

MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Thurmaston Parish Council

1. As a member or co-opted member of Thurmaston Parish Council (the Council) you have a responsibility to represent the community and work constructively with staff and partner organisations to secure better social, economic and environmental outcomes for all.
2. In accordance with the Localism Act provisions, when acting in this capacity you must be committed to behaving in a manner that is consistent with the following principles to achieve best value for our residents and maintain public confidence in the Council:
 - (a) **SELFLESSNESS:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.
 - (b) **INTEGRITY:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
 - (c) **OBJECTIVITY:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
 - (d) **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
 - (e) **OPENNESS:** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
 - (f) **HONESTY:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
 - (g) **LEADERSHIP:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.
3. Whenever you act, claim to act, or give the impression that you are acting in your capacity as a member or co-opted member of Thurmaston Parish Council, your conduct will in particular address the statutory principles of the Code of Conduct by:

(a) Championing the needs of residents – the whole community and in a special way your constituents, including those who did not vote for you - and putting their interests first.

(b) Dealing with representations or enquiries from residents, members of our communities and visitors fairly, appropriately and impartially.

(c) Not allowing other pressures, including the financial interests of yourself or others connected to you, to deter you from pursuing constituents' casework, the interests of the Parish or the good governance of the Council in a proper manner.

(d) Exercising independent judgement and not compromising your position by placing yourself under obligations to outside individuals or organisations who might seek to influence the way you perform my duties as a member/co-opted member of the Council.

(e) 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.

(f) Being accountable for your decisions and co-operating when scrutinised internally and externally, including by local residents.

(g) Contributing to making the Council's decision-making processes as open and transparent as possible to enable residents to understand the reasoning behind those decisions and to be informed when holding yourself and other members to account, but restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it.

(h) Behaving in accordance with all your legal obligations, alongside any requirements contained within the Council's policies, protocols and procedures, including on the use of the Council's resources.

(i) Valuing your 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.

(j) Always treating people with respect, including the organisations and public you engage with and those you work alongside.

(k) Providing leadership through behaving in accordance with these principles when championing the interests of the community with other organisations as well as within the Council.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

4. This section explains the requirements of sections 29 to 34 of the Localism Act 2011 in relation to disclosable pecuniary interests. These provisions are enforced by criminal sanction.

(a) **Disclosable pecuniary interests**

A 'disclosable pecuniary interest' is an interest of yourself or your partner (which means spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners) within the following descriptions:

<i>Interest</i>	<i>Description</i>
(i) Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
(ii) Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
(iii) Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority— (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.

(iv) Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
(v) Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
(vi) Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
(vii) Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where— (a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

These descriptions on interests are subject to the following definitions;

“the Act” means the Localism Act 2011;

“body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest;

“director” includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society;

“land” includes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income;

“M” means the person M referred to in section 30 of the Act;

“member” includes a co-opted member;

“relevant authority” means the authority of which M is a member;

“relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) of the Act;

“relevant person” means M or any other person referred to in section 30(3)(b) of the Act;

securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

(b) Notification of disclosable pecuniary interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or co-opted member, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interests. You must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest or change to any interest registered under this section, notify the Monitoring Officer of the details of that new interest or change.

You must also notify the Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interests that arise at meetings as set out in paragraph 4(e).

(c) Register of interests

Any interests notified to the Monitoring Officer will be included in the register of interests.

A copy of the register will be available for public inspection and will be published on the authority’s website.

(d) Sensitive interests

Where you consider that disclosure of the details of a disclosable pecuniary interest could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation, and the Monitoring Officer agrees:

- (i) if the interest is entered in the register, copies of the register that are made available for inspection and any published version of the register will exclude details of the interest, but may state that you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, the details of which are withheld under s32(2) of the Localism Act 2011;
- (ii) if you are required by paragraph 4(e) below to make a disclosure at a meeting you need only disclose that you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

(e) Disclosure and non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interests at meetings

- (i) If you are present at a meeting of the authority, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority, and you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting:
 - (aa) You may not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;
 - (bb) You may not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;

- (cc) You must disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting;
 - (dd) If the interest is not registered and is not the subject of a pending notification, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days;
 - (ee) You must leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place, other than as set out in paragraphs 4(f).
- (ii) Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter you must not seek to improperly influence any decision on the matter.

