

STOKE ST GREGORY PARISH COUNCIL

MEMBER'S CODE OF CONDUCT

Adopted 14 November 2016

This Code is based on the Model supplied by the National Association of Local Councils and the Somerset Association of Local Councils, as amended in July 2012. Some further guidance may be found in the Standing Orders adopted by the Council.

Introduction

Pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, Stoke St Gregory Parish Council ('the Council') has adopted this Code of Conduct 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.

This Code of Conduct is based on the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership set out in Appendix C.

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/she 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.
- 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 financial 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 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) 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:

Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation: An employment, office trade profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

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 M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M.

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 the relevant person (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 is within the area of the Council.

Licences: Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the Council for a month or longer.

Corporate tenancies: Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge) –
(a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.

Securities: Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where –
(a) that body (to M's 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 the relevant person 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;

"M" means the person M referred to in section 30 of the Act;

"member" includes a co-opted member;

"relevant authority" means the Council of which M is a member;

"relevant period" means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) of the Act;

"relevant person" in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests means M or M's spouse or civil partner or a person with whom M is living as husband and wife or a person with whom M is living as if they 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

[Unless they are interests prescribed by regulation for inclusion in Appendix A] any interest 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.

Appendix C: 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 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.

Leadership

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

