



COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Approved: May 2023



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS FINHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Being a duly elected Councillor/ Co-opted Member for Finham Parish Council hereby declare that I will undertake my duties as follows:

1. I will represent the community and work constructively with our staff and partner organisations to secure better social, economic and environmental outcomes for all.

2. **As a holder of public office** and as required by law I will behave in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve best value for our residents and maintain public confidence in the Council:

a. **Selflessness: *Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.***

I will act solely in terms of the public interest.

b. **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 declare and resolve any interests and relationships.***

I will avoid placing myself under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence me in my work. I will not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for myself, my family, or my friends. I will declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

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

I will act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

d. **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.***

I will be accountable to the public for my decisions and actions and will submit myself to any necessary scrutiny.

e. **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 doing so.***

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

f. **Honesty: *Holders of public office should be truthful.***

At all times I will be truthful.

g. **Leadership: *Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour.***

I will exhibit these principles in my own behaviour. I will actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

3. As a Member of Finham Parish Council, I will act in accordance with the principles in paragraph 2 and, in particular, I will
- (a) Champion the needs of residents - the whole community and all my constituents, including those who did not vote for me - and put the public interest first.
 - (b) Deal with representations or enquiries from residents, members of our communities and visitors fairly, appropriately and impartially.
 - (c) Not allow other pressures, including the financial interests of myself or others connected to me, to deter me from pursuing constituents' casework, the interests of the City of Coventry or the good governance of the Council in a proper manner.
 - (d) Exercise independent judgement and not compromise 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 Authority.
 - (e) Listen to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other professional officers, take all relevant information into consideration, remain objective and make decisions on merit.
 - (f) Be accountable for my decisions and cooperate when scrutinised internally and externally, including by local residents.
 - (g) Contribute to making the Parish Council's decision-making processes as open and transparent as possible to ensure residents understand the reasoning behind those decisions and are informed when holding me and other Members to account but restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it.
 - (h) Behave in accordance with all my legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within the Council's policies, protocols and procedures, including on the use of the Council's resources.
 - (i) Value my colleagues and staff and engage with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect between us that is essential to good local government.
 - (j) Always treat people with respect, including the organisations and public I engage with and those I work alongside.

- (k) Not bully or harass any person (including specifically any Council employee) and I will not intimidate or improperly influence, or attempt to intimidate or improperly influence, any person who is involved in any complaint about any alleged breach of this code of conduct.

Note:

Bullying may be characterised as:

- *offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour; or*
- *an abuse or misuse of power in a way that intends to undermine, humiliate, criticise unfairly or injure someone.*

Harassment may be characterised as

- *unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for an individual.*

Bullying and/or harassment may take many forms and may relate to a variety of issues. For example, bullying and harassment may relate to:

- *Age*
- *Disability*
- *gender reassignment*
- *race*
- *religion*
- *belief*
- *sex*
- *sexual orientation*

However, this list is not exhaustive, and any form of bullying or harassment is prohibited by the Code of Conduct.)

- (a) Comply with any Protocol adopted by the Council which seeks to regulate the conduct of its elected members or co-opted members and which the Council has specifically declared should fall within the provisions of this Code of Conduct
- (b) Provide leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community with other organisations as well as within this Council.
- (c) Not disclose information given to me in confidence by anyone or information acquired by me, which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, without express authority and/or unless the law requires it.
- (d) Comply and co-operate with any formal standards investigation into my conduct, or that of any other elected or co-opted member.
- (e) Not make trivial or malicious allegations that other elected or co-opted members have breached this Code of Conduct.

4. Gifts and Hospitality

4.1 I will, within 28 days of receipt, notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of any gift, benefit or hospitality with a value in excess of £25 which I have accepted as a member from any person or body other than the authority.

4.2 I acknowledge that the Monitoring Officer will place my notification on a public register of gifts and hospitality.

4.3 I am aware that this duty to notify the Monitoring Officer does not apply where the gift, benefit or hospitality comes within any description approved by the Council for this purpose.

5. Register of Interests

5.1 I will:

(a) register and, where appropriate, disclose those disclosable pecuniary interests that I am obliged to declare under the Localism Act and associated regulations; and

(b) register details of my membership of any organisation or body whose rules or requirements of membership could be regarded as suggesting a degree of loyalty to that organisation or body. I acknowledge that this could arise by reason of an organisation having an obligation of secrecy about its rules, its membership or conduct and/or a commitment of allegiance or support to that organisation or body. I understand that such organisations or bodies may or may not be charitable concerns and they may also have a local, regional, national or international aspect; and

(c) register details of my membership of any trade union within the meaning of Section 1 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

5.2 I will do this by completing, signing and submitting the prescribed form to the Monitoring Officer at Coventry City Council. I will keep the register updated and acknowledge that its contents will be published on the Council's website and will be open to the public to inspect.

6. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests Entered on the Register

6.1 I understand that if I am present at a meeting of the Council and

(a) I am aware that I have a disclosable pecuniary interest under paragraph 5.1(a) above in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting; and

(b) the interest is entered in the Council's register
I may not participate in any discussion or further discussion of an item of business or in any vote or further vote taken on that item which affects or relates to the subject matter in which I have such an interest; and I will leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place.

7. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests NOT Entered on the Register

7.1 I understand that if I am present at a meeting of the Council and

- (a) I am aware that I have a disclosable pecuniary interest under paragraph 5.1(a) above in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting; **and**
- (b) the interest is not entered in the Council's register,

I must disclose the interest to the meeting. Furthermore, I may not participate or further participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting or participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting and I will leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place.

7.2 I also understand that if an interest referred to in 7.1 above is not entered on the Council's register and is not the subject of a pending registration, I must notify the Council's Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the date of the disclosure.

7.3 If I am a member who has the power to discharge a council function acting alone, I understand that if I am aware that I have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be dealt with or being dealt with by me in the course of discharging that function:

- (a) I may not take any steps, or any further steps, in relation to the matter (except for the purpose of enabling the matter to be dealt with otherwise than by me); **and**
- (b) If the interest is not entered on the Council's register and is not the subject of a pending registration, I must notify the Council's Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of becoming aware of the interest.

8. Other Relevant Interests

8.1 I understand that I have an Other Relevant Interest (which is not a disclosable pecuniary interest) in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting) where:

- (a) a decision in relation to that matter 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, or an organisation or body under paragraph 5.1(b) or 5.1(c) above, to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which I have been elected or otherwise of the authority's administrative area; **and**
- (b) the interest is one that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice my judgement of the public interest.

- 8.2 I acknowledge that if I have an Other Relevant Interest as described in 8.1. above,—
- (a) I will make a 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; **and**
 - (b) I will not participate in any discussion or further discussion of an item of business or in any vote or further vote taken on that item which affects or relates to the subject matter in which I have an Other Relevant Interest at any meeting at which I am present and I will leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place.

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