - Community events
 - Improvements to public spaces

In summary: A ward councillor is an advocate and decision maker within Leeds City Council whereas a parish council is a local body that can raise money, fund projects and directly organise improvements. eg Kippax benefits from both while Garforth has only ward councillors who are now responsible for even more recently developed areas mentioned above.

For further information please see 'A councillor's workbook on working with parish and town councils' <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/councillors-workbook-working-town-and-parish-councils> August 2025