



CODE OF CONDUCT

(originally adopted 28 June 2012)

Pre-amble to Code of Conduct for Members

1. Introduction

The Council is determined to provide excellent local government for the people of the Civil Parish of Shevington. It promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by Elected Members, Co-opted Members and Co-opted Committee Members and has adopted a Code of Conduct for them in line with its obligations under section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011.

2. General Principles of Conduct for Elected Members, Co-opted Members and Co-opted Committee Members

The Code and the Guidance are based on the following General Principles.

2.1 General Principles

Elected Members, Co-opted Members and Co-opted Committee Members must behave according to the highest standards of personal conduct in everything they do as a Member. In particular they must observe the following principles of conduct, some of which are set out in law.

2.2 Selflessness

Members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

2.3 Honesty and Integrity

Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

2.4 Objectivity

Members should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

2.5 Accountability

Members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.

2.6 Openness

Members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their Authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

2.7 Personal Judgement

Members may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

2.8 Respect for Others

Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the Council's statutory officers, and its other employees.

2.9 Duty to Uphold the Law

Members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

2.10 Stewardship

Members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that the Council uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

2.11 Leadership

Members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.

THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Part 1 General provisions

1. Introduction and interpretation

- 1.1 This Code applies to you as a member of Shevington Parish Council.
- 1.2 It is your responsibility to comply with this Code. Failure to do so may result in a sanction being applied by the Council or Wigan Council's Standards Committee. Failure to take appropriate action in respect of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest may result in a criminal conviction and a fine of up to £5,000 and /or disqualification from office for a period of up to 5 years. In this Code - "meeting" means any meeting of:
- (a) the Council;
 - (b) any of the Council's committees or sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees;
- 1.3 "Member" includes a Co-opted Member and a Co-opted Committee Member. "Council" means Shevington Parish Council.

2. Scope

- 2.1 Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) and (3), you must comply with this Code whenever you are acting as a member or co-opted member of the Council or a co-opted member of a committee, sub-committee, etc, and references to your official capacity are construed accordingly.
- 2.2 This Code does not have effect in relation to your conduct other than where it is in your official capacity.
- 2.3 Where you act as a representative of the Council—
- (a) on another relevant Authority, you must, when acting for that other Authority, comply with that other authority's code of conduct; or
 - (b) on any other Body, you must, when acting for that other Body, comply with this Code, except and insofar as it conflicts with any other lawful obligations to which that other Body may be subject.

3. General obligations

- 3.1 You must not:
- (a) do anything which may knowingly cause the Council to breach the Equality Act 2010;
 - (b) bully or be abusive to any person;
 - (c) intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is or is likely to be:

- (i) a complainant,
 - (ii) a witness, or
 - iii) involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings in relation to an allegation that a member (including yourself) has failed to comply with his or her Authority's code of conduct; or
- (d) do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.

4. You must not:

- (a) disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where:
 - (i) you have the consent of a person authorised to give it;
 - (ii) you are required by law to do so;
 - (iii) the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - (iv) the disclosure is:
 - (a) reasonable and in the public interest; and
 - (b) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Council; or
- (b) prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

5. You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or the Council into disrepute.

6. You:

- (a) must not use or attempt to use your position as a member improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage; and
- (b) must, when using the resources of the Council or encouraging their use by others:
 - (i) act in accordance with the Council's reasonable requirements; and
 - (ii) ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes); and

- (c) must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.
7. (1) When reaching decisions on any matter you must have regard to any relevant advice provided to you by
- (a) The Council's chief finance officer (RFO) and / or
 - (b) The Council's proper officer (Clerk),
- where that officer is acting pursuant to his or her personal statutory duties.
- (2) You must give reasons for all decisions in accordance with any statutory requirements and any reasonable additional requirements imposed by the Council.

Part 2 - Disclosable pecuniary interests

8. Notification of disclosable pecuniary interests

- 8.1 Within 28 days of becoming a member, you must notify the Clerk and Wigan Council's Monitoring Officer of any 'disclosable pecuniary interests'.
- 8.2 A 'disclosable pecuniary interest' is an interest of yourself, or of your partner, if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in the table below.
- 8.3 "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.

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 or provided within the 12 month period prior to notification of the interest in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your 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 (a).
Contracts	Any contract which is made between you or your partner (or a body in which you or your partner 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 Wigan Borough Council.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of Wigan Borough Council for a month or longer.
Corporate Tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) - (a) the landlord is the Council: and (b) the tenant is a body in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest.

Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a Body where –</p> <p>(a) that Body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of Wigan Borough Council; and</p> <p>(b) either -</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that Body; or</p> <p>(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 you or your partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>
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8.3 For the purposes of the above

- (a) " a Body in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest" means a firm in which you or your partner is a partner or a Body corporate of which you or your partner is a director, or in the securities of which you or your partner has a beneficial interest.
- (b) "director" includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.
- (c) "land" includes an easement, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for you or your partner (alone or jointly) to occupy the land or receive income, and
- (d) "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.

9 Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

9.1 If you are present at a meeting of the Council, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Council and you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting

1. You must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting.
2. You must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting.
3. If the interest is not registered, you must disclose the interest to the meeting.

