

Catfield Parish Council Code of Conduct

As a member or co-opted member of Catfield Parish Council I:

- i) Accept and fully understand my responsibilities to represent and serve the parishioners, take note of their concerns and offer advice and help where possible.
- ii) Will work closely and positively with our staff, contractors, county and district councillors, local government officers and staff and, **most importantly each other**, in pursuit of maintaining and when possible, improving social, economic and environmental outcomes for all.
- iii) Will act entirely in the public interest, never to seek personal financial or material gain or benefits for myself, family or friends.
- iv) Never commit myself to financial or other obligations to outside individuals or organisations that may seek to influence my decision making or performance of my duties.
- v) Will remain entirely objective when conducting public business, considering only merit when making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.
- vi) Will accept accountability for my decisions and actions and readily submit myself to all appropriate scrutiny relevant to my office.
- vii) Will remain open and honest and readily offer reasons about all decisions I may take, restricting information only when there are indisputable justifications to show this would be in the wider public interest.
- viii) Will register and disclose my interests that could be incompatible with my public duties and conflict in protection of public interests.
- ix) Will lead by example in support of the ethics contained within this Code of Conduct.
- x) Have the right of free and open speech at council meetings without fear of reprisals.

I will never lose sight of:

- i) My obligations in advocating the needs of all parishioners, including those who may not have supported my appointment, and the need to put their interests first.
- ii) The need to deal with the representations and enquires from residents and visitors in a timely, fair, appropriate and impartial manner.
- iii) The need to ensure my actions could never bring the Parish Council into disrepute.
- iv) The need for transparency in all aspects of Parish Council undertakings.

When engaging with parishioners and my colleagues I will:

- i) Behave in a courteous manner and extend and expect the levels of respect commensurate within polite society.
- ii) Treat everybody with equal respect.
- iii) Refrain from behaviour that could be construed as bullying as defined within this code of conduct.
- iv) Understand that in line with the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 10) I have a right to freedom of expression and, within the confines of councillors engaging in healthy debate, a degree of the immoderate, offensive, shocking, disturbing, exaggerated, provocative, polemical,

- colourful, emotive non-rational and aggressive behaviour that would not normally be acceptable outside that context is to be tolerated.
- v) Accept that as a councillor I am expected to have a thicker skin and more tolerance to comment than ordinary citizens.

Bullying for the purposes of the 'Code of Conduct' is defined as:

- abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments (including belittling, demeaning or patronising someone, especially in front of others)
- unjustified or unreasonable criticism or complaints
- singling someone out and treating them differently from others
- withholding information, supervision, consultation, training or resources deliberately to prevent someone doing their job
- setting unreasonable timelines or constantly changing deadlines
- spreading misinformation or malicious rumours
- setting tasks that are unreasonably below or above someone's skill level
- humiliating, shouting at or threatening someone
- excluding someone from taking part in activities that relate to their work
- teasing or playing practical jokes
- playing mind games, ganging up or other psychological harassment
- intimidation (making someone feel less important and undervalued).

These definitions make clear that bullying and harassment are instances of serious misconduct. By their nature they are likely to be persistent behaviour rather than one-off instances. A councillor should not be considered to be bullying or harassing an officer or another councillor simply by making persistent enquiries or requests for information, nor by saying something that the individual concerned simply dislikes or with which they strongly disagree. Genuine instances of bullying and harassment will fall outside the limits of legitimate inquiries of free expression; but equally accusations of such behaviour should not be used as an attempt to restrict legitimate inquiries of free expression.

Application of the code of practice:

- i) The code will be provided to each councillor as soon as they accept the office of councillor along with the declaration of interests.
- ii) Councillors will sign to confirm they have received this code and not some other applies to them.
- iii) Without fail the code will be presented to the Parish Council annually, at a specified meeting, for consideration, modification and reapproval.

- iv) The current code of conduct will, without fail, be published on the Parish Council website together with its most recent approval date.

Appendix 'A' and Appendix 'B' form an integral part of this code of conduct.

Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office 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 disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office 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

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office 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.

Appendix B Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

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"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or 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.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which ***directly relates*** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which ***affects*** –
- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative, close associate; or
 - c. a body included in those you need to disclose under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter ***affects*** your financial interest or well-being:
- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
 - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. 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 make sure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of your interest.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]

Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the
	councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) 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 and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. ‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licenses	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 the councillor’s knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.

Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor'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 councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

'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.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- b) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) any body directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)