

BRASTED PARISH COUNCIL

Code of Conduct for Members

This Code of Conduct was reviewed and adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on 8 June 2020.

Introduction

Pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, Brasted Parish 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 Parish 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 Parish Council.

In accordance with the Localism Act provisions, when acting in this capacity they are committed to behaving in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve best value for their residents and maintain public confidence in the Parish Council.

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions 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 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.

Expectations of Conduct

- Members and co-opted members shall base their conduct on a consideration of the public interest, avoid conflict between personal interest and the public interest and resolve any conflict between the two, at once, and in favour of the public interest. They shall not compromise their position by placing themselves under obligations to outside individuals or organisations who might seek to influence the way they perform their duties as a Member/co-opted Member of the Parish Council. When speaking as a Member/co-opted Member their comments shall reflect the overall Parish Council policy even if that is not their personal view.
- Members and co-opted members shall at all times conduct themselves in a manner which will tend to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of the Parish Council and never undertake any action which would bring the Parish Council, or its Members or officers generally, into disrepute.
- Members and co-opted members shall value colleagues and staff and engage with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect between them that is essential to good local government. They shall always treat people with respect, including the organisations and public they engage with and those they work alongside. They shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.
- Members and co-opted members shall at all times ensure that their use of expenses, allowances, facilities and services provided from the public purse is strictly in accordance with the rules laid down on these matters, and that they observe any limits placed by the Authority on the use of such expenses, allowances, facilities and services.
- Members and co-opted members shall behave in accordance with all legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within this Parish Council's policies, protocols and procedures, including on the use of the Parish Council's resources.
- They shall not disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure is prohibited by law.
- Members and co-opted members shall provide leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community with other organisations as well as within this Parish Council.

Definition

For the purposes of this Code, a 'co-opted member' is a person who is not a member of the Parish Council but who is either a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Parish Council.

Registration of Interests

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 with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in Appendices A and B.

Upon the re-election of a member or the re-appointment of a co-opted member, he/she shall within 28 days re-register with the Monitoring Officer any interests in Appendices A and B.

A member shall register with the Monitoring Officer any change to interests or new interests in Appendices A and B within 28 days of becoming aware of it.

A member need only declare 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 at Meetings

Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A 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.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix A 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.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix B, the member shall not vote on the matter. He/she may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting.

A member only has to declare his/her interest in Appendix B 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. 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.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to a financial interest of a friend, relative or close associate (other than an interest in Appendix A), the member shall disclose the nature of the interest and not vote on the matter. He/she may speak on the matter 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

On a written request made to the Council's proper officer, 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 and B 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

Interests described in the table below.

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any 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 to the member during the 12 month period ending on the latest date referred to in paragraph 7 above for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a member, 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 member or between his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such a 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 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	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 member or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive an income.
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 the member's knowledge): (a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the member, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member 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 member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council; and (b) either the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or 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 member, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the member 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.

* "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.

Appendix B

An 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 or in a position of general control or management;

(iii) any gifts or hospitality worth more than an estimated value of £50 which the member has received by virtue of his or her office.