

## ST HELENS WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

### Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Councillors are bound by the Code of Conduct. This policy is intended to supplement that by setting out the Council's requirements in respect of the acceptance of Gifts or Hospitality by Councillors in connection with their official duties. It is accepted that the normal activities of a parish councillor rarely involve the receipt of gifts or hospitality but all Councillors should be alive to the fact that their official duties and role as a Councillor may place them under scrutiny. The aim of this policy is to safeguard Councillors from unwarranted complaints.

#### Gifts

The general rule is that Councillors should not accept gifts of whatever value. Common sense should prevail in respect of low value gifts such as the provision of refreshments, pens or other items received in the course of attendance at seminars, conferences etc where these are provided to all attendees.

Where a Councillor finds themselves in receipt of a gift or consideration of whatever value outside these circumstances then that gift should be declared to the Council and the presumption will be that the item or consideration will be considered as the property of the Council. The Council will then decide whether the gift should be returned or otherwise disposed of to the benefit of the Parish.

#### Hospitality

The general rule is that Councillors should not accept hospitality. Again, common sense should prevail in respect of hospitality received at meetings, seminars, conferences etc where the same level of hospitality is accorded to all and is of low value. Councillors should be particularly mindful of whether the acceptance of hospitality, either in their official or private capacity, is likely to be viewed as prejudicial to their decision making as a Councillor. Whilst the Code of Conduct covers declaration of matters of pecuniary interest, Councillors should be alive to the implications of non-pecuniary hospitality they may have received.

#### Procedure

The Clerk will maintain a Register of Gifts and Hospitality. In accordance with the policy set out above Councillors should report any Gifts or Hospitality they receive (subject to the Common Sense considerations set out above) **at the earliest opportunity after receipt**. Entries in the Register of Gifts and hospitality (if any) will be considered by the full Council at each full Council meeting by way of a standing agenda item.