

EAST HORSLEY PARISH COUNCIL

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COUNCILLORS

PART 1

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Introduction and Interpretation

1. (1) This Code applies to you only when acting in your capacity as a member of the Parish Council or its committees and working groups.
- (2) It is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this Code which will assist the Parish Council in meeting its statutory obligation to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its councillors in accordance with the following principles:
 - **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.
 - **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.
 - **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.
 - **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.
 - **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.
 - **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.
 - **Leadership** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.
- (3) In this Code:-

A “disclosable pecuniary interest” is an interest within the prescribed descriptions set out below that you have personally, or is an interest of your spouse or civil partner, a person with whom you are living as husband and wife, or a person with

whom you are living as if you were civil partners, and you are aware that that other person has the interest:

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Prescribed description</i>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
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.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
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.
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 a member of a relevant authority;

“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) or section 31 (7), as the case may be, 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.

(4) In this Code:-

“meeting” means any meeting of:-

(a) the Parish Council;

(b) any of the Parish Council’s committees or working groups including any site visit authorised by the Parish Council or any of the aforementioned committees/working groups.

(5) This Code does not cover matters in respect of which the Localism Act 2011 specifically provides that criminal sanctions will apply.

(6) A failure of a councillor to comply with this Code is not to be dealt with otherwise than in accordance with arrangements approved by the Parish Council under which allegations of such failure can be investigated and decisions on such allegations can be made. In particular, a decision is not invalidated just because something that occurred in the process of making the decision involved a failure by a councillor to comply with the Code.

General Obligations

2. (1) You must treat others with respect.

(2) You must not:-

(a) do anything which may cause the Parish Council to breach any of the equality enactments;

(b) bully any person;

(c) intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is or is likely to be:-

(i) a complainant,

- (ii) a witness, or
 - (iii) involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings, in relation to an allegation that a councillor (including yourself) has failed to comply with this code of conduct; or
 - (d) do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Parish Council.
- 3. You must not:-
 - (a) disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you which you believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where:-
 - (i) you have the consent of a person authorised to give it;
 - (ii) you are required by law to do so;
 - (iii) the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - (iv) the disclosure is:-
 - (aa) reasonable and in the public interest; and
 - (bb) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Parish Council; or
 - (b) prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.
- 4. You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or the Parish Council into disrepute, or in a manner which is contrary to the Council's duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by councillors.
- 5. You:-
 - (a) must not use or attempt to use your position as a councillor improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage; and
 - (b) must, when using or authorising the use by others of the Parish Council's resources:-
 - (i) act in accordance with the Parish Council's reasonable requirements;
 - (ii) ensure that such resources are not used improperly; and
 - (c) must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.
- 6. (1) When reaching decisions on any matter you must have regard to any relevant advice provided to you by the Parish Council's Responsible Financial Officer/Clerk where that officer is acting pursuant to their statutory duties.
- (2) You must give reasons for all decisions in accordance with any statutory requirements and any reasonable additional requirements imposed by the Parish Council.

PART 2

INTERESTS

Registration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

7. As a member of the Parish Council you must avoid participating in any decision where you could reasonably be seen as having an interest which compromised your honesty or objectivity. Equally you should avoid any action which might reasonably lead others to conclude that you were not acting selflessly or with integrity. In order to assist with this and to promote openness and accountability, the Monitoring Officer at Guildford Borough Council (G.B.) must, by law, establish and maintain a register of interests for the East Horsley Parish Councillors, open for inspection by the public at the G.B. Council's offices and publically accessible via the website
8. You must, before the end of 28 days beginning with the day on which you became a member of the Parish Council, notify the Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interests which you have at the time when the notification is given. You should be aware that these interests include those of your 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 they were a civil partner so far as you are aware of the interests of that person. These interests will then be entered on the register of interests.
9. Where you become a member of the Parish Council as a result of re-election or re-appointment, paragraph 8 applies only as regards disclosable pecuniary interests not entered in the register when the notification is given.

