



WAREHAM TOWN COUNCIL MEMBER'S CODE OF CONDUCT

Adopted 3 November 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 Wareham Town Council has a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its councillors. This Code of Conduct sets out the conduct that is expected of councillors when carrying out Council business or representing the Council.

1.2 The Code of Conduct is to be interpreted in a way that is consistent with the following principles:

Selflessness: Councillors should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity: Councillors must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations 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: Councillors must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability: Councillors are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness: Councillors should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty: Councillors should be truthful.

Leadership: Councillors should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

2. General Obligations

2.1. A Councillor must

- (a) comply with this Code of Conduct and any other of the Council's policies, protocols and other procedures relating to the conduct of councillors;
- (b) treat others with respect;
- (c) when using or authorising the use by others of the Council resources act in accordance with the Council's reasonable requirements;
- (d) take into account any relevant advice provided by the Town Clerk when reaching decisions on any matter
- (e) inform the Town Clerk of the receipt of any gifts and hospitality that they estimate has a value of more than £50 and the name of person providing the gift or hospitality.

2.2 A Councillor must not –

- (a) do anything which may cause the Council to breach the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) bully any person;
- (c) intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is or is likely to be –

- (i) a complainant,
- (ii) a witness, or
- (iii) involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings, in relation to an allegation that a councillor (including them) has failed to comply with this Code of Conduct; or
- (d) do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.
- (e) disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by them which they believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where –
 - (i) they have the consent of a person authorised to give it;
 - (ii) they are required by law to do so;
 - (iii) the disclosure is made 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
 - (iv) the disclosure is reasonable and in the public interest; and is made in good faith and in compliance with the Council's reasonable requirements;
- (f) prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law; or
- (g) behave in a way which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or the Council into disrepute;
- (h) use or attempt to use their position improperly to confer on or secure for them or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage; or
- (i) use the Council's resources improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes).

3. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

3.1 A Councillor must register any disclosable pecuniary interest that they or their husband or wife, civil partner or any person that they are living with as husband or wife or civil partner, as if they are their own interests, when they know about them.

3.2 A Councillor must register any disclosable pecuniary interests with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of:

- (a) being elected or appointed to office;
- (b) this Code of Conduct being adopted;
- (c) declaring an unregistered interest at a meeting of the Council; and
- (d) becoming aware of any new interests or changes in those interests

3.3 A Councillor who is aware or ought reasonably to be aware that they have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any business of the Council who attends a meeting of the Council at which that business is discussed, must disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of the interest at the beginning of the meeting or when it becomes apparent that they have such an interest. Where information about an interest has been agreed with the Town Clerk to be sensitive, the Councillor need only declare the existence of the interest.

3.4 A Councillor who has a disclosable pecuniary interest in any business of the Council must not take part in the consideration of that business and must withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held unless they have been granted a dispensation by the Town Clerk.

4. Sensitive interests

Where you have an interest (whether or not it is a disclosable pecuniary interest) and the nature of the interest is such that you and the Town Clerk consider the disclosure could lead to you or a person connected with you being subject to violence or intimidation, special rules apply to registration of the interest. The elements of the Register of Interests that are in the public domain must not include details of the interest but will instead refer to the details being withheld in accordance with section 32 of the Localism Act. You need to disclose the interest at a meeting, but the disclosure is limited to a statement that you have a disclosable pecuniary interest which falls within an exemption in the Act without further details being given.

5. Gifts and Hospitality

The Council will maintain a public Register of Gifts and Hospitality to you and your party. This is for Gifts and Hospitality which exceed an estimated £50 in value at any one time. You are asked to keep this Register up to date by notifying (in writing) the Town Clerk and Monitoring Officer within 28 days of any receipt of such a gift or hospitality so that this can be entered in the Register. Such matters are not included in the Regulations for disclosable pecuniary interests and therefore will not require a disclosure and withdrawal at a business meeting.

6. Monitoring and review

This Code will be kept under review by the Council