

# **HAMPSTHWAITE PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT**

**ADOPTED: 11 NOVEMBER 2019**

**REVIEWED: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**Review date: December 2021**

This Code sets out the standards of behaviour required of you whenever you are acting as a Councillor or Co-opted Member of Hampsthwaite Parish Council.

You must sign an Undertaking to comply with this Code of Conduct before acting as a Councillor.

The Code has been adopted by the Parish Council and also requires compliance with the general principles of public life as set out at the end of the document. The Council has established procedures to deal with any allegations of breaches of the code.

1. You must not treat others with disrespect.
2. You must not do anything which may cause the Parish Council to breach any equality enactment.
3. You must not bully or intimidate any person, or attempt to bully or intimidate them.
4. You must not do anything which compromises the impartiality of anyone who works for or on behalf of the Council, or do anything that is likely to compromise their impartiality.
5. You must not disclose information which is given to you in confidence or which you believe is of a confidential nature, or ought reasonably to be aware is of a confidential nature, unless:
  - You have the permission of a person authorised to give it; or
  - You are required by law to disclose the information; or
  - You disclose it to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice, provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
  - The disclosure is reasonable; and is in the public interest; and is made in good faith; and is only made after having complied with any reasonable requirements of the Council to delay disclosure or to maintain confidentiality.

Before disclosing any information under this paragraph, you must consult the Monitoring Officer or his deputy and/or the Chief Executive. Names are available from Harrogate Borough Council.

6. You must not prevent another person gaining access to information which that person is entitled to by law.
7. You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing the Parish Council into disrepute.
8. You must not use your position as a Parish Councillor improperly to obtain any advantage or disadvantage for yourself or any other person, or attempt to do so.

9. You must not take part in the scrutiny of any decision you have been involved in making – except that you may provide evidence or opinion to those undertaking any scrutiny process.
10. You must not accept any gift or hospitality which could reasonably be perceived as creating an obligation upon the Council or upon yourself as a Councillor. If you do accept any gift or hospitality which might be attributable to your membership of the Council (other than the refreshments which might usually be expected at a Council meeting or civic function) you must disclose this or any offer of such gift or hospitality, to the Monitoring Officer.
11. You must act in accordance with the Council's guidance or requirements when using the resources of the Council (such as office time, IT and copying equipment, or physical materials), or when authorising others to use them, and must ensure that those resources are not used improperly for political or other purposes.
12. You must have regard to relevant advice given by the Council's Responsible Financial Officer (The Parish Clerk) when making decisions and must give reasons for those decisions, in accordance with any requirements imposed by statute or the Council.
13. You must comply with the following section of this Code, which relates to registering and declaring in meetings any personal and prejudicial interests you may have, until new statutory provisions relating to these matters come into force, as set out in Statutory Instruments under the Localism Act 2011. Thereafter you must comply with the requirements of those statutory provisions, until the Council adopts and brings into force a revised Code which satisfies the requirements of the new statutory provisions. This includes complying with any procedure rule adopted by the Council which requires Members to leave the room during any meeting at which a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest is being discussed.

## **INTERESTS**

### **Personal Interests**

14. (1) you have a personal interest in any business of your authority where either:
  - (a) It relates to or is likely to affect:
    - (i) Any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority;
    - (ii) Any body:

- (aa) exercising functions of a public nature;
  - (bb) directed to charitable purposes; or
  - (cc) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union), of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;
- (iii) Any employment or business carried on by you;
  - (iv) Any person or body who employs or has appointed you;
  - (v) any person or body, other than a relevant authority, who has made a payment to you in respect of your election or any expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties;
  - (vi) any person or body who has a place of business or land in your authority's area, and in whom you have a beneficial interest in a class of securities of that person or body that exceeds the nominal value of £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital (whichever is the lower);
  - (vii) any contract for goods, services or works made between your authority and you or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (vi);
  - (viii) The interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25;
  - (ix) Any land in your authority's area in which you have a beneficial interest;
  - (x) any land where the landlord is your authority and you are, or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (vi) is, the tenant;
  - (xi) Any land in the authority's area for which you have a licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy for 28 days or longer; or
- (b) A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of:
    - (i) Other Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward, affected by the decision;

- (2) In sub-paragraph (1) (b) a relevant person is:
- (a) A member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association; or
  - (b) Any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;
  - (c) Any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
  - (d) Any body of a type described in sub-paragraph (1) (a) (i) or (ii).

