

NORTH MUNDHAM PARISH COUNCIL
EMPLOYEES CODE OF CONDUCT

The public expects a high standard of conduct from all local government employees.

The Code does not affect your rights and your responsibilities under the law. A breach of the Code may give rise to disciplinary action. As far as possible all employees should comply with the Code.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

You should not take decisions which will result in any financial or other benefit to yourself, your family, or your friends. Decisions should be based solely on the Council's best interest.

Integrity

You should not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to an individual or an organisation which might influence you in your work with the Council.

Objectivity

Any decisions which you make in the course of your work with the Council, including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, must be solely based on merit.

Accountability

You are accountable to North Mundham Parish Council as your employer. North Mundham Parish Council, in turn, is accountable to the public.

Openness

You should be as open as possible in all the decisions and actions that you take. You should give clear reasons for your decisions and should not restrict information, unless this is clearly required by Council policy or the law.

Honesty

You have a duty to declare any private interests which might affect your work with the Council.

Leadership

If you are a manager, you should promote and support these principles by your leadership and example.

Relationships

- **The Public**

You may have contact with members of the public. You should always be courteous and helpful. You should deal fairly, equitably and consistently with each member of the public, and must follow North Mundham Parish Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

- **Councillors**

Both councillors and employees are servants of the public, and they are indispensable to one another. But their responsibilities are distinct. Councillors are responsible to the electorate and serve only as long as their term of office lasts. Employees are responsible to the Council. Their job is to give advice to Councillors and the Council, and to carry out the Council's work under the direction of the Council, its Committees and Sub- Committees.

Mutual respect between Councillors and employees is essential. Close personal familiarity between individual Councillors and employees can damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to other Councillors and Employees.

- **Contractors**

You must be fair and impartial in your dealings with contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers.

If you are involved in the tendering process you must follow the Council's procedures and rules about tenders and contracts.

If you have access to confidential information on tenders or costs for contractors, you must not disclose that information to any unauthorised individual or organisation,

Conflicts of Interest

As a Council employee, you must not allow any private interest to influence your decisions. You must not use your position to further your own interests or the interest of others who do not have a right to benefit.

You may have a private interest which relates to the work of the Council. That interest may be a financial one, or one which a member of the public might reasonably think could influence your judgement. In addition, close family members or people living in your household may have financial interests in the work of North Mundham Parish Council. All such interests must be declared to the Chairman of the Employment Committee.

If you are a member of an organisation or a club, and membership might result in a conflict of interest in relation to any aspect of your work with the Council, you must declare this membership to the Chairman of the Employment Committee. This applies equally to membership of organisations or clubs which are not open to the public, e.g. Freemasonry.

Openness and Disclosure of Information

The Council's decision making process must be transparent and open. The Council must provide the public with clear and accessible information about how it operates. It must also ensure that there is an effective procedure in place for the public to use when it goes

wrong. But there are exceptions to the principle of openness where confidentiality is involved, and information may be withheld if, for example, it would compromise a personal or commercial confidentiality. This does not apply where there is a legal duty to provide information.

Paid employment outside the Council

The Council will normally allow you to undertake paid employment outside the Council, unless there is a clear conflict of interest, or it is likely to have an adverse effect on the work of the Council. If you want to undertake paid employment outside the Council, you must first obtain the Council's approval. This procedure is in your interests and will protect you. You are not allowed to use the equipment and resources of the Council in any paid employment.

Hospitality

You should not accept offers of hospitality unless you can answer "Yes" to the following questions:

- Can I justify this? And
- Can I be sure I will not be subject to legitimate criticism?

If you are in any doubt, you should seek the advice of the Chairman of the Employment Committee. You should not accept repeated hospitality from the same source.

Gifts

You must not accept personal gifts, but you may keep items of token value, i.e. pens, diaries.

Corruption

It is important that you are aware this it is a serious criminal offence for you corruptly to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing anything, or for showing favour or disfavour to any person, in the course of your work with the Council.

Use of Resources

You and your colleagues serve the public, and you must remember this principle when you use Council equipment, materials and resources, in order to ensure value for money,

Appointments

All appointments must be made on the basis of merit.

Contact with the Media

In your work with the Council, contact with the media must follow North Mundham Parish Council's Media Relations Policy.

Political Neutrality

The public expect you to carry out your duties in a politically neutral way, and this may be represented by Councillors.

You must serve the Council and all Councillors, regardless of their political outlook. You must implement the policies of the Council irrespective of your personal views.

If you are asked by a Councillor to provide assistance with a matter which is clearly party political, or which does not have a clear link with the work of the Council, you should politely refuse and inform the Councillor that you are referring the matter to the Chairman of the Employment Committee.

Your rights as an employee

- **Public Statements**

As a citizen, you are entitled to express your views about the Council provided you do not make use of any private information gained through your work with the Council. But you should not, in your capacity, criticise the Council, either through the media or at a public meeting, or in any written communication with members of the public.

- **Fair and reasonable treatment at work**

You are entitled to expect fair and reasonable treatment from your Councillors. If you feel that you have been unfairly treated, or have been discriminated against, you are entitled to make use of the appropriate Council procedures.

There may be the rare occasion when you feel that you have been required by a Councillor, or a member of the public, or by an organisation, to act in a way which might be illegal, improper or unethical, or which is otherwise in conflict with the principles of this code of conduct.

- If you are in this situation you must report the matter to the Chairman of the Employment Committee
- If, however, you feel that you cannot discuss the matter with the Chairman of the Employment Committee then you must report the matter to the Chairman of the Council
- The Chairman of the Council or the Chairman of the Employment Committee will then decide, in consultation, where necessary with the District Council's monitoring officer, what action is to be taken
- The confidentiality of your concern will be maintained wherever possible

- **Confidentiality**

In the course of your employment you may have access to confidential information relating to employees, client, customers of the Council and the business and operation of the Council itself. You must respect this and ensure that you do not divulge any information you gain during the course of your work, or use it to gain personal advantage. You must also take care of files, papers etc., and ensure that all documents in your possession are kept in a secure manner.

If you use a computer system in the course of your work, you must take into account the computer, internet and email guidelines.

- **Return of corporate property**

Upon termination of employment employees are required to return to the Chairman of the Employment Committee ID badges, documents, files, office equipment, keys and other property belonging to the Council. Failure to do so will entitle the Council to

withhold the whole or any part of any salaries due from the Council to the employee up to the replacement value of the property not returned.

- **Overpayment of Salary**

In the event of overpayments being made to you the Council is authorised to make any adjustment to your pay.

A review of this Code shall be undertaken bi-annually (or as appropriate) and necessary amendments will be undertaken by the Clerk and reported to the full Council for approval. The Council will undertake to ensure that its members and employees are trained in the processes required by this Code as deemed appropriate.

Adopted on: 7th March 2017

Minute No: 35.17(2)

Review: March 2019