

# Bleadon Parish Council

## Code of Conduct for Parish Councillors

### **The Ethical Framework**

Local Authorities are required to adopt a Code of Conduct which sets out rules governing the behavior of their Members and satisfies requirements of the Localism Act 2011. All elected, co-opted and independent Members of local authorities, including Parish Councils, are required to abide by their own, formally adopted, Code. The Code of Conduct seeks to ensure that Members observe the highest standards of conduct in their civic role. The Code is intended to be consistent with the seven principles:

### **THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE**

#### **SELFLESSNESS**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

#### **INTEGRITY**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people of organizations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

#### **OBJECTIVITY**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

#### **OPENNESS**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

#### **HONESTY**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

#### **LEADERSHIP**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

All text in **bold** are statutory obligations that must be complied with.

## Definitions

For the purposes of this Code a 'co-opted member' is a person who is not a member of the Council, but who is either a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Council, or a member of, and represents the Council on any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Council, and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee.

For the purposes of this Code, a 'meeting' is a meeting of the Council, any of its committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.

For the purposes of this Code, and unless otherwise expressed, a reference to a member of the Council includes a co-opted member of the Council.

## Member obligations

When a member of the Council acts, claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a representative of the Council, he/she has the following obligations.

1. He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.
2. He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.
3. He/she shall not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
4. He/she shall use the resources of the Council in accordance with its requirements.
5. He/she shall not disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure is prohibited by law.

## Registration of interests

6. **Within 28 days of this Code being adopted by the Council, or the member's election or the co-opted member's appointment (where that is later), he/shes shall register all interests which fall within the categories set out in Appendices A and B.**
7. Upon the re-election of a member or the re-appointment of a co-opted member, he/she shall within 28 days re-register any interests in Appendices A (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) and B (Other Interests).
8. **A member shall register any change to interests or new interests in Appendices A and B within 28 days of becoming aware of it.**
9. **A member need only declare on the public register of interests the existence but not the details of any interest which the Monitoring Officer agrees is a 'sensitive interest'. A sensitive interest is one which, if disclosed on a public register, could lead the member or a person connected with the member to be subject to violence or intimidation.**

## Declaration of interests

10. **Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A (disclosable pecuniary interest) the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter.** He/she only has to declare what his/her interest is if it is not already entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.
11. **Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A (disclosable pecuniary interest), which is a sensitive interest, the member shall not participate in a discussion or vote on the matter. If it is a sensitive interest which has not already been disclosed to the Monitoring Officer, the member shall disclose he/she has an interest but not the nature of it.**
12. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix B (other interests), the member shall withdraw from the meeting. He/she may speak on the matter before withdrawing only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.
13. A member only has to declare his/her interest in Appendix B (other interests) if it is not already entered in his/her register of interests or he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it or if he/she speaks on the matter before withdrawing. If he/she holds an interest in Appendix B which is a sensitive interest not already disclosed to the Monitoring Officer, he/she shall declare the interest, but not the nature of the interest.
14. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to a pecuniary interest of a friend, relative or close associate, the member shall disclose the nature of the interest and withdraw from the meeting. He/she may speak on the matter before withdrawing only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. If it is a 'sensitive interest' the member shall declare the interest but not the nature of the interest.

## **Dispensations**

15. On a request made to the Council's Chairman, the Council may grant a member a dispensation to participate in a discussion and vote on a matter at a meeting even if he/she has an interest in Appendices A (disclosable pecuniary interest) and B (other interests) and if the Council believes that the number of members otherwise prohibited from taking part in the meeting would impede the transaction of the business, or it is in the interests of the inhabitants in the Council's area to allow the member to take part or it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

## Appendix A

### DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

A 'disclosable pecuniary interest' is an interest of yourself or your partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners) within the following descriptions:

<i>Interest</i>	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner, undertakes.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contract	Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or civil partner (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the Council – (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or civil partner, have which is within the area of the Council.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of the Council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge)– (a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or civil partner, has a beneficial interest.

## Securities

Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or civil partner, has in securities of a body where–

(a) That body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council; and

(b) either –

(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or

(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

These descriptions on interests are subject to the following definitions;

“the Act” means the Localism Act 2011;

“body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest;

“director” includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;

“land” includes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income;

“member” includes a co-opted member;

“relevant authority” means the Council of which you are a member;

“relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which you give a notification for the purposes of Section 30(1) of the Act;

“relevant person” in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests means you or your spouse or civil partner or a person with whom you are living as husband and wife or a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners;

“securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

## Appendix B

### OTHER INTERESTS

Any interest [unless they are interests prescribed by regulation for inclusion in Appendix A] which relates to or is likely to affect;

- (i) any body of which the member is in a position of general control or management and to which he/she is appointed or nominated by the Council;
- (ii) any body—
  - (a) exercising functions of a public nature;
  - (b) directed to charitable purposes; or
  - (c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which the member of the Council is a member in a position of general control or management;
- (iii) any gifts or hospitality worth more than an estimated value of £50 which the member has received by virtue of his or her office

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