**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF**

**PUBLIC BODIES INCLUDING PARISH COUNCILS**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As a public officeholder, the behaviour and actions of local councillors will be governed by the principles set out below in this Code of Conduct. It is each councillor’s responsibility to ensure that s/he is familiar with and complies with all the relevant provisions of the Code.

## 2. KEY PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

2.1 The key principles upon which this Code of Conduct is based are the Seven Principle of Public Life. These are:

## Selflessness

You should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. You should not do so to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family or your friends.

## Integrity

You should not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might, or might be perceived to, influence you in the performance of your official duties.

## Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including awarding contracts and recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, you should make choices on merit.

## Accountability

You are accountable for your decisions and actions to the public and must submit yourself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate for your office.

## Openness

You should be as open as possible about the decisions and actions that you take. You should give reasons for your decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

## Honesty

You have a duty to declare any private interests relating to your public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

## Leadership

You should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

2.2 These principles should inform all your actions and decisions as a councillor.

**3. GENERAL CONDUCT**

## Community Representation

3.1 As a Member of Morton Parish Council, councillors will ensure their conduct is in accordance with the statutory principles of this Code of Conduct by:

* Dealing with people fairly, appropriately, and impartially.
* Behaving in accordance with the Council's legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within Morton Parish Council's policies, protocols, and procedures, including on the use of the Authority’s resources.
* Not allowing other pressures, including any personal financial interests or those of others connected to me, to deter me from pursuing constituents' casework or the good governance of the Council.
* Complying with the requirements of the Council's Protocol on Gifts and Hospitality by registering with the Monitoring Officer any item of hospitality that are offered or received of the value of £25 or more.
* Exercising independent judgement and not compromising my position by placing myself under obligations to outside individuals or organisations who might seek to influence the way I undertake my duties as a member or co-opted member of the Council.
* Listening to the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from statutory and other professional officers, taking all relevant information into consideration, remaining objective and making decisions on merit.
* Being accountable for my decisions and co-operating when scrutinised internally and externally, including by residents.
* Contributing to making the Council's decision-making processes as open and transparent as possible by allowing residents to access information they are entitled to by law, helping them to understand the reasoning behind the decisions taken and enabling them to be informed when holding me and other members to account.  Restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it.
* Valuing my colleagues and staff and engaging with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect between us that is essential to good local government.
* Always treating people with respect, including the organisations and public I engage with and those I work alongside; and
* Providing leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community, with other organisations, as well as within this Authority

## Use of Public Funds

3.2 You have a duty to ensure the safeguarding of public funds and the proper custody of assets which have been publicly funded.

3.3 You must carry out your fiduciary obligations responsibly – that is, take appropriate measures to ensure that the body uses resources efficiently, economically, and effectively, avoiding waste and extravagance.

## Allowances (where applicable)

3.4 You must comply with the rules set by the council regarding remuneration, allowances, and expenses. It is your responsibility to ensure compliance with all relevant HM Revenue and Customs’ requirements concerning payments, including expenses. This should be taken to include all forms of receipts from fees, charges, and other sources.

## Gifts and Hospitality

3.5 You must not accept any gifts or hospitality which might, or might reasonably appear to, compromise your personal judgement or integrity, or place you under an improper obligation.

3.6 You must never canvass or seek gifts or hospitality.

3.7 You must comply with the rules set out in Appendix A in the Protocol on Gifts and

Hospitality on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. You should inform the Proper Officer (Clerk) of any offer of gifts or hospitality and ensure that, where a gift or hospitality is accepted, this is recorded in a public register in line with the rules set out in Appendix A.

3.8 You are responsible for your decisions on the acceptance of gifts or hospitality and for ensuring that any gifts or hospitality accepted can stand up to public scrutiny and do not bring the public body into disrepute.

## Use of Official Resources

3.9 You must not misuse official resources for personal gain or for promoting political purposes.

## Use of Official Information

3.10 You must not misuse information gained in the course of your public service as a councillor for personal gain or for promoting political purposes.

