



# Great and Little Chishill Parish Council

## Code of Conduct

(based on the Model Councillor Code of Conduct of the Local Government Association)

### Introduction

Pursuant to section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, Great and Little Chishill Parish 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 Seven Principles of public life, also known as the Nolan Principles:

- **Selflessness:** Act solely in the public interest.
- **Integrity:** Avoid placing yourself under any obligation to people or organizations that might try to inappropriately influence your work.
- **Objectivity:** Act and take decisions impartially and fairly.
- **Accountability:** Be prepared to submit yourself to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness:** Be as open as possible about all decisions and actions.
- **Honesty:** Be truthful.
- **Leadership:** Promote and support these principles by example.

### 1. Definitions

For the purposes of this Code, a ‘co-opted member’ is a person who is not a member of the Council but who is either a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Council, or a member of, and represents the Council on any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Council, and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee.

For the purposes of this Code, a ‘meeting’ is a meeting of the Council, any of its sub-committees or joint committees.

For the purposes of this Code, and unless otherwise expressed, a reference to a member of the Council includes a co-opted member of the Council.

The ‘Monitoring Officer’ refers to an officer role at South Cambridgeshire District Council with the remit of overseeing councillor conduct and legal compliance.

## **2. Purpose of the Code of Conduct**

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. Local Government Association (LGA) encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

## **3. Application of the Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor;
- your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor.

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings;
- at online or telephone meetings;
- in written communication;
- in verbal communication;
- in non-verbal communication;
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

## **4. Standards of councillor conduct**

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken. Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

## 5. General Obligations

As a councillor, you must adhere to the following standards of behaviour:

### 5.1 Respect and Civility

As a councillor, you must treat others with civility and respect. This includes:

- Professionalism: Treating all members of the public, fellow councillors, and the Clerk (as the Council's sole employee) with courtesy.
- Non-Harassment: Not engaging in bullying, harassment, or any behaviour that could reasonably be perceived as such.
- The 'Clerk-Member' Relationship: Recognizing that the Clerk is an officer of the Council and must be allowed to perform their duties without undue influence, intimidation, or personal attack.

### 5.2 Disrepute and Integrity

You must not:

- Bring the Council into Disrepute: Act in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or the Council into disrepute.
- Abuse of Position: Use your position as a councillor improperly to confer an advantage or disadvantage on yourself or any other person.
- Gifts and Hospitality: Accept any gift or hospitality (regardless of value) which could be perceived as an attempt to influence your decisions. Any gift accepted over the value of £50 must be registered with the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

### 5.3 Use of Council Resources and Facilities

When using the resources of the Council, you must:

- Act Responsibly: Ensure such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes).
- Legal Compliance: Have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.
- Efficiency: Ensure that Council resources are used economically and only for the business of the Parish Council.

### 5.4 Confidentiality

You must not 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:

- You have the consent of a person authorized to give it;
- You are required by law to do so;
- The disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice;
- The disclosure is reasonable, in the public interest, and made in good faith.

## 5.5 Confidentiality and Access to Information

- Do not disclose confidential information unless you have legal consent or it is a "whistleblowing" situation in the public interest.
- Do not prevent anyone from accessing information they are entitled to by law.

## 6. Registering and Declaring Interests

### 6.1 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)

You must register any DPIs (interests belonging to you or your partner) within 28 days of election.

These typically include:

- Employment, office, trade, or profession.
- Sponsorship or land ownership in the parish.
- Securities and certain contracts with the Council.

### 6.2 Other Registrable Interests (ORIs)

You must register interests that do not involve money but might influence your judgment, such as membership in a local charity, a trade union, or a political party.

### 6.3 Declaring at Meetings

- DPIs: If a matter arises in a meeting where you have a DPI, you must disclose it and leave the room. You cannot participate in the discussion or vote.
- Non-Registrable Interests: If a matter affects your wellbeing or finances more than the average resident, you should declare it and consider if it is appropriate to vote.

## 7. Gifts and Hospitality

- You must not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of value, which could be perceived as a bribe or an attempt to influence your role.
- You must register any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 (or the threshold set by your Council) within 28 days of receipt.

**Adopted:**

**Last reviewed:**