Disclosure of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and participation in decision making

10. Subject to paragraphs 15 to 18 (*dispensations*), if you are present at any meeting and you are aware that you have, or any other person referred to in paragraph 8 above has, a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter that will be, or is being, considered at that meeting, you must, irrespective of whether that interest has been registered:
 - (a) disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting (or, if it is a sensitive interest as described in paragraph 19 below, disclose merely the fact that it is a disclosable pecuniary interest);
 - (b) not participate in any discussion or vote regarding that matter; and
 - (c) withdraw immediately from the room where the meeting considering that matter is being held.Where you have not previously notified the Monitoring Officer of that disclosable pecuniary interest you must do so within 28 days of the date of the meeting at which it became apparent.
11. Subject to paragraphs 15 to 18 (*dispensations*), if you are aware that you have, or any other person referred to in paragraph 8 above has, a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter on which either:
 - (a) you are authorised to make decisions, or
 - (b) you are consulted by an officer discharging powers delegated to them,you must not, in relation to (a) above, take any decision on that matter or, in relation to (b) above, participate in any consultation with such officer in respect of that matter

Where you have not previously notified the Monitoring Officer of that disclosable pecuniary interest you must do so within 28 days of the date on which it became apparent.

12. You may participate in any business of the Parish Council where that business relates to the Council's functions in respect of:-
 - (i) an allowance or payment or indemnity given to councillors
 - (ii) any ceremonial honour given to councillors; and
 - (iii) setting a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality

13. As a member of the Parish Council you must avoid accepting any gift, hospitality or other favour which could give the impression of compromising your integrity, honesty or objectivity. In particular, you
 - (1) should avoid any behaviour which might reasonably be seen as motivated by personal gain;
 - (2) should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you might reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor or co-opted member;
 - (3) should never accept significant gifts or hospitality (i.e. anything with a value of £25 or more) from suppliers or contractors seeking to acquire or develop business with the Parish Council; and
 - (4) must, within 28 days of receipt or acceptance, notify the Monitoring Officer of any gift you receive or hospitality you accept (of a value of £25 or more) for inclusion in the register of interests.

Dispensations

14. A councillor with a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter may submit a written request to the Monitoring Officer for the grant of a dispensation allowing them to participate in any discussion and/or vote on that matter at a meeting.
15. The Monitoring Officer may, after having had regard to all relevant circumstances, grant a dispensation to the councillor only if, he considers that without the dispensation:
 - (a) the number of persons prohibited from participating in any particular business in relation to the matter would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of that business, or
 - (b) considers that without the dispensation each member of the Parish Council would be prohibited from participating in any particular business to be transacted in relation to the matter.
16. Any dispensation granted must specify the period for which it has effect, and the period specified may not exceed four years.

Sensitive Information

17. (1) Sub-paragraphs (2) and (3) apply where:
- (a) a member of the Parish Council has an interest (whether or not a disclosable pecuniary interest), and
 - (b) the nature of the interest is such that the councillor and the Monitoring Officer, consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with that councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
- (2) If the interest is entered in the register of interests, copies of the register that are made available for inspection, and any version of the register published on the Council's website, must not include details of the interest (but may state that the councillor has an interest the details of which are withheld under this provision of the Code).
- (3) Where a disclosable pecuniary interest is not entered on the register of interests and would otherwise require disclosure at a meeting, the councillor shall be entitled to merely disclose at the meeting the fact that they have such an interest in the matter concerned.

Removal of entries in the register

18. An entry in the register of interests will be removed once the person concerned:
- (a) no longer has the interest, or
 - (b) is (otherwise than transitorily on re-election or re-appointment) neither a councillor nor a co-opted member of the Parish Council.

*This Code of Conduct for East Horsley Parish Council was adopted on 24th July 2012
Minute 2.72*