

EAST KIRKBY PARISH COUNCIL

CODE OF CONDUCT (2026)

Produced using the Local Government Association
Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020

Adapted and Modified Specifically for East Kirkby
Parish Council by Mrs. J Mussett (Parish Clerk)

and

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EAST KIRKBY PARISH COUNCIL

Code of Conduct 2026

Statement

The role of Parish Councillor is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as Parish Councillors we can be held accountable, and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual Parish Councillor affects the reputation of all the Parish Councillors. We want the role of Parish Councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become Parish Councillors.

As Parish Councillors, we represent our local residents and the public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our Parish, taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a Parish Councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied, or threatened by anyone.

This code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct, and safeguard the public's trust in the Parish Council.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “Parish Councillor” means a member, or co-opted member, of the Parish Council. A “co-opted member” is defined as “a person who is not a member of the Parish Council, but who is:

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the Parish Council, or
- b) is a member of, and represents the Parish Council on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the Parish Council; and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a Parish Councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, and fellow Parish Councillors, and the reputation of the Parish Council. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all Parish Councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct.

General principles of Parish Councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, but in this instance, Parish Councillors, should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as **the Nolan Principles** (Appendix A). Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of Parish Councillor.

To comply with the Nolan Principles and in accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty.
- I act lawfully.
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of Parish Councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community.
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person.
- I avoid conflicts of interest.
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my Parish Council’s requirements and in the public interest.

Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of Parish Councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a Parish Councillor or co-opted member.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a Parish Councillor which could include if:

- you misuse your position as a Parish Councillor.
- your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge

of all the facts that you are acting as a Parish Councillor.

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements, and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show integrity at all times when acting as a Parish Councillor.

The Parish Clerk will act as the Monitoring Officer and has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from the Parish Clerk.

Standards of Parish Councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a Parish Councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

General Conduct

1. Respect

As a Parish Councillor:

1.1 I treat other Parish Councillors and members of the public with respect.

1.2 I treat representatives of other organisations and those volunteering for the Parish Council with respect and respect the role they play.

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate, and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a Parish Councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions, and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in Parish Councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidatory or threatening, you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the Parish Council, the relevant social media provider, or the police. This also applies to fellow Parish Councillors, where action could then be taken under the Code of Conduct.

2. Bullying, harassment, and discrimination as a Parish Councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equality and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate, or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace, social events, and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

East Kirkby Parish Council strongly agrees with the ACAS and Equality Act 2010 statements above and actively promotes this ethos.

3. Impartiality of Parish Councillors

As a Parish Councillor:

3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the Parish Council.

Those who work for the Parish Council as a whole must be politically neutral. They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question them in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

4. Confidentiality and access to information as a Parish Councillor

As a Parish Councillor:

4.1 I do not disclose information:

1. given to me in confidence by anyone,
2. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless
 - A. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it.
 - B. I am required by law to do so.
 - C. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or
 - D. the disclosure is:
 - a. reasonable and in the public interest; and
 - b. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the Parish Council; and
 - c. I have consulted the Parish Clerk prior to its release.

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely in my role as a Parish Councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.

4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.

Parish Councils must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents, and other information relating to or held by the Parish Council must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a Parish Councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or the Parish Council into disrepute.

As a Parish Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You

should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other Parish Councillors and/or your Parish Council and may lower the public's confidence in you or your Parish Council's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your Parish Council into disrepute.

You are able to hold the Parish Council and fellow Parish Councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the Parish Council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

6. Use of position

As a Parish Councillor:

6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the Parish Council provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

7. Use of local Parish Council facilities as a Parish Councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse Parish Council resources.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Parish Councillor:

8.1 I undertake to read and understand this Code of Conduct provided by East Kirkby Parish Council.

8.2 I co-operate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.

8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.

8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.

It is extremely important for you as a Parish Councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the Parish Council or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the Parish Council's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with the Parish Clerk.

9. Protecting your interests, reputation, and the reputation of the Parish Council.

As a Parish Councillor:

9.1 I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Local Authority, and the Parish Clerk, to establish

and maintain a register of interests of members of the Parish Council.

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow Parish Councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other Parish Councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in Table 1, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Appendix B sets out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Parish Clerk.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a Parish Councillor:

10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the Parish Council or from persons who may apply to the Parish Council for any permission, licence, or other significant advantage.

Appendices

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

The principles are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so

doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix B – Registering interests.

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Local Authority via the Parish Clerk the interests which fall within the categories set out in Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) which are as described in “The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012”. You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests).

“Disclosable Pecuniary Interest”

means an interest of yourself, or of your partner within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

"Partner" means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Parish Clerk.
2. A ‘sensitive interest’ is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the Parish Councillor, or a person connected with the Parish Councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a ‘sensitive interest’ you must notify the Parish Clerk with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Parish Clerk agrees, they will withhold the interest from the public register.

Nonparticipation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in Table 1, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion, or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

5. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in Table 2), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in **Table 1**) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being.
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under Other Registrable Interests as set out in Table 2 you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

8. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 7 above) affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the parish affected by the decision and.
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise, you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a ‘sensitive interest’, you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession, or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession, or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit made to the Parish Councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a Parish Councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

<p>Contracts</p>	<p>Any contract made between the Parish Councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the Parish Councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities* of) and the Parish Council:</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
<p>Land and Property</p>	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the Parish Councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the Parish Councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
<p>Licenses</p>	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the Parish Council for a month or longer.</p>
<p>Corporate Tenancies</p>	<p>Any tenancy where (to the Parish Councillor’s knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the Parish Council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the Parish Councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the Parish Councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
<p>Securities</p>	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the Parish Councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Parish Council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(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 Parish</p>

	Councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the Parish Councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* '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.

Table 2: Other Registrable Interests

<p>You must register as an Other Registerable Interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) any unpaid directorships b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed c) any body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Recommendations

The LGA has undertaken a review of this Code of Conduct whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on Local Government Ethical Standards. If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished.

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. For East Kirkby Parish Council, these are:

Best practice 1: The Parish Council should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

Best practice 2: The Parish Council should include provisions in the Code of Conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by Parish Councillors.

Best practice 3: The Parish Council should review their Code of Conduct as required.

Best practice 4: The Parish Council's Code of Conduct should be readily accessible to both Parish Councillors and the public, in a prominent position on the Parish Council's website.

Best practice 5: The Parish Council should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the Code of Conduct.

Best practice 6: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a Parish Councillor towards the Parish Clerk should be made by the Chairman or by the Parish Council, rather than the Parish Clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 7: The Parish Clerk's role should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to the Parish Council's Code of Conduct. They should be provided with adequate training.

