



RUSPER PARISH COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS

1. Statement of Purpose

The role of Councillor is a fundamental part of local democracy. Councillors are entrusted to represent their communities, make decisions in the public interest, and uphold the reputation of local government.

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected of all Members and co-opted Members of Rusper Parish Council. It ensures accountability, promotes public confidence, and supports high standards of conduct.

Councillors are expected to act with integrity, transparency, and respect at all times, both in their official capacity and in any context where they may be perceived to represent the Council.

2. Introduction

This Code is adopted in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and is based on the Local Government Association (LGA) Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

The Code applies to all Members and co-opted Members of Rusper Parish Council. It incorporates the Nolan Principles of Public Life and reflects best practice guidance issued by the LGA and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

The Monitoring Officer of the principal authority has responsibility for oversight of the Code. Parish Councillors should seek advice from the Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer where appropriate.

3. Application of the Code

This Code applies when a Member:

- Acts in their capacity as a Councillor or representative of the Council
- Claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a Councillor
- Uses their position or knowledge gained through office in public or private communication

The Code applies to all forms of communication, including meetings (in-person or remote), written correspondence, verbal communication, and social media activity.

Members are expected to uphold high standards of conduct at all times.

4. General Principles of Conduct

Members must uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life (Appendix A):

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

In addition, Members must:

- Act in the public interest
- Treat others fairly and with respect
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Exercise due care, diligence, and good judgment

- Ensure proper use of public resources

5. Standards of Conduct

5.1 Respect

Members must treat all individuals with respect and courtesy. This includes Councillors, officers, contractors, volunteers, and members of the public.

Debate and disagreement are part of democratic life, but personal attacks, abuse, or offensive conduct are not acceptable.

5.2 Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

Members must not:

- Bully or harass any person
- Engage in discriminatory behaviour

Bullying and harassment include behaviour that intimidates, humiliates, or undermines others, whether in person, in writing, or online.

Members must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and promote equality in all Council activities.

5.3 Impartiality of Officers

Members must not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the political neutrality or professional integrity of Council employees or contractors.

Officers must be allowed to provide impartial advice without undue influence.

5.4 Confidentiality and Information

Members must not:

- Disclose confidential information unless legally permitted
- Use confidential information for personal or third-party advantage
- Prevent lawful access to information

Confidentiality obligations continue after a Member leaves office.

5.5 Disrepute

Members must not conduct themselves in a manner that could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or the Council into disrepute.

5.6 Use of Position

Members must not use their position improperly to gain advantage or cause disadvantage to any person or organisation.

5.7 Use of Council Resources

Council resources must be used solely for official Council business and in accordance with Council policies.

Resources include equipment, stationery, facilities, and information systems.

5.8 Compliance with the Code

Members must:

- Undertake Code of Conduct training when offered
- Co-operate with investigations
- Not obstruct or intimidate any person involved in complaints or investigations
- Comply with any sanctions imposed

6. Interests

Members must register and declare interests in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

Failure to declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is a criminal offence.

Members must:

- Keep their Register of Interests up to date
- Declare relevant interests at meetings

- Withdraw from discussions where required

Further detail is set out in Appendix B.

7. Gifts and Hospitality

Members must not accept gifts or hospitality that could reasonably be perceived as influencing their role.

Members must:

- Register any gift or hospitality valued at £50 or more within 28 days
- Register refused offers where appropriate
- Exercise caution at all times when offered gifts or hospitality

8. Application to Parish Council Responsibilities

Members must act in accordance with this Code when undertaking any Council-related duties, including representation on outside bodies or committees.

9. Enforcement

Alleged breaches of this Code may be referred for investigation in accordance with the relevant standards process. Outcomes may include no further action, informal resolution, or formal sanctions where applicable.

10. Review of Code

This Code will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains consistent with legislation, statutory guidance, and best practice.

Appendix A – Seven Principles of Public Life

(Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership)

Appendix B – Registering and Declaring Interests

(Aligned with Localism Act 2011 requirements)

Members must register within 28 days of election or appointment and update within 28 days of any change.