Code of Conduct

Little Longstone Parish Meeting

Version 1.0 - Draft for adoption at the assembly to be held on 26th August 2026

1. About this Code

Little Longstone is a parish meeting, not a parish council. The statutory code of conduct provisions for members of local authorities under the Localism Act 2011 do not apply to a parish meeting in the same way as they apply to members of a parish council.

Little Longstone Parish Meeting has nevertheless adopted this Code voluntarily to promote high standards of conduct by those who hold office or act on its behalf. The Code is based on the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) and reflects the principles of openness, accountability and integrity expected in public life.

This Code does not affect the statutory rights of local government electors to attend, speak and vote at assemblies of the parish meeting. Conduct during an assembly is also subject to the Parish Meeting's Standing Orders.

2. Who this Code applies to

2.1 This Code applies to:

a) the Chair and Vice-Chair of the parish meeting when carrying out their official functions;

b) the Clerk when acting on behalf of the parish meeting;

c) any elector participating in the business of an assembly of the parish meeting;

d) any elector serving on a working group or other body established by the assembly, when carrying out that role; and

e) any elector or other person specifically authorised by the assembly to represent, speak for, or act on behalf of the parish meeting.

2.2 Electors participating in an assembly are expected to observe the standards of behaviour in this Code in exercising their rights to speak, propose or second motions, and vote. Nothing in this Code restricts an elector's statutory right to participate in an assembly, subject to the Standing Orders governing the conduct of the meeting.

2.3 The standards of behaviour in this Code also apply to communications outside an assembly where they are directed at the Chair, Vice-Chair, Clerk or another person acting on behalf of the parish meeting and arise directly from the performance of that person's parish meeting duties.

2.4 Nothing in paragraph 2.3 restricts legitimate criticism or expressions of disagreement. Social media and other public communications are addressed in section 6.

2.5 Nothing in this Code creates any power to suspend, remove or disqualify an elector from taking part in the parish meeting. Conduct during an assembly is managed by the Chair in accordance with the Standing Orders.

3. The Seven Principles of Public Life

3.1 Everyone to whom this Code applies shall have regard to the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) when participating in parish meeting business or acting on behalf of the parish meeting:

Principle	What it means in practice
Selflessness	Act solely in the public interest.
Integrity	Avoid placing yourself under any obligation to people or organisations that might inappropriately influence you in your work. Do not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family or friends. Declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
Objectivity	Act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
Accountability	Be accountable to the public for your decisions and actions and submit yourself to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
Openness	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 doing so.
Honesty	Be truthful.
Leadership	Exhibit these principles in your own behaviour, support them and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. Treat others with respect.

4. Interests

4.1 Anyone acting in an official or representative capacity on behalf of the parish meeting shall act impartially and in the public interest. They shall declare any financial, personal or other interest or relationship which could reasonably be regarded as affecting their ability to act impartially on behalf of the parish meeting.

4.2 Where such an interest arises outside an assembly, the person shall notify the Clerk and shall not take part in the matter unless the conflict can be appropriately managed. Where necessary, the matter shall be referred to the assembly for a decision.

4.3 Interests arising when an elector participates in an assembly are governed by Standing Order 13. This includes the requirements relating to direct and indirect financial interests, withdrawal from discussion or voting where appropriate, interests in businesses or organisations competing for a contract or licence, and the recording of declarations in the minutes.

4.4 The statutory regime for disclosable pecuniary interests applying to members of parish councils under the Localism Act 2011 does not apply to Little Longstone Parish Meeting. The interests provisions in Standing Order 13 and this Code are rules adopted by the parish meeting to promote openness, impartiality and public confidence in its decision-making.

5. Standards of behaviour

5.1 Everyone to whom this Code applies shall, when participating in parish meeting business or in circumstances covered by paragraph 2.3:

a) treat others with courtesy and respect;

b) not bully, harass, intimidate or discriminate against any person;

c) not knowingly make a false or misleading statement about another person, or make an allegation recklessly without regard to whether it is true;

d) use parish meeting information, property and resources only for proper purposes and in accordance with any restrictions applying to them;

e) respect the confidentiality of information received in confidence, except where disclosure is required or permitted by law; and

f) not use their position, or information obtained through that position, to secure an improper advantage or disadvantage for themselves or any other person.

5.2 Disagreement, robust debate and challenge are a normal and healthy part of public decision-making. Nothing in this Code prevents legitimate criticism of the parish meeting, its decisions, its administration, or the actions of anyone acting on its behalf. Criticism expressed firmly or robustly does not, by itself, amount to disrespect, bullying or harassment.

6. Social media and public comments

6.1 Electors are free to express their personal views about the parish meeting, its decisions, its administration, and the actions of anyone carrying out duties on its behalf, including through social media and other public forums. Disagreement or criticism, even where expressed firmly, does not by itself amount to a breach of this Code.

6.2 Where paragraph 2.3 applies, communications must meet the standards of behaviour in section 5. In particular, criticism must not become personal abuse, bullying, harassment or intimidation, and a person must not knowingly make a false or misleading statement about another person, or make an allegation recklessly without regard to whether it is true.

6.3 The Chair, Vice-Chair, Clerk or any other person authorised to communicate on behalf of the parish meeting shall make clear when they are speaking officially. When expressing a personal view, they shall not imply that their view represents the parish meeting unless the assembly has authorised that position.

6.4 No person shall disclose confidential information obtained through their role with the parish meeting, including through social media or other public communications, except where disclosure is required or permitted by law.

7. How concerns about conduct are handled

7.1 Conduct during an assembly is managed by the Chair in accordance with the Standing Orders. The Chair may take such action as the Standing Orders permit to maintain order and enable the business of the assembly to proceed.

7.2 A complaint about the conduct of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Clerk, or any person acting in an official or representative capacity on behalf of the parish meeting shall be dealt with under the parish meeting's Complaints Procedure.

7.3 The standards in this Code also set out the behaviour expected of electors when participating in parish meeting business and in the circumstances described in paragraph 2.3. The Code does not establish a separate formal complaints or disciplinary procedure for alleged breaches by electors who are not acting in an official or representative capacity.

7.4 Nothing in this Code creates any power to fine, sanction, suspend, remove or disqualify an elector from attending, speaking or voting at an assembly. An elector's conduct during an assembly remains subject to the Standing Orders.

8. Resolution of Adoption and Review

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