### **Disclosure of Personal Interests**

15. (1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) to (7), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you attend a meeting of your authority at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.
- (2) Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority which relates to or is likely to affect a person described in paragraph 14(1) (a) (ii) (a), you need only disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest when you address the meeting on that business.
- (3) Where you have a personal interest in any business of the authority of the type mentioned in paragraph 14(1) (aa) (viii), you need not disclose the nature or existence of that interest to the meeting if the interest was registered more than three years before the date of the meeting.
- (4) Sub-paragraph (1) only applies where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of that personal interest.
- (5) Where you have a personal interest but, by virtue of paragraph 20, sensitive information relating to it is not registered in your authority's register of members' interests, you must indicate to the meeting that you have a personal interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information to the meeting.
- (6) Subject to paragraph 18(1) (b), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must ensure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of that interest.

- (7) In this paragraph “executive decision” is to be construed in accordance with any regulations made by the Secretary of State under Section 22 of the Local Government Act 2000.

### **Prejudicial Interest Generally**

16. (1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority you also have a prejudicial interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.
- (2) You do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the authority where that business;
- (a) Does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in paragraph 14;
  - (b) does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in paragraph 14; or
  - (c) Relates to the functions of your authority in respect of:
    - (i) Housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
    - (ii) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
    - (iii) Statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
    - (iv) An allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
    - (v) Any ceremonial honour given to members; and
    - (vi) Setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

## **Prejudicial interests arising in relation to Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

17. You also have a prejudicial interest in any business before an overview and scrutiny committee of your authority (or of a sub-committee of such a committee) where;
- (1) That business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by your authority's executive or another of your authority's committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees; and
  - (2) At the time the decision was made or action was taken, you were a member of the executive, committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee mentioned in paragraph (a) and you were present when that decision was made or action was taken.

## **Effect of prejudicial interests on participation**

18. (1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of your authority;

(a) You must withdraw from the room or chamber where a meeting considering the business is being held;

(i) In a case where sub-paragraph (2) applies, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence;

(ii) In any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at that meeting;

Unless you have obtained a dispensation from your authority's Standards Committee;

(b) You must not exercise executive functions in relation to that business; and

(c) You must not seek improperly to influence a decision about that business.

(2) where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of your authority, you may attend a meeting (including a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of your authority or of a sub-committee of such a committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

## **REGISTRATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

### **Registration of Members' Interests**

19. (1) Subject to paragraph 20, you must, within 28 days of:
- (a) This Code being adopted by or applied to your authority; or
  - (b) Your election or appointment to office (where that is later),

Register in your authority's register of members' interests (maintained under Section 81(1) of the Local Government Act 2000) details of your personal interests where they fall within a category mentioned in paragraph 14(1)(a), by providing written notification to your authority's monitoring officer.

(2) Subject to paragraph 20, you must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new personal interest or change to any personal interest registered under paragraph (1), register details of that new personal interest or change by providing written notification to your authority's monitoring officer.

### **Sensitive Information**

20. (1) Where you consider that the information relating to any of your personal interests is sensitive information, and your authority's monitoring officer agrees, you need not include that information when registering that interest, or, as the case may be, a change to that interest under paragraph 19.
- (2) You must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any change of circumstances which means that information excluded under paragraph (1) is no longer sensitive information, notify your authority's monitoring officer asking that the information be included in your authority's register of members' interests.
- (3) In this Code, "sensitive information" means information whose availability for inspection by the public creates, or is likely to create, a serious risk that you or a person who lives with you may be subjected to violence or intimidation.
21. If you are in any doubt as to your position under the Code of Conduct please consult the Monitoring Officer or his Deputy.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE**

### Selflessness

1. You should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

### Honesty and Integrity

2. You should not behave improperly, should not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

### Objectivity

3. You should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

### Accountability

4. You should be accountable to the public for your actions and the manner in which you carry out your responsibilities, and should cooperate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to your office.

### Openness

5. You should be as open as possible about your actions and those of the Parish Council, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

### Personal Judgement

6. You may take account of the views of others, including your political group, but should reach your own conclusions on the issues before you and act in accordance with those conclusions.

### Respect for Others

7. You should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. You should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers, and its other employees.

### Duty to Uphold the Law

8. You should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in you.

### Stewardship

9. You should do whatever you are able to do, to ensure that the Parish Council uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

#### Leadership

10. You should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should always act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.