

The Godalming Members' Code of Conduct

Introduction and Interpretation

1. (1) This Code applies to you as a Member of Godalming Town Council ("the Council") when you act in your role as a Member.
- (2) You are a representative of the Council and the public will view you as such. Your actions can impact on how the Council as a whole is viewed.
- (3) This Code is based on and is consistent with the principles of public life set out in Section 28 Localism Act 2011 which Godalming endorses: -
 - selflessness
 - integrity
 - objectivity
 - accountability
 - openness
 - honesty
 - leadershipGodalming is under a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members
- (4) It is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this Code when acting in your capacity as a Member.
- (5) In this Code –
 - "meeting" means any meeting of
 - (a) the Council;
 - (b) the Executive;
 - (c) any of the Council's committees, sub-committees, joint committees, joint sub-committees, area committees, Special interest Groups;
 - "Member" includes a co-opted member and an appointed member.

General Obligations

2. (1) **You must** always treat member colleagues, officers, other organizations and members of the public with respect.
- (2) **You must not** conduct yourself in a manner which is contrary to the Council's duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members.
- (3) **You must not** 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 legal 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;
 - (bb) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Council; and
 - (cc) you have consulted the Monitoring Officer or taken other independent legal advice prior to its release.
 - (4) **You must not** prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.
 - (5) **You 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.
3. When using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the Council -
- (1) **Do** act in accordance with the Council's reasonable requirements and policies;
 - (2) **Do** ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes); and
 - (3) **Do** have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.

Gifts and Hospitality

4. (1) **Do** exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a Member.
- (2) **Do not** accept significant gifts or hospitality from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the Council or from persons who may apply to the Council for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.
- (3) **Do** register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 within 28 days of its receipt.

Registration of Interests

5. (1) You must notify the Monitoring Officer of your disclosable pecuniary interests, or other interests which the Council has decided are appropriate for registration. On election, you must do this within 28 days of being elected or appointed to office. Details of disclosable pecuniary interests are set out in the Annex to this Code.
- (2) **Do** similarly notify the Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary or other interests not already registered within 28 days of your re-election or re-appointment to office.
- (3) **Do** be aware that disclosable pecuniary interests include not only your interests but also the interests of your spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband or wife or a person with whom you are living as if they were a civil partner, so far as you are aware of the interests of that person.
- (4) **Do** be aware that the Council has decided that it is appropriate for you to register and disclose non-pecuniary interests that arise from your membership of or your occupation of a position of general control or management in the following bodies -
- (i) bodies to which you have been appointed or nominated by the Council;
 - (ii) bodies exercising functions of a public nature;
 - (iii) bodies directed to charitable purposes;
 - (iv) bodies one of whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy.

Disclosure of Interests and Participation

6. (1) **Do** disclose to a meeting at which you are present any disclosable pecuniary interest, or other interest which the Council has decided is appropriate for disclosure.
- (2) **Do** notify the Monitoring Officer of any interest not already registered that is disclosed to a meeting under paragraph 6(1) above within 28 days of the disclosure.
- (3) **Do not** participate in any discussion, or vote, where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter. **Do** withdraw from the meeting during the consideration of the matter.

Decision-making and Predetermination

7. (1) Where you have been involved in campaigning in your political role on an issue which does not impact on your personal and/or professional life, you should not be prohibited from participating in a decision in your political role as a Member.
- (2) However, **do not** place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organizations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.
- (3) When making a decision, **do** consider the matter with an open mind and on the facts before the meeting at which the decision is to be made, listening to the advice of relevant parties, including advice from officers, and taking all relevant information into consideration, remaining objective and making decisions on merit.

ANNEXE 1 – DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

1. Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation

Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

2. Sponsorship

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made or provided within the period of 12 months ending with the day on which you give a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) or section 31(7) of the Localism Act 2011 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.

3. Contracts

Any contract which is made between you (or a body in which you have 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.

4. Land

Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the Council.

5. Licences

Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the Council for a month or longer.

6. Corporate Tenancies

Any tenancy where (to your knowledge)-

- (a) the landlord is the Council; and
- (b) the tenant is a body in which you have a beneficial interest.

7. 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 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 you have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

ANNEXE 2 – INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED BREACHES OF THE CODE & SANCTIONS

8. Alleged Breach of the Code

Any allegation of a breach of the code of conduct by a member of Godalming Town Council will be referred to the Monitoring Officer for that officer to investigate. All investigations will be conducted in accordance with such guidelines as Waverley Borough Council's Standards Panel may have approved for that purpose.

9. Sanctions

If any person or body investigating an alleged breach of the code (in accordance with the guidelines referred to above) finds that there has been a breach of that code then they are required to report that matter to Godalming Town Council. In all cases the investigating person/body will be asked to make a recommendation to Godalming Town Council as to the sanction to be applied to the member in breach of the code.

The available sanctions are:

- publication of the findings in respect of the member's conduct;
- removal of the member from any or all Committees or Sub-Committees of the Council;
- instruction of the Monitoring Officer/Town Clerk to, arrange training for the member;
- removal of the member from all outside appointments to which he/she has been appointed or nominated by Town Council;
- withdrawal of any facilities provided to the member by the Council, such as a computer, website and/or email and Internet access; or
- exclusion of the member from the Council's offices or other premises, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings.