

# **Sonning Common Parish Council**

## **Councillors' Code of Conduct**

### **Introduction**

All councils are legally required to have a Code of Conduct for councillors (Localism Act 2011). The fundamental aim of the code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government, based on the Nolan principles for public life of selflessness, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, integrity and leadership.

The Code of Conduct applies to all councillors – both elected and co-opted members – as soon as they have signed their declarations of acceptance of the office and attended their first meetings. It applies when members are acting in their capacity as councillors and covers all forms of communication and interaction, including face-to-face, online and telephone meetings plus verbal, non-verbal, electronic and social media communications.

Sonning Common Parish Council's Code of Conduct is based on the Oxfordshire Councils' Councillor Code of Conduct 2022. All parish councillors are expected to formally adopt and abide by the code. Any alleged breaches of the code may be referred to the Monitoring Officer at South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) after first seeking advice from the parish clerk.

### **Code of Conduct for members of Sonning Common Parish Council**

When acting in my capacity as a member of Sonning Common Parish Council I will comply with the council's Code of Conduct. This means that I will:

1. Act lawfully and with integrity and honesty;
2. Treat all persons fairly and with respect;
3. Lead by example in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor;
4. Avoid conflicts of interest;
5. Exercise reasonable care and diligence;
6. Ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with the council's requirements and in the public interest.;
7. Be impartial and exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community;
8. Register and disclose all interests, whether pecuniary (financial) or personal that might give rise to a conflict of interest;\*
9. Comply with the council's Code of Conduct, cooperate with any investigation into an alleged breach of the code by myself and abide by the outcome of such an investigation.

I will not:

1. Misuse council resources;
2. Bully or harass or discriminate unlawfully against any person;
3. Disclose confidential information, improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as councillor or prevent anyone from getting information they are entitled to by law;
4. Bring my role or council into disrepute;
5. Improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person;
6. Accept gifts or hospitality which could lead to personal gain or give rise to influence.

Signed by: ..... Date: .....

In the presence of:

Name: .....

Position: .....

**\*Registering and Disclosing Interests**

SODC's Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct. A councillor must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify the Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest, as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State, where the interest is theirs or that of their spouse or civil partner. Any changes must be notified by the councillor to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

A councillor must disclose the interest at any meeting of the council attended where they have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered, unless the interest is 'sensitive', in which case the interest must be disclosed but not the nature of it.

Councillors must declare a personal interest in any matter being discussed where the matter affects them – or someone with whom they have a close relationship – more than it would most people.

Unless dispensation has been granted by the Monitoring Officer a councillor must not participate in any discussion or vote on any matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other registerable interest.

Disclosable pecuniary interests include, but are not exclusive to, any employment, office or trade carried on for profit or gain; any sponsorship for carrying out councillor duties; and any beneficial interest in land and property which is within the council's area.

Registerable interests include unpaid directorships; any body of which a councillor is a member, in control of and to which they have been nominated/appointed by the council; any body exercising functions of a public nature, a charity or one whose principal purpose includes the influence of public opinion or policy.