

Localism Act 2011

**Promoting and Maintaining High Standards of
Conduct in Local Government**

**ASHELDHAM & DENGIE PARISH COUNCIL
CODE OF MEMBER CONDUCT**

COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT

PART 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

Introduction and interpretation

As a Member you are a representative of Asheldham & Dengie Parish Council (“the Council”) and the public will view you as such. Therefore your actions impact on how the Council as a whole is viewed and your actions can have both positive and negative impacts on the Council.

This Code as a whole is consistent with “Nolan Principles” which are set out in **Appendix 1** and the provisions of S29(1) Localism Act 2011

In this Code-

“meeting” means any meeting of:

(a) the Council

(b) any of the Council’s committees, sub-committees, joint committees, joint sub-committees or areas committees

whether or not the press and public are excluded from the meeting in question by virtue of a resolution of Members

(d) any briefings by officers and site visits organised by the Council

“relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which you give notification to the Council’s monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary interests you had at the time of the notification.

“profit or gain” includes any payments or benefits in kind which are subject to Income Tax

“beneficial interest” means having an economic benefit as a legal owner or holding it on trust for the beneficial owner, having a right to the income from the land or securities or a share in it or the right to the proceeds of sale or share of part of the proceeds of sale

“Member” includes a co-opted member.

1. Who does the Code apply to?

(1) This Code applies to all Members of the Council including co-opted members.

(2) It is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this Code.

2. What does the Code apply to?

(1) You must comply with this Code whenever you -

(a) conduct the business of the Council, or

(b) you are acting as a representative of the Council.

(2) This Code has effect in relation to your conduct in your official capacity.

(3) Where you act as a representative of the Council--

- (a) on another relevant Council, you must, when acting for that other Council, comply with that other Council's code of conduct; or
- (b) on any other body, you must, when acting for that other body, comply with the Council's code of conduct, except and insofar as it conflicts with any other lawful obligations to which that other body may be subject.

3. General obligations

- (1) You must treat others with respect.
- (2) You must uphold the law
- (3) You must not--
 - (a) do anything which may cause the Council to breach any of the equality enactments
 - (b) bully 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 the Council'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. Confidential Information

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--
 - (aa) reasonable and in the public interest; and
 - (bb) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Council:
- (b) prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

5. Conferring an advantage or disadvantage

You must--

- (a) 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;
- (b) when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the Council-
 - (i) act in accordance with the Council's reasonable requirements;
 - (ii) ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes);
- (c) have regard to any applicable Local Council Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.

PART 2 MEMBERS INTERESTS

6. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests¹

6.1 You have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any business of the Council if it is of a description set out in 6.2 below and is either:

- (a) An interest of yours; or
- (b) An interest (of which you are aware) of a spouse, civil partner or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner (“known as Relevant Persons”).

6.2 A Pecuniary Interest is an interest which relates to or is likely to affect:

- i. Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on by you or a Relevant Person for profit or gain;
- ii. 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 in carrying out your 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
- iii. Any contract for goods, services or works which has not been fully discharged between you or a Relevant Person and the Council or a body in which you or they have a beneficial interest;
- iv. A beneficial interest in any land in the Council’s area
- v. a licence of any land in the Council’s area (alone or jointly with others) that you or a Relevant Person occupy for a month or longer
- vi. any tenancy where to your knowledge (a) the landlord is the Council and (b) the tenant is a body in which you or a Relevant Person has a beneficial interest
- vii. Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where-
 - 1. that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council and
 - 2. either:
 - a. the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
 - b. the beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of the share capital of that body, if of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class

¹ The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 set out the pecuniary interests specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 Section 30(3) of the Localism Act 2011

7. Other Pecuniary Interests

You have a pecuniary interest in any business of the Council where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- (i) any person or body who employs or has appointed you;
- (ii) any contract for goods, services or works made between the Council and you or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specific in paragraph 6.2.(vii) which has been fully discharged within the last 12 months;

8. Non-Pecuniary Interests

You have a non-pecuniary 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-
 - 1. exercising functions of a public nature;
 - 2. directed to charitable purposes; or
 - 3. one of whose principal 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;
- iii. the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50;
- iv. a decision in relation to that business which might reasonably be regarded as affecting your wellbeing or the wellbeing of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of:-
 - (a) (in the case of authorities with electoral divisions or wards) other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral division or ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision; or
 - (b) (in all other cases) other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the Council's area