(f) Dispensations

The Member Conduct Committee may, having regard to all relevant circumstances, grant you a dispensation to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in the following circumstances:

- (i) that without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business;
- (ii) that without the dispensation the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business;
- (iii) granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area;
- (iv)
- (v) it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

Commented [mh1]: This is something that each parish/town council must do rather than being referred to the Borough Council as presently.

(g) Offences

It is a criminal offence to:

- (i) Fail to notify the Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of your election;
- (ii) Fail to disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest at a meeting if it is not on the register;
- (iii) Fail to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of a disclosable pecuniary interest that is not on the register that you have disclosed at a meeting;
- (iv) Participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest;
- (v) Knowingly or recklessly providing information that is false or misleading in notifying the Monitoring Officer of a disclosable pecuniary interest or in disclosing such interest to a meeting.

The criminal penalties available to a court are to impose a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale and disqualification from being a councillor for up to 5 years.

Other requirements relating to the registration and disclosure of disclosable pecuniary interests have been included as local provisions form the purpose of this Code of Conduct.

Other Personal Interests

5. This section explains the requirements for the purposes of the Code of Conduct in relation to other personal interests not covered by the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

(a) Notification of interests

- (i) In addition to the disclosable pecuniary interests notifiable under the Localism Act 2011, you must, within 28 days of this Code being adopted or your election or appointment to office (where that is later), notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of the details of your other personal interests, where they fall within the following descriptions, for inclusion in the register of interests.
- (ii) You have an other personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:
 - (aa) any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority;
 - (bb) any body—
 - (1) exercising functions of a public nature;
 - (2) directed to charitable purposes; or
 - (3) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union), of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;
- (iii) You must, within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest or change to any interest registered under this section, notify the Monitoring Officer of the details of that new interest or change.

(b) Disclosure of other personal interests

- (i) Subject to sub-paragraphs (iii) to (iv), where you have an other personal interest described in paragraph 5(a)(ii) above or in paragraph 5(b)(ii) below in any business of your authority, and where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the other personal interest, and you attend a meeting of your authority at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that other personal interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.
- (ii)(A) You also have an other personal interest in any business of your authority where a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a *relevant person* to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral division or ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision;
- (B) In sub-paragraph (ii)(A), a *relevant person* is:
 - (aa) a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association; or
 - (bb) any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;
 - (cc) any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or

(dd) any body of a type described in paragraph 5(a)(ii).

(iii) Where you have an other personal interest but, by virtue of paragraph 5(d), sensitive information relating to it is not registered in your authority's register of members' interests, you must indicate to the meeting that you have a personal interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information to the meeting.

(c) Register of other personal interests

Any interests notified to the Monitoring Officer will be included in the register of interests.

A copy of the register will be available for public inspection and will be published on the authority's website.

(d) Sensitive interests

Where you consider that disclosure of the details an interest could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation, and the Monitoring Officer agrees, if the interest is entered on the register, copies of the register that are made available for inspection and any published version of the register will exclude details of the interest, but may state that you have an interest, the details of which are withheld.

(e) Non participation in case of other personal interests which are also interests which could lead to bias

(i) Where you have an other personal interest in any business of your authority you also have an interest which could lead to bias in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest and where that business:

(aa) affects your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in paragraphs 5(a)(ii) or 5(b)(ii) ;or

(bb) relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in paragraphs 5(a)(ii) or 5(b)(ii).

(ii) Subject to paragraph (iii) and (iv), where you have an interest which could lead to bias in any business of your authority:

(aa) You may not participate in any discussion of the matter at the meeting;

(bb) You may not participate in any vote taken on the matter at the meeting;

(cc) You must leave the room where the meeting is held while any discussion or voting takes place, other than as set out in sub-paragraphs (iii) and (iv) and paragraph 5(g).

(iii) Where you have an interest which could lead to bias in any business of your authority, you may attend a meeting but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise and you leave the room where the meeting is held immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence.

(iv) Subject to you disclosing the interest at the meeting, you may attend a meeting and vote on a matter where you have an interest which could lead to bias that relates to the functions of your authority in respect of:

- (aa) housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
- (bb) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
- (cc) statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
- (dd) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
- (ee) any ceremonial honour given to members; and
- (ff) setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(v) Where you have an interest which could lead to bias in any matter you must not seek to improperly influence any decision on the matter.

(h) **Gifts and hospitality**

You must, within 28 days of receiving any gift or hospitality over the value of £25, notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of the details of the gift or hospitality including the identity of the person from whom it was received.

Any receipt of gifts of hospitality notified to the Monitoring Officer will be included in the register of interests.