4. If the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, you must notify the Clerk and Wigan Council's Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days

[Note: In addition, the Council's Standing Orders require you to leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place, and in the case of a registered (as well as unregistered interest) to disclose it to the meeting].

- 9.2 Where a member has been delegated to discharge a function alone and becomes aware of a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter being dealt with or to be dealt with by her/him, the member must notify the Clerk and Wigan Council's Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter.

10 Offences

- 10.1 It is a criminal offence to

- Fail to notify Wigan Council's Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election;
- Fail to disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest at a meeting if it is not on the register;
- Fail to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of a disclosable pecuniary interest that is not on the register that you have disclosed to a meeting;
- Participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest;
- As a member delegated to discharge a function acting alone, and having a disclosable pecuniary interest in such a matter, fail to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the interest;
- As a member delegated to discharge a function acting alone, and having a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, take any steps in relation to such a matter.
- Knowingly or recklessly providing information that is false or misleading in notifying the Monitoring Officer of a disclosable pecuniary interest or in disclosing such interest to a meeting

- 10.2 The criminal penalties available to a court are to impose a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale and disqualification from being a councillor for up to 5 years.

Part 3 - Other interests

11 Notification of personal interests

11.1 In addition to the disclosable pecuniary interests notifiable under the Localism Act 2011, you must, within 28 days of -

- (a) this Code being adopted by the Council or
- (b) your election or co-option to office (where that is later),

notify the Clerk and Monitoring Officer in writing of the details of your other personal interests, where they fall within the categories set out in paragraph 11(2) below for inclusion in the register of interests.

11.2 You have a personal interest in any business of the Council where it relates to or is likely to affect -

- (a) any Body of which you are in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council;
- (b) any Body -
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature;
 - (ii) 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), of which you are in a position of general control or management;
- (c) the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25.

12 Disclosure of interests

12.1 Subject to paragraphs 12.4 to 12.6, where you have a personal interest described in paragraph 11.2 above or in paragraph 12.2 below in any business of the Council, and where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the personal interest, and you attend a meeting of the Council at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

12.2 You also have a personal interest in any business of the Council where a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of other precept payers or inhabitants of the electoral ward affected by the decision;

12.3 In paragraph 12.2, a relevant person is -

- (a) a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association; or

- (b) any person or Body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors; or
- (c) any person or Body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
- (d) any Body of a type described in paragraph 11.2(a) or (b).

12.4 Where you have a personal interest in any business of the Council which relates to or is likely to affect a Body described in paragraph 11.2(a) or 11.2(b)(i), you need only disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest when you address the meeting on that business.

12.5 Where you have a personal interest in any business of the Council of the type mentioned in paragraph 11.2(c), (gifts and hospitality) you need not disclose the nature or existence of that interest to the meeting if the interest was registered more than three years before the date of the meeting.

12.6 Where you have a personal interest but, by virtue of paragraph 16, sensitive information relating to it is not registered in the Council's register of members' interests, you must indicate to the meeting that you have a personal interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information to the meeting.

13 Non participation in case of prejudicial interest

13.1 Where you have a personal interest in any business of the Council you also have a prejudicial interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest and where that business -

- (a) affects your financial position or the financial position of a person or Body described in paragraph 12.3 ; or
- (b) relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or Body described in paragraph 12.3.

13.2 Subject to paragraphs 13.3 and 13.4, where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of the Council —

- a) You must not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting.
- b) You must not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting.
- c) If the interest is not registered, you must disclose the interest to the meeting.

- d) If the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, you must notify the Clerk and Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days.

[Note: In addition the Council's Standing Orders require you to leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place].

13.3 Where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of the Council, you may attend a meeting but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise and you leave the room where the meeting is held immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence.

13.4 Subject to your disclosing the interest at the meeting, you may attend a meeting and vote on a matter where you have a prejudicial interest that relates to the functions of the Council in respect of—

- (a) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
- (b) statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay; and
- (c) any ceremonial honour given to members.
- (d) housing, where you are a tenant of the Council provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
- (e) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
- (f) setting a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

unless that interest constitutes a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest under paragraph 8.

13.5 Where you have been delegated to discharge a function alone, and you become aware of a prejudicial interest in a matter being dealt with, or to be dealt with by you, you must notify the Clerk and Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter, or seek improperly to influence a decision about the matter.

Part 4 - General Matters relating to Parts 2 and 3

14 Register of interests

Subject to paragraph 15, any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests notified to the Clerk and Wigan Council's Monitoring Officer will be included in the register of interests. A copy of the register will be available for public inspection and will be published on Shevington Parish Council's and Wigan Council's websites.

15 Sensitive interests

This paragraph applies where you consider that disclosure of the details of a disclosable pecuniary interest or a personal interest could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation, and the Monitoring Officer agrees. In these circumstances, if the interest is entered on the register, copies of the register that are made available for inspection and any published version of the register will exclude details of the interest, but may state that you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, the details of which are withheld under Section 32(2) of the Localism Act 2011.

16 Dispensations

The Council may grant you a dispensation, but only in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest or a prejudicial interest.

Personalised, amended and re-adopted 25.10.12

J Ball

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Chairman