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Fakenham Town Council

MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

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1. Introduction

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

This Code of Conduct applies as soon as the declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor is signed or a council meeting is attended and applies until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct is based on the Nolan Principles of Public Life (Appendix A), from Committee on Standards 1995 report, of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

2. Members conduct:

In accordance with the public trust placed on councillors, on all occasions the councillor must:

- Act with integrity and honesty
- Act lawfully
- Treat others with respect and fairness
- Lead by example and in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor

In undertaking the role, the councillor must:

- Act impartially and in the interests of the local community
- Not improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage to any person
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Exercise reasonable care and diligence
- Ensure that public resources are used in the public interest

This Code of Conduct applies to councillors as soon as the declaration of acceptance in signed and continues to apply until you cease to be a councillor.

The code applies to all forms of communication and interaction including:

- Face to face meetings
- Online and telephone meetings
- In written and verbal communication
- In electronic communication, social media, posts, statements and comments

Confidentiality and access to information

As a councillor you must not:

- Disclose information given in confidence without consent or if required to by law
- Improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of being a councillor for personal advancement or for friends, family or business associates
- Bring the council into disrepute

3. 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, or a member of, and represents the Council on any joint committee or joint sub- committee of the Council, and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee.

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.

4. Member Obligations

When a member of the Council acts, claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a representative of the Council, he/she has the following obligations.

1. He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.

2. He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying or intimidatory.

3. He/she shall not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

4. He/she shall use the resources of the Council in accordance with its requirements.

5. He/she shall not disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure is prohibited by law.

5. Registration of interests

1. 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 B and C.

2. 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 B and C.

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

4. 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.

6. Declaration of interests at meetings

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

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

3. Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to an interest in Appendix C, 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.

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

5. 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 B), 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.

7. 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 B and C 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.

Signed……. **Date…….**

Name……..

Reviewed at Governance & Finance 20th October 2026
Ratified at Full Council 28th October 2026

8. Appendices

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

The principles are:

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

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 disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

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

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.

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 so doing.

Honesty
Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership
Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B

Interests defined by regulations made under section 30(3) of the Localism Act 2011 and 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 6 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 body in which such a person is a partner in a firm, a director of an incorporated body or holds the beneficial interest in securities*) 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 relevant authority 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/the person with whom the member is living as if they were spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest.
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 -
	(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued 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.

*'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 C

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.