

Brightling Parish Council

Councillor Code of Conduct

Adopted 14th May 2025

1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct applies to all members and co-opted members of Brightling Parish Council when acting in their official capacity. It is intended to support high standards of conduct in local government and is based on the Local Government Association (LGA) Model Code of Conduct (2020), guidance for parish and town councils (2022), and Rother District Council's Member Code of Conduct (2023).

2. General Principles of Public Life

As a councillor, I commit to upholding the following principles:

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

3. Application of the Code

This Code applies when:

- I act, claim to act, or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Council;
- I misuse my position as a councillor;
- My actions could be reasonably perceived as being related to my role as a councillor.

It applies to all forms of communication, including face-to-face, written, and digital interactions.

4. Standards of Behaviour

I will:

- Treat others with respect.
- Not bully, harass or discriminate unlawfully against any person.
- Promote equalities.
- Respect the impartiality and integrity of officers and contractors.
- Not bring the Council or my role into disrepute.
- Not use or attempt to use my position improperly to gain advantage or cause disadvantage.

5. Respect and Civility

I will uphold a culture of mutual respect, recognising diverse opinions, and avoiding personal attacks. I will not engage in malicious gossip, disrespectful behaviour, or inappropriate challenges to officers or fellow councillors.

6. Confidentiality

I will not disclose confidential information, unless legally required or in the public interest with prior consultation with the Clerk or Monitoring Officer. I will not use confidential information for personal advantage.

7. Use of Council Resources

I will not misuse council resources for political or personal purposes. Resources must be used in accordance with council policy and for official duties only.

8. Gifts and Hospitality

I will record any gift or hospitality with a value of over £25, or if it could be seen as intended to influence me, in the Register of Interests, maintained by the Clerk.

9. Interests and Bias

I will:

- Register and declare Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) and Other Interests as required.

- Not participate in discussion or voting where I have a prejudicial interest unless dispensation has been granted.
- Avoid any appearance of bias or predetermination in decision-making.

10. Social Media and Public Statements

When using social media or making public statements, I will:

- Make clear when I am expressing personal views.
- Not disclose confidential information.
- Not make statements that bring the Council into disrepute.

11. Allegations of Misconduct

Allegations that I have failed to comply with this Code may be investigated by the Monitoring Officer at Rother District Council in accordance with the Council's published Complaints Procedure (see Appendix C).

12. Commitment to Ongoing Training

I will participate in Code of Conduct and governance training provided or recommended by the Council.

13. Review

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting or sooner if new national guidance is issued.

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles)

1. Selflessness: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
2. Integrity: Avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try to influence them.
3. Objectivity: Make choices based on merit in carrying out public business.
4. Accountability: Be accountable to the public for decisions and actions and submit to appropriate scrutiny.
5. Openness: Be as open as possible about decisions and actions.
6. Honesty: Be truthful.
7. Leadership: Exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and actively promote and support them.

Appendix B – Interests

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs):

Defined in legislation and include interests of you or your spouse/partner in areas such as:

- Employment, trade, profession or vocation
- Sponsorship
- Contracts
- Land or property within the parish
- Licences
- Corporate tenancies
- Securities (interests in companies)

Other Registerable Interests:

Includes membership of:

- Any body to which you are appointed or nominated by the council
- Any public authority, company, charity, or body with a not-for-profit purpose

Declaration of Interests:

- Declare DPIs and other interests in writing to the Clerk within 28 days of election/co-option.
- Declare interests at meetings when relevant items arise.
- Withdraw from meetings where required unless a dispensation has been granted.

Appendix C – Complaints Process Summary

Brightling Parish Council's Complaints Procedure (March 2024) outlines the process for handling alleged breaches of this Code:

1. Who Can Complain?

- Any person may submit a complaint alleging a councillor has breached the Code.

2. Where to Send Complaints:

- All complaints must be submitted in writing to the Monitoring Officer at Rother District Council.

3. Initial Assessment:

- The Monitoring Officer will assess whether the complaint merits formal investigation.

4. Investigation and Outcome:

- If investigated, the Monitoring Officer may consult with an Independent Person. The outcome may result in no further action, a formal finding, or recommendation for local resolution.

5. Confidentiality:

- The process maintains confidentiality where appropriate, but outcomes may be made public depending on the nature of the breach.

6. Sanctions:

- Brightling Parish Council may issue an apology request, formal censure, removal from committees, or recommend training, depending on the Monitoring Officer's findings and advice.

For full details, refer to the Council's Complaints Procedure at:

<https://rdcparishsites.blob.core.windows.net/brightling/2024/03/Complaints-Procedure.pdf>