



Beaminster Town Council

CODE OF CONDUCT

INTRODUCTION & INTERPRETATION

Pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, Beaminster Town Council ('the 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 Council. As a member and representative of this Council it is your responsibility to comply with this Code.

As a representative of this Council your actions impact on how the Council as a whole is viewed by the public. It is important, therefore, that you do not do anything when undertaking Council business which you could not justify to the public.

This Code of Conduct is based on the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. As a member you shall have regard to those principles when fulfilling your role.

DEFINITIONS

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

For the purposes of this Code, a 'meeting' is a meeting of the Council, any of its committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees.

For the purposes of this Code, and unless otherwise expressed, a reference to a member of the Council includes a co-opted member of the Council.

OBLIGATIONS

When undertaking Council business you must:

- behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful
- not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.
- not use or attempt to use your position as a member improperly to give yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage.
- not use the resources of the Council improperly.
- act in accordance with the Council's policies.
- not disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonable to be aware, is of a confidential nature.

- avoid doing anything which may cause the Council to breach a statutory duty or any of the equality enactments (as defined in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010).
- avoid doing anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Council.
- not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.
- not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or the Council into disrepute

INTERESTS

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Within 28 days of this Code being adopted by the Council or your taking office as a member or co-opted member, you must register any **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** with the Council's Monitoring Officer. Where the interest is your, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the interest of somebody with whom you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners (significant person).

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests will be recorded in the District Council's Register of Members' Interests and made available for public inspection on the Council's website at www.beaminster-tc.gov.uk

Within 28 days of becoming aware of any new Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or change to any such interest already registered, you must register details of that new interest or change in writing to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

Where any business of the Council, relates to or affects a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest whether registered or not, and you attend any meeting of the Council, or any Committee, Sub-Committee, Joint Committee at which that business is to be considered you must

- disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest no later than the start of the consideration of the business in which you have that interest, or (if later) the time at which the interest becomes apparent to you.
- not seek to influence a decision about that business
- withdraw from the meeting room or chamber as soon as it becomes apparent that business is being considered at the meeting unless you have obtained a dispensation from the Council or the Town Clerk as appropriate
- not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest
- following any disclosure at a meeting or as part of a decision record, a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest not on the Council's register or the subject of pending notification, notify the monitoring officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of the disclosure at the meeting, or in the decision record in order for the interest to be included in the register

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

<i>Interest</i>	<i>Description</i>
Employment, office, trade, Profession or vacation	An 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 relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses
Contract	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person 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 the Council
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 your knowledge) – (a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where – (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council; and (b) either – (i) the total nominal value of securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issue share capital of that body or (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 the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class

It is conceivable that an interest could be categorised as both a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and a Personal Interest.

Personal Interests

You have a Personal Interest in any business of the Council where –

- it relates to or is likely to affect
 - (i) any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council
 - (ii) any body –
 - exercising functions of a public nature
 - established for charitable purposes
 - whose principle purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union), of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management
- a decision in relation to any business of the Council might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a significant person to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral division, as the case may be, affected by the decision

Where you are aware of a Personal Interest in any business of the Council, 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 start of the consideration of that business, or when the interest becomes apparent to you.

Where you have a Personal Interest in any business of the Council which relates to or is likely to affect a significant person you need only disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest if and when you address the meeting on that business.

Any Personal interests notified to the 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 the Council's website.

Sensitive Interests

If you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or a Personal Interest but you consider that disclosure of the interest could lead to you or a person connected to you being subject to violence or intimidation **AND** the Monitoring Officer agrees with that assessment then instead of disclosing the interest you need only disclose that you have an interest. In such instances any published version of the register of interests will exclude details of the interest but may state that you have an interest, the details of which are withheld.

RECEIPTS OF 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 £25 which you have accepted as a member from any person or body other than the Council. The Monitoring Officer will place your notification on a public register of gifts and hospitality which forms part of the register of interests.

DISPENSATIONS

The Council or the Council's Proper Officer 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.

*If the Council, or the Council's Proper Officer 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.

OFFENCES

It is a criminal offence to

- fail to notify the 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 registered
- fail to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that is not on the register that you have disclosed to a meeting
- participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which you have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

knowingly or recklessly providing information that is false or misleading in notifying the Monitoring Officer of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or in disclosing an interest to a meeting.