

SOMERCOTES PARISH COUNCIL

MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Principles of Conduct

1.1. As a member or co-opted member of Somercotes Parish Council I have a responsibility to represent the community and work constructively with our staff and partner organisations to secure better social, economic and environmental outcomes for all.

1.2. In accordance with the Localism Act provisions, when acting in this capacity I am committed to behaving in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve best value for our residents and maintain public confidence in this authority.

- **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 should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **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.

- Bullying and harassment: Holders of public office must treat others with respect and must not pursue a course of conduct which amounts to bullying or harassment of another.
- Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

2. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

2.1. I shall

- 2.1.1. comply with the statutory and local requirements to register, disclose and withdraw from participating in respect of any matter in which I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest;
- 2.1.2. ensure that my register of interests is submitted to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of my election or appointment or the Code being applied and is kept up to date and I shall notify the Monitoring Officer in writing within 28 days of becoming aware of any change in respect of my Disclosable Pecuniary Interests;
- 2.1.3. make verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest at any meeting at which I am present at which an item of business which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent (unless the interest is a sensitive interest in which event there is no need to disclose the nature of the interest)
- 2.1.4. not vote on any matter which may affect the calculation of the Council Tax, any limitation of it, its administration or related penalties or enforcement if I am two or more months in arrears with a Council Tax payment.

2.2. "Meeting" means any meeting organised by or on behalf of the Parish Council, including:-

- any meeting of the Council, or a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council
- any briefing by the Proper Officer of the Council (Clerk); and

- any site visit to do with business of the authority

3. Other Interests

3.1. In addition to the requirements of Paragraph 2, if I attend a meeting at which any item of business is to be considered and I am aware that I have a “non-disclosable pecuniary interest” or “personal interest” in that item, I shall make verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.

3.2. I have a “non-disclosable pecuniary interest” or “personal interest” in an item of business of my authority where:-

3.2.1. a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well being or financial standing of me or a member of my family or a person with whom I have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward for which I have been elected or otherwise of the authority’s administrative area, or

3.2.2. it relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests listed in the Table in Schedule 1 to this Code, but in respect of a member of my family (other than my spouse, civil partner or person with whom I am living as spouse or civil partner) or a person with whom I have a close association

and that interest is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.

3.3. If I have a “non-disclosable pecuniary interest” or “personal interest” as defined in paragraph 3.2 above and that interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice my judgement of the public interest, I shall when present at a meeting, disclose the interest and leave the room prior to the discussion and voting on the item as required under the Council’s Rules of Procedure.

3.4. Examples of the type of interest in paragraph 3.3 are

- such matters affecting my financial position (excluding members’ allowances/indemnity, the setting of Council Tax or civic award) or other persons or bodies with which I have a close association (eg considering an application for

a grant relating to a body or another authority of which I am a member or otherwise have an interest);

- such matters relating to the determining of any regulatory matters and particularly planning and licensing applications;
- other circumstances defined in documents approved by the Council.

3.5. When deciding whether I have an interest in a matter, I shall have regard to any advice from the Proper Officer to the Council (Clerk) or best practice issued by the Monitoring Officer in reaching my decision.

4. Local requirements relating to both Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests

4.1. I shall

4.1.1. under the Council's best practice policy, seek advice from the Proper Officer to the Council (Clerk), where needed, on matters relating to my interests and where the interest relates to a meeting, this shall be done by no later than 5pm two working days before the meeting; and

4.1.2. prior to the start of a meeting, record in writing on the form provided any relevant interest I have and record whether I intend to remain in the meeting or leave.

5. General conduct

As a Member of Somercotes Parish Council, my conduct will in particular address the statutory principles of the code of conduct by:

5.1. Championing the needs of residents – the whole community and in a special way my constituents, including those who did not vote for me – and putting their interests first.

5.2. Dealing with representations or enquiries from residents, members of our communities and visitors fairly, appropriately and impartially.

5.3. Not allowing other pressures, including the financial interests of myself or others connected to me, to deter me from pursuing constituents' casework, the interests of the Parish or the good governance of the authority in a proper manner.

- 5.4. Exercising independent judgement and not compromising my position by placing myself under obligations to outside individuals or organisations who might seek to influence the way I perform my duties as a member/co-opted member of this Council.
- 5.5. Listening to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other professional officers, taking all relevant information into consideration, remaining objective and making decisions on merit.
- 5.6. Being accountable for my decisions and co-operating when scrutinised internally and externally, including by local residents.
- 5.7. Contributing to making this Council's decision-making processes as open and transparent as possible to enable residents to understand the reasoning behind those decisions and to be informed when holding me and other members to account but restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it.
- 5.8. Behaving in accordance with all our legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within this authority's policies, protocols and procedures, including on the use of the authority's resources.
- 5.9. Valuing my colleagues and staff and engaging with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect between us that is essential to good local government.
- 5.10. Always treating people with respect, including the organisations and public I engage with and those I work alongside.
- 5.11. Providing leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community with other organisations as well as within this authority.

6. Additional local requirements

- 6.1. I shall conduct myself in accordance with the requirements set out in the following documents, copies of which are available in the Parish Council Office.
- 6.2. Protocol on the use of resources.
 - Local code of good practice for councillors dealing with planning matters.

- Bullying and harassment policy.
- Protocol on Member relations.
- Member relations – what councillors can expect from officers and what officers can expect from councillors.
- IT, email and internet policies.
- Counter-fraud and corruption policy.

6.3. Upon my election or appointment to the Council, I shall sign an undertaking to observe this Code of Conduct and the standards of behaviour set out in the Council's Local Election Compact detailed in Schedule 2.

7. Application of the Members' Code of Conduct

7.1. This Code of Conduct shall apply with effect from 1 July 2012 to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour by its Members and Co-opted Members whenever they conduct the business of the Council including the business of the office to which they were elected or appointed or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council.