



Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Policy 4.1

CODE OF CONDUCT

Proposed 11 June 2012

Adopted 25 June 2012

Reviewed May 2015

Review by 31 December 2018

Introduction

Pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, Sawbridgeworth Town Council ('the Council') has adopted this Code of Conduct to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour by its members and co-opted members whenever they conduct the business of the Council including the business of the office to which they were elected or appointed or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council.

This Code of Conduct is based on the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

1. General

As a member or co-opted member of Sawbridgeworth Town Council you have a responsibility to represent the community and work constructively with our staff and partner organisations to secure better social, economic and environmental outcomes for all residents of and visitors to the town.

2. Principles

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 this Council.

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. Registration and Declaration of Interests

3.1 The Act further provides for registration and disclosure of interests and in Sawbridgeworth Town Council this will be done as follows:

3.2 You must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify the Town Clerk of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State, where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living with as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners.

3.3 In addition, you must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify the Town Clerk of any disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest which your Council has decided should be included in the register.

3.4 If an interest has not been entered onto the Council's register, then you must disclose the interest to any meeting of the Council at which you are present, where you have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a 'sensitive interest' as defined in the Localism Act.¹

3.5 Following any disclosure of an interest not on the Council's register or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the Town Clerk of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.

3.6 Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State. Additionally, you must observe the restrictions the Town Council places on your involvement in matters where you have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council.

4. Conduct

4.1 As a Member of Sawbridgeworth Town Council your conduct must address the statutory principles in particular by:

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

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

4.4 Not allowing other pressures, including the financial interests of myself or others connected to me, to deter you from pursuing constituents' casework, the interests of the town of Sawbridgeworth or the good governance of the Council in a proper manner.

4.5 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 your duties as a member of this Council.

4.6 Considering the interests of all parties, including relevant advice from officers, taking all relevant information into consideration, remaining objective and making decisions on merit.

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

4.8 Contributing to making this 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 you and other members to account but restricting access to information when the wider public interest or the law requires it

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

4.10 Valuing your colleagues and staff and engaging with them in an appropriate manner and one that underpins the mutual respect that is essential to good local government.

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

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

¹ A 'sensitive interest' is described in the Localism Act 2011 as a member or co-opted member of an authority having an interest, and the nature of the interest being such that the member or co-opted member, and the Monitoring Officer, consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.