

Halstead Parish Council – Members’ Code of Conduct (Updated 2026)

1. Introduction

As a member or co-opted member of Halstead Parish Council, you must have regard to the **Seven Principles of Public Life: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership**.

This Code sets out the standards of behaviour expected of you when acting in your capacity as a councillor. It reflects the **Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct (2024–2025)** and current parish council practice.

The purpose of this Code is to:

- Maintain public confidence in local government
- Protect councillors, officers and the public
- Promote high standards of conduct
- Provide a clear framework for ethical decision-making

2. General Conduct Obligations

When acting as a councillor, you must:

2.1 Act in the public interest

You must not improperly confer advantage or disadvantage, or seek financial or material benefit for yourself, your family, friends or close associates.

2.2 Act with integrity

You must not place yourself under any obligation that might influence your duties.

2.3 Treat others with respect

You must not:

- Bully, harass or intimidate any person
- Engage in behaviour that could reasonably be seen as offensive, hostile or discriminatory

2.4 Uphold impartiality of officers

You must not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of council staff.

2.5 Exercise objectivity

Decisions must be made on merit, including appointments, awards, contracts and recommendations.

2.6 Be accountable

You must cooperate with lawful scrutiny and comply with all legal obligations, including:

- ▮ Local Government Act 1972
- ▮ Freedom of Information Act 2000
- ▮ Equality Act 2010
- ▮ Bribery Act 2010
- ▮ Localism Act 2011
- ▮ Data Protection legislation (UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018)
- ▮ Health & Safety legislation

2.7 Be open and transparent

You must be as open as possible about your decisions and actions and be prepared to give reasons.

2.8 Declare and manage interests

You must declare pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in accordance with Schedules A and B of this Code.

2.9 Use council resources responsibly

You must:

- ▮ Use resources only for council business
- ▮ Not use council resources for political purposes
- ▮ Follow the Local Authority Code of Publicity

2.10 Maintain confidentiality

You must not disclose confidential information unless:

- ▮ You have consent
- ▮ You are required by law
- ▮ The disclosure is in the public interest and lawful

2.11 Promote high standards

You must lead by example and promote high standards of conduct.

2.12 Comply with local protocols

You must follow all Halstead Parish Council policies, protocols and procedures.

3. Registering and Declaring Interests

3.1 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)

You must, within 28 days of taking office, notify the Monitoring Officer of all DPIs as defined in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

This includes interests held by:

- ▮ You
- ▮ Your spouse or civil partner
- ▮ A person you live with as spouse or civil partner

3.2 Other Registerable Interests (ORIs)

You must also register:

- ▮ Membership of external bodies
- ▮ Charitable or public-purpose organisations
- ▮ Organisations influencing public policy
- ▮ Gifts or hospitality over £25

This reflects Schedule B of the LGA Model Code (2024–2025).

3.3 Declaration at meetings

If an interest is not yet registered, you must declare it at the meeting where it arises.

3.4 Participation restrictions

If you have a DPI:

- ▮ You must not participate in discussion or vote
- ▮ You must leave the room

Unless a dispensation has been granted.

3.5 Sensitive interests

Where disclosure could lead to risk of harm, the Monitoring Officer (Sevenoaks District Council) may agree to withhold details.

4. Criminal Offences

Under section 34 of the Localism Act 2011, it is a criminal offence to:

- ▮ Fail to register a DPI within 28 days
- ▮ Fail to declare a DPI at a meeting

- Participate in business where you have a DPI
- Provide false or misleading information

5. SCHEDULE A – Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, as prescribed by The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No 1464) are as follows:
- The descriptions on Disclosable Pecuniary Interests are subject to the following definitions:
- “the Act” means the Localism Act 2011
- “body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which the relevant person is a partner or a body corporate of which the relevant person is a director, or in the securities of which the relevant person has a beneficial interest
- “director” includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society
- “land” excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income
- “M” means a member of the relevant authority
- “member” includes a co-opted member
- “relevant authority” means the authority of which M is a member
- “relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which M gives a notification for the purposes of section 30(1) or section 31(7), as the case may be, of the Act
- “relevant person” means M or any other person referred to in section 30(3)(b) of the Act (the Member’s spouse, civil partner, or somebody with whom they are living as a husband or wife, or as if they were civil partners).
- “securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society

Interest	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vacation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant

period in respect of any expenses incurred by M in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of M.

This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Contracts	Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority: (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to M's knowledge): (a) the landlord is the relevant authority; and (b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where: (a) that body (to M's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and (b) either (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

NOTE:

In accordance with section 34 of the Localism Act 2011, it is a criminal offence if, without reasonable excuse, you:

- fail to notify the Monitoring Officer of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest before the end of 28 days of becoming, or being re-elected or re-appointed, a Member or Co-opted Member of the Authority;

- ▮ fail to notify the Monitoring Officer of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest before the end of 28 days of becoming aware of it, where you are acting alone in the course of discharging a function of the Authority (including making a decision in relation to the matter) and the interest is not already registered or is not the subject of a pending notification to the Monitoring Officer;
- ▮ fail to disclose a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest at a meeting, where such interest has not already been registered or notified to the Monitoring Officer;
- ▮ fail to notify the Monitoring Officer of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest before the end of 28 days of disclosing it at a meeting, where such interest has not already been registered or notified to the Monitoring Officer;
- ▮ take part in discussions or votes at meetings that relate to the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, unless a dispensation has been granted
- ▮ knowingly or recklessly provide false or misleading information in any of the above disclosures or notifications.

6. SCHEDULE B – Other Registerable Interests

You must register any interest which relates to or is likely to affect:

- ▮ Any body to which you are appointed by the Council
- ▮ Any public, charitable or political organisation of which you are a member
- ▮ Any organisation influencing public policy
- ▮ Any gifts or hospitality over **£25** received in your role as councillor