

Arthington Parish Council

Code of Conduct Policy

1. General Principles

Councillors must uphold the following principles in all council activities:

- **Selflessness** — Decisions should be made solely in the public interest.
- **Integrity** — Councillors must avoid placing themselves under any obligation that might influence their work.
- **Objectivity** — Decisions should be based on evidence, merit, and fairness.
- **Accountability** — Councillors are answerable to the public for their actions and decisions.
- **Openness** — Information should be shared transparently unless legally restricted.
- **Honesty** — Councillors must declare private interests relating to their public duties.
- **Leadership** — Councillors should promote and support high standards of conduct.

2. Expected Behaviour - Respect and Courtesy

- Treat fellow councillors, staff, and members of the public with respect.
- Listen to others' views without interruption or hostility.
- Avoid personal attacks, inflammatory language, or behaviour that could reasonably be seen as bullying or harassment.

3. Meetings and Decision-Making

- Attend meetings regularly and arrive prepared.
- Allow the Chair to manage proceedings and follow meeting protocols.
- Engage in constructive debate and accept majority decisions once made.

4. Use of Council Resources

- Use council facilities, equipment, and information only for legitimate council business.
- Do not use council resources for personal or political campaigning.

5. Communication

- Ensure public statements, including online or on social media, are accurate, respectful, and do not bring the council into disrepute.
- Avoid sharing confidential information.

6. Conflicts of Interest

- Declare any personal or financial interest that could influence decision-making.
- Withdraw from discussions or votes where a conflict exists.
- Maintain an up-to-date register of interests as required by law.

7. Confidentiality

- Respect confidential information shared during council business.
- Do not disclose information that is restricted, sensitive, or legally protected.

8. Gifts and Hospitality

- Do not accept gifts or hospitality that could be perceived as influencing your role.
- Report any offers or acceptance of gifts/hospitality in accordance with council procedures.

9. Use of Social Media

- Conduct yourself online in a way that reflects the standards expected offline.
- Avoid posting content that is discriminatory, abusive, misleading, or damaging to the council's reputation.
- Make clear when expressing personal views that they are not official council positions.

10. Breaches of the Code

- Alleged breaches will be reported to the Monitoring Officer.
- Councillors must cooperate fully with any investigation.
- Sanctions may include formal warnings, training requirements, removal from committees, or other actions permitted by law.

10. Commitment

- By serving on the parish council, councillors agree to uphold this Code of Conduct and act in the best interests of the community at all times.