



## **Code of Conduct**

Last Reviewed 13<sup>th</sup> March 2019, Minute ref TC19/47

### **Introduction to the Code**

This Code of Conduct is a key part of Reepham Town Council's discharge of its statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its members. It is very much focused upon the principles of conduct in public life of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership and it is the intention of the Council that the Code be used exclusively in that context and not for any other purpose. It sets an objective, non political and high standard whose purpose is to remind members of the Council of the behaviour expected of them in public life and to set out clearly the key principles against which their conduct will be measured.

The Code also contains provisions for registration and declaration of interests the breach of which will now attract potential criminal sanctions.

Broadland District Council will establish a Standards Committee to hear breaches of the Code and decide on sanctions against members found to be in default. Working closely with Broadland District Council's Monitoring Officer and Independent Person the Standards Committee will oversee a straightforward and robust regime dealing only with substantial ethics and standards issues and filtering out the inconsequential, trivial and vexatious. The Code will deal in broad common sense principles and neither it nor the supporting arrangements are intended to be over-technical or over-procedural. To return to the wording of the statute the Code is Reepham Town Council's public statement on the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct in public life.

Every member of Reepham Town Council must sign an undertaking to observe the Code in the terms set out below.

### **The Code**

As a member of Reepham Town 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.

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 Council.

**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.

As a Member of Reepham Town Council my conduct will in particular address the statutory principles of the Code by:

- Championing the needs of residents and the whole community and putting their interests first.
- Dealing with representations or enquiries from residents, members of our communities and visitors fairly, appropriately and impartially.
- Not allowing other pressures, including the financial interests of myself or others connected to me, to deter me from neither the interests of Reepham and its residents nor the good governance of the Council in a proper manner.
- 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 of this Council.
- Listening to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other professional officers and bodies, taking all relevant information into consideration, remaining objective and making decisions on merit.

- Being accountable for my decisions and co-operating when scrutinised internally and externally, including by local residents.
- Contributing to making Reepham Town 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
- Behaving in accordance with all our legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within this Council's policies, protocols and procedures, including on the use of the Council's resources.
- 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.
- Always treating people with respect, including the organisations and public I engage with and those I work alongside.
- Providing leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community with other organisations as well as within this Council.

### **Declaration of Interests**

The Localism Act 2011 further provides for registration and disclosure of interests and in Reepham Town Council this will be done as follows:

- On taking up office a member or co-opted member must, within 28 days of becoming such, notify the Monitoring Officer of any 'disclosable pecuniary interests', as prescribed by the Secretary of State.
- On re-election or re-appointments, a member or co-opted member must, within 28 days, notify the Monitoring Officer of any 'disclosable pecuniary interests not already included in his or her register of interests.
- If a member or co-opted member is aware that they have a 'disclosable pecuniary interest' in a matter they must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter at a meeting.
- If a member or co-opted member is aware of a 'disclosable pecuniary interest' in a matter under consideration at a meeting but such interest is not already on the Council's register of interests or in the process of entry onto the register having been notified to the Monitoring Officer, the member or co-opted member must disclose the 'disclosable pecuniary interest' to the meeting and register it within 28 days of the meeting at which it is first disclosed.

## **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

The duties to register, disclose and not to participate for the entire consideration of the matter, in respect of any matter in which a member has a disclosable pecuniary interest are set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011. Members are also required to withdraw from the room as stated in the Standing Orders of this Council.

Disclosable pecuniary interests are defined in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Personal Interests) Regulations 2012. Please refer to the Register of Member's Interests Form for definition.

## **Gifts and Hospitality**

- You must, within 28 days of receipt, notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any gift, benefit or hospitality with a value in excess of £50 which you have accepted as a member from any person or body other than the Town Council.
- The Monitoring Officer will place your notification on a public register of gifts and hospitality.
- This duty to notify the Monitoring Officer does not apply where the gift, benefit or hospitality comes within any description approved by the Town Council for this purpose

Signed .....

Dated.....