3.11 You must not disclose any information which is confidential in nature, or which is provided in confidence without authority. This duty continues to apply after you have left the council.

## Political Relationships

3.12 When acting in your official capacity, you should be even-handed in all dealings with political parties.

3.13 Subject to the above, you may engage in political activity but should, always, remain conscious of your responsibilities as a councillor representing the local community and exercise proper discretion.

## Employment and Appointments

3.14 If you intend to take up new employment or appointments during your term of office, you should inform the Chairman and the Clerk.

## 4. MEMBERS’ INTERESTS

This section summarises the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests. These provisions are enforced by criminal sanction.

4.1 You must ensure that no conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, between your public duties and your private interests – financial or otherwise.

## Notification of disclosable pecuniary interests

4.2 Within 28 days of becoming a member or co-opted member, you must notify the Proper Officer of any ‘disclosable pecuniary interests’ in accordance with the requirements of the

Localism Act 2011 (Sections 29- 34) and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012. This will include signing a declaration on the prescribed form relating to matters of employment, sponsorship, property ownership, contracts, securities, tenancies, and licences.

4.3 You must comply with the rules of the council on handling conflicts of interests. As a minimum, these will require you to declare publicly any private interests which may, or may be perceived to, conflict with your public duties. The rules will also require you to remove yourself from the discussion or determination of matters in which you have a financial interest. In matters in which you have a non-financial interest, you should not participate in the discussion or determination of a matter where the interest might suggest a danger of bias.

4.4 It is your own responsibility to ensure that you are familiar with the council’s rules on handling conflicts of interests, that you comply with these rules and that your entry in the council’s register of members’ interests is accurate and up to date.

Further explanation of these provisions can be found at the following link:- <https://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/images/Repository/C/Constitution_2018.pdf> (NEDDC Constitution, Page 185)

## 5 RESPONSIBILTIES AS A COUNCILLOR

5.1 You should play a full and active role in the work of the council. You should fulfil your duties and responsibilities responsibly and, always, act in good faith and in the best interests of the council.

5.2 You should deal with the public and their affairs fairly, efficiently, promptly, effectively, and sensitively, to the best of your ability. You must not act in a way that unjustifiably favours or discriminates against individuals or interests.

5.3 You must comply with any statutory or administrative requirements relating to your position.

5.4 You should respect the principle of collective decision-making and corporate responsibility. This means that, once the council has decided, you should support that decision.

5.5 You must not use, or attempt to use, the opportunity of public service to promote your personal interests or those of any connected person, firm, business, or other organisation.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS EMPLOYEES

6.1 You will treat any staff employed by the council with courtesy and respect. It is expected that employees will show you the same consideration in return.

6.2 You will not ask or encourage employees to act in any way which would conflict with their own Code of Conduct.

**Appendix A**

**Protocol on gifts and hospitality**

This protocol has been adopted by the Council to give guidance to Councillors and officers about registering gifts and hospitality.

1. This Protocol relates to offers of gifts, favours or hospitality worth £25 or more that are made, given, or afforded to you in your capacity as a member/officer whether you accept it or not. It is not intended to cover the ordinary social relationships which people enjoy with friends, provided that the friend is not applying to the Council for anything, seeking to do business with the Council, or involved in an ongoing business relationship with the Council.

1. Depending on the nature and value of the gift, favour, or hospitality, it may be advisable to consult the Proper Officer (Clerk) for advice.

1. You must declare either in writing or electronically to the Proper Officer within 28 days of being offered or receiving it any gift or hospitality worth £25 or more. Such a declaration will be recorded in a register which will set out the date of declaration, the date on which the councillor/officer received the hospitality, the name of the councillor/officer, the nature of the gift or hospitality and, if a gift, what was done with it. The register will be signed or authorised electronically by the Proper Officer.