

# **COUNCILLORS CODE OF CONDUCT**

## **STANDON PARISH COUNCIL WILL OPERATE WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR**

### **Standon Parish Council:**

Standon Parish Council will consist of the roles of Chairman and Vice-Chairman and eight Parish Councillors.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman have no greater powers than ordinary Parish Councillors.

Standon Parish Council is a corporate body and all decisions will be taken at full Parish Council meetings unless powers compliant with governing documents have been deferred to a committee.

Standon Parish Council Clerk will be the Responsible Financial Officer and Proper Officer of the Council. The Clerk's role is to enable the Parish Council to take informed and lawful decisions within the parameters of the governing documentation and national legislation and will provide guidance and advice on all issues related to the Parish Council.

### **Principles**

This code meets the recommendations of the **Nolan Committees standards in public life**.

The 7 principles are:

**Selflessness** – you should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**Integrity** - you must avoid placing yourself under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence you in your work. You should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, or your friends. You must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

**Objectivity** - you must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias

**Accountability** - you are accountable to the public for your decisions and actions and must submit yourself to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness** - you 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** - you should be truthful.

**Leadership** - you should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. You should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

### **Breach of this code**

1. Breaches of this code (inside or outside of work) will be investigated and may be reported to the East Herts District Council Monitoring Officer.
2. You must participate in any investigations, including those carried out by the Monitoring Officer, who is responsible for reporting any actual or potential breaches of the law or maladministration of the Council.

When working on behalf of Standon Parish Council you must:

1. Act in the interests of Standon Parish Council, and in accordance with the principles of public life of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
2. Comply with Standon Parish Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, policies and standards, legislation and other professional standards which apply to your role as a Parish Councillor.
3. Declare to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or the Clerk, any potential or actual conflicts of interest or relationships that may impact on your work as a Parish Councillor
4. Report any concerns or breaches of this code to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or the Clerk.
5. Ask the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or the Clerk if you are unsure what is required of you.

**Standon Parish Council is politically neutral and does not support any political party.** Parish Councillors will refrain from promoting any political alliance they may have.

### **Personal conduct**

As a representative of Standon Parish Council, you are expected to conduct yourself to the highest standards.

#### You must:

Carry out the full requirements of your role,

Aligned to your role as a Parish Councillor and Standon Parish Council policies;

Behave politely and reasonably;

Maintain acceptable standards of appearance and personal hygiene;

Demonstrate your commitment to valuing diversity and equality;

Keep relationships with Members, officers, contractors or partners, potential

contractors or service users, on a professional and courteous basis. If you have a personal relationship with any of these groups or individuals, you must declare this using the Declaration of Councillor's Interests form and have it minuted at a meeting as appropriate;

Declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest that may impact on your work or decisions taken as a Parish Councillor;

Avoid damage to Standon Parish Council's reputation or services;

Register any pecuniary financial and pecuniary non- financial interests with Standon Parish Council and East Herts District Council.

You must not:

Engage in any conduct that is harmful to Standon Parish Council or its interests, or which brings legal action against Standon Parish Council;

Be under the influence of alcohol or unprescribed drugs so as to adversely affect your role;

Misuse your official position or information obtained in the course of your work as a Parish Councillor for personal interest or the interest of others.

**Gifts and hospitality**

As a representative of Standon Parish Council, it is important that you treat any offer of gifts or hospitality with care. You must:

Make sure that any modest gifts or hospitality accepted on behalf of Standon Parish Council is authorised by Standon Parish Council.

You must not:

Accept personal gifts, loans, fees, rewards or advantage from planning agents, developers or landowners, contractors, potential contractors including those who have previously worked for Standon Parish Council, service users or outside suppliers. Particular care must be taken in relation to planning applications, agents, developers and landowners.

**Handling Standon Parish Council money**

Standon Parish Council is a publicly funded organisation and as such, you must be familiar with Standon Parish Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

You must:

Use Standon Parish Council funds in a responsible, accountable and lawful way;

Comply with Standon Parish Council's financial regulations and take legal and financial advice where appropriate which will usually be from or via the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer;

Seek value for money;

Comply with all Standon Parish Council policies and guiding documents at all times; if you suspect financial irregularity, corruption or fraud, contact the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the Clerk, or the East Herts District Council Monitoring Officer immediately;

Make sure you do not benefit from any planning application, or contract Standon Parish Council may receive, or show any favour to a partner, spouse, relative, friend or associate.

### **Responsibilities when managing others**

As a Parish Councillor, your leadership skills are key elements to your role.

#### You must:

Maintain an environment of respect, recognition and support and to induct any new employee to their role;

Make appointments only on the basis of merit and capability to carry out the role;

Make sure decisions relating to discipline, promotion and pay are objectively justified;

Identify and assess all risks and ensure they are managed appropriately;

Ensure business continuity arrangements are in place to enable continued delivery of services;

Exercise a duty of care to employees, volunteers, parishioners, contractors and customers, ensuring health and safety requirements are met.

#### You must not

Be involved in a selection process or interview if you are related to an applicant or in a personal relationship with them or a member of their immediate family.

Be involved in a selection process or appoint tenders if you are related to an applicant or contractor, in a relationship with them or a member of their immediate family, or employ the applicant or contractor yourself.

### **Diversity and equality**

Demonstrating your commitment to equality and diversity is an integral part of your role at Standon Parish Council.

#### You must:

Treat others with respect and value diversity;

Seek to review all policies, procedures and services under your responsibility to assess whether any group is being unfairly discriminated against (known as equality impact assessments);

Take steps to eliminate discrimination and remove barriers to fair treatment.

You must not:

Discriminate unfairly in employment practices, the provision of facilities or services.

**Protecting confidential information**

Maintaining confidentiality of sensitive information is essential. You must:

Comply with Standon Parish Council's policy on GDPR and supporting standards;

Report any suspected breach of information security immediately to the Clerk;

Treat all information obtained under the GDPR legislation and within the recommended time limits.

You must not:

Disclose any passwords to anyone;

Use information or facilities provided, for unauthorised personal use, improper or commercial gain, or for fraudulent or malicious activities;

Compromise the security of Standon Parish Council information, for example by installing unauthorised software, inappropriately securing information or forwarding Standon Parish Council emails to members of the public or to outside organisations without seeking permission from Standon Parish Council in an open and transparent manner.

**Commitment to the environment**

In demonstrating your commitment to improving the environment:

You must:

Consider the environmental impact of your actions;

Reduce, re-use and recycle wherever possible;

Develop environmentally sensitive policies and practices where possible with suppliers, partners and customers.