

# Thornhackett Parish Council

## Lobbying Policy

This policy applies principally to matters involved with planning development applications. Matters relating to planning policy development do not fall within the advice of this policy.

Lobbying, or seeking to influence a decision, is a normal and perfectly proper part of the Political process. However, it can lead to impartiality being brought into question and the need to publicly declare that an approach of this nature has taken place. Problems could arise if Councillors indicate or give the impression of support or opposition to a development proposal or particular planning application, or declare their voting intention, before a decisions to be taken; to do so without all relevant Information and views would be unfair and prejudicial. Lobbying can take place by professional agents as well as unrepresented applicants/landowners. In general terms, the following best practice points and guidance notes apply to both situations.

Care should be taken in expressing an opinion on any planning proposal; Councillors should always indicate that they will keep an open mind until all the facts are known and that they have heard both sides of the argument. Before this stage it is better to restrict themselves to giving procedural advice, directing those who are lobbying to Officers, so that their representations can be included in the Officer's report.

Councillors who find themselves in a situation which is developing into lobbying should always explain that whilst they can listen to what is said, they are required to keep an open mind and are constrained from expressing a firm point of view or an intention to vote one way or another. Otherwise, they will have to state their position at the Committee meeting and not take part in the subsequent decision.

Review date: Within 3 years of adoption by Council

Amended: February 2022

Adopted by Council: March 2022