

Great Tey Parish Council

Code of Conduct for Members

Introduction:

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected from members of Great Tey Parish Council.

As a Member, you are a representative of the Council and of the local community. The public will view your actions as those of the Council. Your behaviour can therefore positively or negatively affect the reputation and effectiveness of the Council.

This Code is adopted pursuant to Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 and reflects the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).

The Code also incorporates guidance from the Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct (2020), which promotes consistent ethical standards across local government.

PART 1 – GENERAL PROVISIONS:

1. Application of the Code:

This Code applies to:

- All elected Members of Great Tey Parish Council
- Co-opted members of the Council or its committees.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you comply with this Code.

2. When the Code Applies:

You must comply with this Code whenever you:

1. Conduct the business of the Council; or
2. Act, claim to act, or give the impression you are acting as a representative of the Council.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Council meetings
- Committee or sub-committee meetings
- Working groups
- Briefings by officers
- Site visits organised by the Council
- Correspondence, public statements, and social media where you represent the Council.

Where you act as a representative of the Council on another authority or organisation:

- You must comply with that organisation's code of conduct where applicable.
- Where no code exists, you must comply with this Code.

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PART 2 – STANDARDS OF MEMBER CONDUCT:

3. General Behaviour:

Members must:

1. Treat others with respect.
2. Uphold the law.
3. Promote equality and not discriminate unlawfully.
4. Act with integrity, honesty and objectivity.
5. Promote and support high standards of conduct in public office.

Members must not:

- Bully or harass any person.
- Intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person involved in a Code of Conduct complaint or investigation.
- Conduct themselves in a manner that could reasonably be regarded as bringing the Council or the office of councillor into disrepute.

4. Respect for Officers:

Members must:

- Respect the role and impartiality of Council employees.
- Not improperly attempt to influence officers in the performance of their duties.
- Avoid placing officers under pressure to act contrary to their professional judgement or the law.

5. Use of Council Resources:

Members must ensure that Council resources are used only for proper Council purposes.

Council resources include, but are not limited to:

- Council equipment and property
- Council email and IT systems
- Council information and data
- The Council logo and branding.

Council resources must not be used:

- For personal gain
- For party political purposes
- For campaigning unrelated to Council business.

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Members must also have regard to the Local Authority Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity issued under the Local Government Act 1986.

6. Social Media and Public Communication:

When using social media or other online platforms, Members must:

- Ensure that their conduct does not breach this Code.
- Avoid behaviour that could bring the Council into disrepute.
- Make clear when expressing personal opinions that they are not speaking on behalf of the Council unless authorised to do so.

7. Confidential Information:

Members must not disclose information given to them in confidence or information that they reasonably believe to be confidential unless:

- They have the consent of a person authorised to give it
- Disclosure is required by law
- The disclosure is made in the public interest and in good faith
- The disclosure is made to obtain professional advice.

Members must not prevent another person from accessing information to which they are legally entitled.

8. Conferring Advantage or Disadvantage:

Members must not use their position improperly to secure an advantage or disadvantage for themselves or any other person.

Members must act solely in the public interest and must not misuse Council resources or information.

9. Cooperation with Investigations:

Members must cooperate fully with any investigation into an alleged breach of this Code conducted under the Council's arrangements under the Localism Act 2011.

PART 3 – INTERESTS:

10. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Members must comply with the requirements relating to **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)** as defined in the **Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012**.

These include interests relating to:

- Employment or business

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- Sponsorship
- Contracts with the Council
- Land within the Council's area
- Licences or tenancies of land
- Securities or shareholdings exceeding specified thresholds.

These interests apply to:

- The Member
- The Member's spouse or civil partner
- A person living with the Member as a spouse or civil partner (where known to the Member).

11. Other Pecuniary Interests:

Members must also declare other financial interests where a reasonable member of the public would regard the interest as so significant that it could prejudice the Member's judgement in the public interest.

12. Non-Pecuniary Interests:

Members must declare interests relating to:

- Membership or control of organisations exercising public functions
- Charitable organisations
- Political parties or trade unions
- Bodies influencing public policy
- Gifts or hospitality received.

Members must also declare interests where a decision could affect their wellbeing or that of a close associate more than the majority of residents in the Council area.

PART 4 – DISCLOSURE AND PARTICIPATION:

13. Disclosure of Interests:

Where a Member has an interest in business being considered at a meeting they must:

1. Declare the existence and nature of the interest.
2. Ensure the declaration is recorded in the minutes.

14. Participation Where Interests Exist:

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Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Where a Member has a DPI:

- They must not participate in discussion or vote on the matter.
- They must withdraw from the meeting room unless a dispensation has been granted.

Other Interests:

Where a Member has another interest that could reasonably prejudice their judgement:

- They must declare the interest.
- They must withdraw from the meeting unless a dispensation has been granted.

PART 5 – REGISTER OF INTERESTS:

15. Registration of Interests:

Members must register their interests with the Council's Monitoring Officer within 28 days of:

- Election
- Re-election
- Appointment
- Adoption of this Code.

Members must also notify the Monitoring Officer of any changes within 28 days.

16. Sensitive Interests:

Where disclosure of an interest could lead to violence or intimidation, the Monitoring Officer may agree that details are withheld from the public register in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

PART 6 – GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY:

17. Gifts and Hospitality:

Members must notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of receiving any gift or hospitality worth £50 or more received in their capacity as a Member.

These will be recorded in the Council's Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

PART 7 – COMPLAINTS:

18. Complaints About Member Conduct:

Allegations that a Member has breached this Code will be considered in accordance with the Council's arrangements under Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011.

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Complaints are normally investigated by the Monitoring Officer of the District Council responsible for ethical standards in the area.

Appendix 1 – The Seven Principles of Public Life:

The Seven Principles of Public Life set out by the Nolan Principles are:

Selflessness:

Act solely in the public interest.

Integrity:

Avoid placing yourself under obligations that could influence your work.

Objectivity:

Make decisions impartially and on merit.

Accountability:

Be accountable to the public for your decisions.

Openness:

Be open and transparent wherever possible.

Honesty:

Be truthful.

Leadership:

Promote and support these principles through leadership and example.