



Members' Code of Conduct

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Code is to assist you, as a member, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide personal checks and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, fellow members, the officer, members of the public and the reputation of the parish council.

2. Application of the Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of office of member or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues until you cease to be a member. The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction including:

- at face- to- face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments

3. General Conduct

As a member of Heytesbury Imber and Knook Parish Council you shall have regard to the Seven Principles of Public Life- **Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership.**

You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterized by the following requirements, by leadership and example. Accordingly, when acting in your capacity as a member:

- a) You must act solely in the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, a friend or close associate.
- b) You must not place yourself under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.
- c) When carrying out your public duties you must make all choices, such as making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, on merit.
- d) You are accountable for your decisions to the public and you must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office.

- e) You must be as open as possible about your decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of your authority and should be prepared to give reasons for those decisions and actions.
- f) You must declare any private interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary, that relate to your public duties, and must take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest, including registering and declaring interests in a manner conforming with the procedures set out below.
- g) You must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your authority, ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes) and you must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.
- h) You must treat other members, the officer, and public with respect. Respect means with politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in written word. Debate and having different views, ideas and opinions are all part of a healthy democracy but you should not subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to a personal attack. You can express, challenge, criticise, and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner.
- i) You must in your contact with the public treat them politely and courteously. In return you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public and you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction if a member of the public is abusive, intimidatory or threatening. This also applies to fellow members, where action could then be taken under the Code of Conduct.
- j) You must not bully any person, not harass any person, promote equalities and not discriminate unlawfully against any person. Bullying can be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying may be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident.
- k) You must not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for or on behalf of the parish council.
- l) You must not disclose information given to you in confidence or acquired by you which you believe or ought reasonably to be aware is of a confidential nature unless : you have received the consent of a person authorised to give it; you are required by law to do so, or the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or the disclosure is: reasonable and in the public interest; and made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and you have consulted the monitoring officer prior to its release.
- m) You must not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of your role as a member for the advancement of yourself, your friends, your family, your employer or your business interests.
- n) You must not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.
- o) You must not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on your part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or

do business with the parish council or for persons who may apply to the parish council for any permission or other significant advantage.

- p) You must register with the monitoring officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt, and register with the monitoring officer any significant gift or hospitality that you have been offered but refused to accept, however you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a member such as gifts from family or friends. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a member.
- q) You must cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination, not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings, and comply with any sanction imposed on you following a finding that you have breached the Code of Conduct.

4. Registering and Declaring Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

- a) You must, within 28 days of taking office as a member notify your authority's monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State, where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners.
- b) In addition, you must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify your authority's monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests which your authority has decided should be included in the register.
- c) If an interest has not been entered onto the authority's register you must disclose the interest to any meeting of authority at which you are present, where you have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a sensitive interest.
- d) Following any disclosure of an interest which is not on the authority's register or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the monitoring officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.
- e) Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State. Additionally, you must observe the restrictions your authority places on your involvement in matters where you have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest as defined by your authority.