

Huggate Parish Council

Code of Conduct Policy

1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected of all Parish Councillors, co-opted members, employees, volunteers, and anyone acting on behalf of the Parish Council. It aims to promote public confidence, integrity, transparency, accountability, and respectful conduct in all Council activities.

2. Core Principles

All members shall uphold the following principles:

- Selflessness – acting solely in the public interest.
- Integrity – avoiding improper influence and conflicts of interest.
- Objectivity – making decisions based on evidence and merit.
- Accountability – being accountable to the public for decisions and actions.
- Openness – conducting business transparently where appropriate.
- Honesty – declaring relevant interests and providing truthful information.
- Leadership – promoting and supporting high standards of conduct.
- Respect – treating all individuals with courtesy and dignity.

3. General Standards of Behaviour

Members and representatives of the Council shall:

- Treat others with respect, courtesy, and professionalism.
- Listen to differing views and opinions without hostility.
- Promote equality and inclusion.
- Avoid discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation, or victimisation.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality where required.
- Use Council resources responsibly and only for authorised purposes.
- Comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and Council policies.

4. Conduct During Meetings

During Council meetings, members shall:

- Behave in a respectful and orderly manner.
- Follow the Chair's rulings and meeting procedures.
- Allow others to speak without interruption.
- Debate issues constructively and avoid personal attacks.
- Focus discussions on Council business and the interests of the community.
- Refrain from using offensive, abusive, or inappropriate language.

5. Relationships with Officers, Employees and Volunteers

Members shall:

- Treat employees and volunteers with respect and professionalism.
- Recognise and respect the distinct roles of councillors and staff.
- Not seek to improperly influence staff in carrying out their duties.
- Raise concerns regarding staff performance through appropriate procedures rather than in public meetings.

6. Interests and Conflicts of Interest

Members must:

- Declare any financial, personal, or other interests that could reasonably be perceived as influencing their decision-making.
- Comply with statutory requirements relating to the registration and declaration of interests.
- Withdraw from discussions and voting where required by law or Council policy.
- Avoid situations that could create a conflict between personal interests and Council responsibilities.

7. Use of Information

Members shall:

- Not disclose confidential information without proper authority or legal justification.
- Use information obtained through Council duties only for legitimate Council purposes.
- Comply with data protection legislation and information governance requirements.

8. Use of Council Resources

Council property, facilities, equipment, and funds shall:

- Be used only for legitimate Council business.
- Not be used for personal gain, political campaigning, or unauthorised activities.
- Be protected from misuse, damage, or waste.

9. Communications and Social Media

When communicating in person, in writing, online, or through social media, members shall:

- Maintain the same standards of conduct expected in formal meetings.
- Distinguish between personal opinions and official Council positions.
- Avoid posting content that could bring the Council into disrepute.
- Refrain from making defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, or misleading statements.
- Respect confidentiality and data protection obligations.

10. Gifts and Hospitality

Members shall:

- Not accept gifts, hospitality, or benefits that could reasonably be perceived as influencing their role.
- Declare gifts and hospitality in accordance with Council policy and legal requirements.
- Seek guidance from the Proper Officer where uncertainty exists.

11. Complaints and Breaches

Alleged breaches of this Code may be addressed through:

- Informal resolution where appropriate.
- The Council's complaints procedure.
- Referral to the relevant monitoring officer or standards body where required.

Where a breach is substantiated, appropriate action may be taken in accordance with applicable procedures and legislation.

12. Equality and Diversity

The Parish Council is committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity.
- Preventing discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Creating an inclusive environment for councillors, staff, volunteers, residents, and visitors.

13. Commitment

All Parish Councillors and those acting on behalf of the Council are expected to read, understand, and comply with this Code of Conduct.

Adopted by: Huggate Parish Council

Date Adopted: 15.06.2026

Review Date: 15.06.2028

Signed:

Chair of the Council _____

Clerk _____