Marske & New Forest Parish Council – Code of Conduct for Members

(Based on and aligned with the North Yorkshire Council Code of Conduct)

Introduction

This Code sets out the standards of behaviour required of you whenever you act in your official capacity as a **Councillor of Marske & New Forest Parish Council**. As North Yorkshire Council is the unitary authority, this parish council adopts the same Code of Conduct to ensure consistency and compliance with the Localism Act 2011.

You must sign an **Undertaking to comply with this Code** before acting as a councillor.

The Code incorporates the **Seven Principles of Public Life** (Nolan Principles) and is overseen by the **Monitoring Officer of North Yorkshire Council**, who is responsible for standards matters affecting parish councils.

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1. General Conduct Obligations

1. Respect

You must treat others with respect.

"Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word."

You may challenge ideas robustly, but must not subject individuals or groups to personal attack.

2. Unlawful Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against any person or cause the council to breach equality legislation.
Protected characteristics include *age, disability, race, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership*.

3. Bullying, Intimidation, Harassment

You must not bully, intimidate, or harass any person.

Bullying includes "offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour… an abuse or misuse of power."

4. Impartiality of Officers

You must not compromise the impartiality of anyone who works for or on behalf of the council.

Officers "should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality."

5. Confidentiality

You must not disclose confidential information unless permitted by law or authorised.

Disclosure must be "reasonable; and in the public interest; and made in good faith."

6. Access to Information

You must not prevent another person from accessing information they are legally entitled to.

7. Disrepute

You must not conduct yourself in a way that brings the council into disrepute.

"Your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public."

8. Improper Use of Position

You must not use your position improperly to secure an advantage or disadvantage for yourself or others.

9. Scrutiny

You must not take part in scrutiny of decisions you were involved in making.

10–12. Gifts and Hospitality

You must exercise caution regarding gifts or hospitality.
You must not accept anything that could reasonably be perceived as creating an obligation.
Any gift or hospitality **£25 or over** must be declared to the Monitoring Officer within **28 days**.

13. Use of Council Resources

You must use council resources only for council business and in accordance with council policies.

14–18. Standards Regime

You must:

- attend standards training
- cooperate with investigations
- not intimidate complainants or witnesses
- not make trivial, vexatious, or malicious complaints

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2. Interests

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs)

These are defined in law and listed in Appendix 1 of the Code.
You must register DPIs within **28 days** of taking office and update them within **28 days** of any change.
Failure to register or disclose a DPI is a **criminal offence**.

If you have a DPI in a matter being considered:

- you must declare it
- you must not participate or vote
- you must leave the room

Other Registrable Interests (ORIs)

These include unpaid directorships, membership of bodies exercising public functions, charities, political parties, or organisations influencing public policy.

If an ORI directly relates to a matter:

- you must declare it
- you may speak only if the public may speak
- you must not vote or remain in the room (unless a dispensation is granted)

Non-Registrable Interests (NRIs)

These arise from:

- your own financial interest or wellbeing
- that of a relative or close associate

You must declare the interest and may only speak if the public may speak.

A two-part test determines whether you must withdraw:

1. Does the matter affect your interest more than most people in the ward?
2. Would a reasonable person think it would prejudice your view of the public interest?

Sensitive Interests

Where disclosure could lead to violence or intimidation, only the existence—not the details—of the interest is recorded.

Dispensations

You may request a dispensation from the Monitoring Officer to participate despite an interest.

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3. Offences

It is a criminal offence to:

- fail to register or disclose a DPI
- participate in business where you have a DPI
- knowingly or recklessly provide false or misleading information

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4. Principles of Public Life

The Code incorporates the **Seven Principles**:
Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership.