

Code of Conduct for Felliscliffe Parish Council

In January 2019 the Committee on Standards in Public Life, Chair: Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL, reported that “The oversight of parish councils must be proportionate in relation to their comparatively limited budget and remit”.

Felliscliffe Parish Council has a very limited budget and has no statutory powers being only a consultee and representative of issues on such matters as planning and highways which are the points of interest most raised by parishioners.

The Code of Practice recognises the above paragraphs and addresses them accordingly.

General Principles of Conduct

In carrying out their duties in exercising the functions of the Authority or otherwise acting as a member or co-opted member of the Authority, members will be expected to observe the following general principles of conduct identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in its Report as applying to holders of public office. These principles will be taken into consideration when any allegation is received of breaches of the provisions of the Code.

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions 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 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.

Rules of Conduct

Members shall in particular observe the following rules when acting as a Member or co-opted Member of the Authority and Members are informed that you:

(a) Do treat others with respect and courtesy.

- (b) Do not do anything which may cause the Authority to breach any of its equality duties (in particular as set out in the Equality Act 2010);
- (c) Do not bully any person;
- (d) Do not 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 member (including yourself) has failed to comply with his or her Authority's code of conduct;
- (e) Do not anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the Authority.
- (f) Do not use or attempt to use your position as a member improperly to confer on, or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage; and
- (g) Do be aware of the requirements of the Bribery Act 2010 and that offences under the Act include the situation where a Member requests, agrees to receive or accepts a financial or other advantage intending that, in consequence, any function of a public nature, any activity connected with the Authority or any activity to be performed by or on behalf of the Authority or others should be performed improperly.
- (h) Do 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:
- (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 legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - (iv) the disclosure is—
reasonable and in the public interest; and
made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Authority.
- (i) Do not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.
- (j) Do not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or authority into disrepute.
- (k) Do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of your role as a member for the advancement of your own interests.
- (l) Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships in particular a councillor must not participate in a discussion or vote in a matter to be considered at a meeting if they have any interest, whether registered or not, "if a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your discussion or decision-making in relation to that matter".
- (m) Members shall give reasons for the decisions in accordance with any statutory requirements and any reasonable additional requirements imposed by the authority.
- End of Code

Review date 12th January 2023