

Model Text for Town and Parish Councils

### **Code of Conduct for Ringstead Parish Council Councillors**

This Code applies to all Councillors when they act in their role as Councillors of Ringstead Parish Council. This Code is a requirement of the Localism Act 2011 and forms part of the Standing Orders of Ringstead Parish Council which all Councillors will follow. (\*1) This code is based on the seven Nolan<sup>1</sup> principles of public life:

#### 1.0 Introduction

As a Councillor you are a representative of the Council, and the public and other stakeholders will form a view of Ringstead Parish Council as a result of your actions. As such you must conduct yourself in a manner which is consistent with the Council's duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of Councillors.

#### 2.1 Selflessness

As a public figure, your public role as a Councillor may overlap with your personal or professional life and interests. However, as a Councillor you will serve only the public interest and will never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person. At all times you will act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in you.

#### 2.2 Integrity and honesty

**As a councillor you will be truthful.** You will consider your actions carefully to avoid placing yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned and will on all occasions avoid improper behaviour or the appearance of improper behaviour.

#### 2.3 Objectivity (in decision making)

You will make decisions on merit, **using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias**, including when making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits. You must approach decisions with an open mind and listen to the views of others and assess the information presented at the decision making meeting. You must then reach your own conclusions on issues and act accordingly. Failure to do so may expose the decision to challenge on the basis of pre-determination.

## 2.4 Accountability

Everything Ringstead Parish Council does must be able to stand the test of scrutiny by the public, the media, other stakeholders, and the courts. You are accountable to the public for your actions and the manner in which you carry your responsibilities, and will co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to your particular office.

## 2.5 Openness

2.5.1 Ringstead Parish Council strives to maintain an atmosphere of openness throughout the organisation to promote confidence of the public, stakeholders, staff and regulators. You will be as open as possible about your actions and those of the council, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions. **Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.**

2.5.2 You will review your Register of Interests (including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as required by the Localism Act and related regulations) at least annually to ensure ongoing accuracy

1

The Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee) recommended in 1996 seven principles of conduct that should underpin the work of public authorities.

2.5.3 You need to consider carefully your position before participating in any decisions or activity, especially those relating to regulatory activities such as planning or licensing. (\*2)

Where the decision or activity is so closely tied to your personal or professional life that your ability to make an impartial decision may be called into question you must consider whether you need to declare, at any relevant meeting, any new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) or other conflict of interest or circumstance. These will be added to your Register of Interests **as soon as possible** after the meeting. (\*3)

2.5.4 The law says that if you have a DPI you must not become involved in the discussions nor must you vote in relation to such matters. If you have other interests in the matter you should also consider if it is appropriate for you to take part in the discussions or debate.

**Breaches of the rules relating to Discloseable Pecuniary Interests may lead to criminal sanctions being imposed.**

2.5.5 You must declare **within 28 days of receipt** any gifts or hospitality valued over £50 (on one occasion or from the same donor within one year) given in respect of your role as a Councillor in your Register of Interests. (\*3)

## 2.6 Leadership

You will promote and support these principles by leadership and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence and avoids bringing your role or the council into disrepute. You will actively promote and robustly support this code and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## 3.0 Other obligations

In addition to the above principles, you will:

- a) strive to establish respectful and courteous relationships with everyone you come into contact with as Councillors. You will also respect the political impartiality and professional role(s) of the council's statutory officers and its other employees.
- b) uphold the law in relation to the policies of the council and its legal obligations
- c) not disclose or use confidential information for any purpose other than that provided for by the law.
- d) use those particular council resources provided for the undertaking of council duties in accordance with council policies or standing orders and not for any other purposes.

## 4.0 Training

Participation in training and development activities is not a legal requirement to be a Councillor. However this council expects that you will participate, in induction and other training and development activities in relation to standards matters.

## 5.0 Summary

This code is intended to provide a guide and protection for councillors in carrying out their duties. However, a breach of any part of this code may result in a complaint being made. A complaint will be assessed according to the arrangements outlined in Part 9 of the East Northamptonshire Council's Constitution.

Date : Approved by . Ringstead Parish Council May 2019

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Notes

\*1. We have asked all ENC Cllrs to sign up to the ENC Constitution of which the Code will be a part. You may need to modify this wording if you do not want to include your Code as part of your Standards Orders

\*2 There are particular risks associated with decisions made in relation to these matters. At ENC we ask Cllrs with a DPI in a matter under debate to move to one side of the room whilst the issue is debated but to leave the room if it is a regulatory function. We have amended our Constitution accordingly and you may wish to consider the same for your Standarding Orders. Such amendments will also need to cover the right to speak as a member of the public in both cases.

\*3 Please notify me of any additional interests that Cllrs wish to have included in their Registers.

Revisions to 2012 Code highlighted in Purple