9. Disclosure of Interests (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests and Non-Pecuniary Interests)

- 9.1 Subject to sub-paragraphs 9.2 to 9.3, where you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, other Pecuniary Interest or Non-Pecuniary Interest in any business of the Council and you are present at a meeting of the Council at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest whether or not such interest is registered on your Register of Interests or for which you have made a pending notification
- 9.2 Sub-paragraph 9.1 only applies where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the Relevant Person's Interest
- 9.3 Where you have an interest in any business of the Council which would be disclosable by virtue of paragraph 9.1 but by virtue of paragraph 12 (Sensitive Information) details of the interest are not registered in the Council's published Register of Members' Interests and the interest is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest you need not disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting

10. Effect of Interests on participation

10.1 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- (a) If you are present at a meeting of the Council or of 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 and you are aware of that Interest:
- (i) You must not participate, or participate further, in any discussion of the matter at the meeting, or participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting
 - (ii) You must withdraw from the room or chamber where the meeting considering the business is being held unless you have received a dispensation from the Council's proper officer
- (b) If you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any business of the Council you must not seek improperly to influence a decision about that business

10.2 Other Pecuniary Interests

If you have an Other Pecuniary Interest in any business of the Council 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 in the public interest and you are present at a meeting of the Council at which such business is to be considered or is being considered you must:

- (i) disclose the existence and nature of the interest in accordance with paragraph 9.1 (but subject to paragraph 9.3) and
- (ii) withdraw from the room or chamber where the meeting considering the business is being held unless you have obtained a dispensation from the Council's proper officer

PART 3 REGISTER OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

11. Registration of Members' Interests

Subject to paragraph 12, you must, within 28 days of—

- (i) this Code being adopted by or applied to the Council; or
- (ii) your election, re-election or appointment or re-appointment to office (where that is later), or co-opted onto the Council

register in the Council's Register of Members' Interests (maintained by the Monitoring Officer under Section 29(1) of the Localism Act 2011) details of:

- i. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as referred to in paragraph 6 that you, your spouse, civil partner or person with whom you live as if they were your spouse or civil partner in so far as you are aware of their interests at that time
- ii. Pecuniary Interests referred to in paragraph 7 that you have

Subject to paragraph 12, you must within 28 days of becoming aware of any new Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as referred to in paragraph 6 that you, your spouse, civil partner or person with whom you live as if they were your spouse or civil partner or change to any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest registered under paragraphs 11.(a) (i) or (ii) above by providing written notification to your Council's Monitoring Officer

12. Sensitive Information

12.1 Where you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest referred to in paragraph 6 or pecuniary interest referred to in paragraph 7 and the nature of the interest is such that you and the Council's monitoring officer consider that disclosure of details of the interest could lead to you or a person connected with you being subject to violence or intimidation if the interest is entered in the Council's Register then copies of the register available for inspection and any published version of the Register should not include details of the interest but may state that you have an interest details of which are withheld under s32(2) of the Localism Act 2011 and/or this paragraph.

12.2 You must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any change of circumstances which means that information excluded under paragraph 12.1 is no longer sensitive information, notify the Council's monitoring officer

12.3 In this Code “sensitive information” means information whose availability for inspection by the public creates, or is likely to create, a serious risk that you or a person who lives with you may be subject to violence or intimidation.

13. Register of Gifts and Hospitality

13.1 You must within 28 days of receipt, notify the Council’s monitoring officer in writing of any gift, benefit or hospitality with a value in excess of £50 which you have accepted as a member from any person or body other than the Council.

13.2 The monitoring officer will place your notification on a public register of gifts and hospitality

13.3 This duty to notify the monitoring officer does not apply where the gift, benefit or hospitality comes within any description approved by the Council for this purpose.

CODE OF CONDUCT

APPENDIX 1

THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES AND SECTION 28(1) OF THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

SELFLESSNESS

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

INTEGRITY

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

OBJECTIVITY

Make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding Contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

ACCOUNTABILITY

To 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 Office.

OPENNESS

To be as open as possible about their actions and those of the Council and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

HONESTY

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

LEADERSHIP

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

This code of conduct was reviewed and adopted by the members of Asheldham & Dengie Parish Council on Monday 3rd September 2012.

Signed.....

Name.....

Date

Minute Reference:.....

