



Working Party Participation Code	Doc. Ref. CPC-P-WPPC
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Working Party Participation Code

1. Purpose and status

This Participation Code applies to all non-councillors invited to take part in a working party or advisory group established by Chacewater Parish Council.

Working parties are advisory bodies only. They have no delegated decision-making powers and do not act on behalf of the Council.

This Code is not the statutory Members' Code of Conduct, but it is derived from the same principles and is intended to ensure high standards of behaviour, integrity, and public confidence.

2. Core principles

Participants are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the following principles:

- selflessness and service to the parish as a whole;
- honesty and integrity;
- objectivity and evidence-based advice;
- accountability to the Council;
- openness, subject to confidentiality requirements; and
- respect for others.

3. Behaviour and respect

Participants must:

- treat councillors, Council employees, fellow participants, and members of the public with respect;
- not bully, intimidate, harass, or discriminate against any person; and
- conduct themselves in a manner that does not bring the Council into disrepute.

4. Impartiality, predetermination, and advocacy

Participants must act in an advisory capacity only.

For the purposes of this Code, predetermination means approaching the work of the working party with a closed mind, having already reached a fixed conclusion, and using participation primarily to secure a particular outcome rather than to inform the Council's decision-making.



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Predetermination is not permitted because it:

- undermines the objectivity and usefulness of advice given to the Council;
- risks compromising the Council's ability to demonstrate fair, open, and lawful decision-making; and
- may expose the Council to legal challenge or loss of public confidence.

Participants must therefore not:

- use the working party as a platform to promote a predetermined position;
- seek to advance the aims of any external campaign, action, or lobbying group through their participation;
- seek to bind, pressure, or influence councillors outside the agreed working party process; or
- present themselves publicly as representing the Council or the working party unless expressly authorised.

5. Conflicts of interest

Participants must:

- declare any actual or potential conflict of interest relevant to the work of the working party; and
- declare any membership of, or involvement in, external organisations that may reasonably be perceived as relevant.

A participant must not be a member of, or actively involved in, any campaign, action, or lobbying group directly related to the project or matters under consideration by the working party.

Where circumstances change, participants must notify the Clerk immediately.

For the purposes of this Code, a conflict of interest may arise where a participant's personal, professional, financial, or organisational interests could reasonably be perceived as influencing their advice or conduct.

Conflicts of interest are not limited to financial gain and may include, for example:

- involvement in an external organisation, group, or body with a stated position on the subject matter;
- close personal, family, or business relationships that may be affected by the work of the working party;
- prior or ongoing public advocacy, campaigning, or lobbying on the same matters; or
- professional or commercial interests that could benefit from a particular outcome.

The test is not whether the participant believes they can act impartially, but whether a reasonable member of the public, knowing the relevant facts, might perceive a risk to impartiality.



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6. Confidentiality

Participants must not disclose confidential information acquired through the working party except where:

- authorised by the Council or the Clerk; or
- required by law.

Where a participant believes that information should be disclosed in the public interest, they must raise the matter with the Clerk or the Council. Participants must not disclose information on their own initiative.

7. Breach of this Code

Failure to comply with this Participation Code may result in removal from the working party.

This policy should be read alongside the Council's Standing Orders, Members' Code of Conduct, Public Participation Policy, and relevant Terms of Reference.