



COUNCIL EMPLOYEES - CODE of CONDUCT

Introduction

The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees of the Parish Council. This code sets out the standards that are expected of employees and provides a framework that will help to promote good practice.

Who does the code apply to?

The code covers all employees of East Dean and Friston Parish Council, including agency employees, temporary workers and internal contractors who carry out work on behalf of the council.

General Principles

The role of employees is to serve the Council in providing advice, implementing its policies, and delivering services to the local community. In performing their duties, they must act with integrity, fairness, honesty, impartiality and objectivity.

Accountability

Employees serve the whole of the Council. They are accountable to, and owe a duty to the Council. They must act in accordance with the principles set out in this Code, recognising the duty of all public sector employees to discharge public functions reasonably and according to the law.

Political Neutrality

Employees of the Council must follow every lawfully expressed policy of the Council and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

Relations with members, the public and other employees

Mutual respect between employees and members is essential to good local government, and working relationships should be kept on a professional basis. Employees of the Council should deal with the public, members and other employees sympathetically, efficiently, and without bias. They must observe correct relations with Members and other Staff. Treat all alike, without favour and avoid over-familiarity

Stewardship

Employees of the Council must ensure that they use public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner, and must not utilise property, computers, vehicles or other facilities of the authority for personal use unless authorised to do so.

Equality

Employees of the Council must comply with the requirements of the law relating to equality issues.

Personal Interests

Whilst employees' private lives are their own concern, they must not allow their private interests to conflict with their public duty. They must not misuse their official position or information acquired in the course of their employment to further their private interests, or the interests of others. In particular, they must comply with:

- (1) any rules of the Council on the registration and declaration by employees of financial and non - financial interests,
- (2) any rules of the Council on the declaration by employees of hospitality or gifts offered to or received by them, from any person or organisation doing or seeking to do business, or otherwise benefiting or seeking to benefit from a relationship with the Council. Employees must not accept any Favours or Gifts - apart from modest items that might be offered e.g. Pens/Diaries/Calendars.
- (3) Disclose any personal or family Interests in Issues under discussion in Council
- (4) Council Grants, Donations, Sponsorship and the engagement of Contractors: If it could be considered by Residents that Council Staff and their families may benefit from such activities, report the matter to Council

Treatment of Confidential Information

Openness in the dissemination of information and decision making should be the norm in the Council. However, certain information may be confidential or sensitive and therefore not appropriate for a wide audience. Where confidentiality is necessary to protect the privacy or other rights of individuals or bodies, information should not be released to anyone other than a member, or other person who is entitled to receive it, or needs to have access to it for the proper discharge of their functions. Nothing in this Code can be taken as overriding existing statutory or common law obligations to keep certain information confidential, or to divulge certain information.

Appointment of Staff

Employees of the Council involved in the recruitment and appointment of staff must ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, such employees must not be involved in any appointment, or any other decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay and conditions for any other employee, or prospective employee, to whom they are related, or with whom they have a close personal relationship outside work.

Open Government.

Keep everything in the open and discourage closed Sessions. Ensure Members and Staff are kept up-to-date with all Matters affecting the Council

Contractors

All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, should be made known to the Chair. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders, and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process. No part of the local community should be discriminated against. Employees who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, should declare that relationship to the Chair.

Alcohol and Drugs

Any employee attending work whilst under the influence of alcohol will be liable for disciplinary action.

Consumption, possession, dealing in or handling illegal substances will not be tolerated and disciplinary action will be taken in appropriate cases.

Any of the above will normally result in summary dismissal.

Concerns

If it appears that an adopted Policy is illegal or improper, refer the matter to your Local Council Association or District Monitoring Officer

Employees who have concerns about wrongdoing at work should contact the Clerk or Chairman.

Standards and attitude

Be prompt in all dealings/responses - if this is not always possible, issue an acknowledgement that a matter is receiving attention

Be open and amenable to any potential changes in Procedures and Systems