

## **19.1 Register of Interest and Declaration of Acceptance of the Code of Conduct**

After being elected as a Parish Councillor you must, within 28 days of the election result, complete and submit to the Monitoring Officer a Register of Interest form, and a Declaration of acceptance of the Code of Conduct. This also applies if you have been co-opted on to a Parish Council.

The Local Government Act (2000) requires that the Council establishes and maintains a Register of Interests of Councillors and Co-opted independent representatives.

A Code of Conduct for Councillors, overseen by the Standards Committee, requires Councillors to register their financial and other interests in the maintained register on the registration forms.

The Register of Interests provides a record of the principal external activities and interests of the Councillor, to help local people have a broader understanding of the people who represent them. It indicates the sorts of influences and interests which might effect a Councillor's views and also the way they carry out their public duties. Unless in special exceptional circumstances or if given a dispensation, Councillors are still required to declare the interests at meetings, prior to the issue which they have an interest in is discussed. If the interest is prejudicial, the Councillor must leave the meeting. See more details below.

Registers of Interest are available for inspection at the Council Offices. You need to make an appointment to inspect a Register of Interest, and you should contact the Clerk to arrange this

## **19.2 Declaring a Personal Interest**

You have a **personal interest** in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- 1) An interest that you must register.
- 2) An interest that is not on your register but where the well-being or financial position of you, members of your family, or people with whom you have a close association, is likely to be affected by the business of your authority more than it would affect anyone else.

There are two exemptions to the rule on declaring a personal interest, which is a key change under the revised Code. Exemptions apply where an interest arises solely from membership of, position of control or management on:

- Any other body to which you were appointed or nominated by the authority.
- Any other body exercising functions of a public nature for example, if you have been appointed as a school governor.

In these exceptional circumstances you only need to declare your interest if and when you speak on a matter, provided that you do not have a prejudicial interest (see below).

### **19.3 Declaring a Prejudicial Interest**

Your personal interest will also be a **prejudicial interest** if it meets all of the following conditions:

- a) The matter does not fall within one of the exempt categories of decisions such as setting the Precept.
- b) The matter affects your interests financially or a licensing or regulatory matter, for example an application for a grant funding to a body on your register of interests, or a planning or licensing application made by you or a body on your register of interests.
- c) A member of the public, who knows the relevant facts, would reasonably think your personal interest so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

Note: in order for your interest to be prejudicial, it must be a financial or regulatory matter.

#### **19.3.1 What to do if you have a prejudicial interest**

If you have a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting:

- You must declare that you have a prejudicial interest and the nature of that interest as soon as the interest becomes apparent.
- You should leave the room unless members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter. If this is the case, you can also attend the meeting for that purpose.
- You must leave the room immediately once you have finished speaking, or when the meeting decides that you have finished (if that is earlier).

#### **19.4 If you have any doubts**

Any councillor who unsure of the interpretation of their interests, or who require advice on whether they need to declare an interest should seek clarification from the Clerk prior to the meeting, when the topic will be discussed.