

Sourton Parish Council Code of Conduct

Joint statement

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable, and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of 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 councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area, 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 councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied, or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a "councillor" means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A "co-opted member" is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as "a person who is not a member of the authority but who.

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or.
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority.

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee".

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, "local authority" includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a 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, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

General principles of councillor conduct

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors, and local authority officers; should uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

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 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 local authority'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 councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a 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 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 leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

Standards of councillor conduct

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a 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

The general conduct guidance follows below:

1. Respect

As a councillor:

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

1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority 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 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 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 local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor- officer protocol.

2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination

As a councillor:

2.1 I do not bully any person.

2.2 I do not harass any person.

2.3 I promote equalities 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 or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

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.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's

performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

3. Impartiality of officers of the council

As a councillor:

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

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers 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 councillor:

- **4.1 I do not disclose information:**
 - **a. given to me in confidence by anyone.**
 - **b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
 - **i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it.**
 - **ii. I am required by law to do so.**
 - **iii. 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**
 - **iv. the disclosure is:**
 - **1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
 - **2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
 - **3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a 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.

Local authorities 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 local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

5. Disrepute

As a councillor:

5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.

As a 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 councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in you or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

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

6. Use of position

As a 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 local authority 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 authority resources and facilities

As a councillor:

7.1 I do not misuse council resources.

7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local authority or authorising their use by others:

- **a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- **b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

8. Complying with the Code of Conduct

As a Councillor:

8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.

8.2 I cooperate 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 councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

9. Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority

9. Interests

As a councillor:

9.1 I register and disclose my interests.

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority.

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow 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, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other 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 Monitoring Officer.

10. Gifts and hospitality

As a 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 local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.

10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.

10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case, you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as

a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life

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 Monitoring Officer 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 if you are aware of your partner's interest, 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 Monitoring Officer.

2. A ‘sensitive interest’ is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.

3. Where you have a ‘sensitive interest’ you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer 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.

5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. 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

7. 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.

8. 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

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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 (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a 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.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
	interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

9. Where a matter (referred to in paragraph 8 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 ward 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.

10. [Where you have an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable Interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it]

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

* ‘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 Interest

You must register as an Other Registerable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) anybody of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority

c) any body

(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

Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review 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
- 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. These are:

Best practice 1: Local authorities 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: Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

Best practice 3: Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

Best practice 4: An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises. **Best practice 5:** Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

Best practice 6: Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

Best practice 7: Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

Best practice 8: An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded dismissing as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

Best practice 9: Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

Best practice 10: A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

Best practice 11: Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

Best practice 12: Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

Best practice 13: A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

Best practice 14: Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

Best practice 15: Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

This policy was adopted on	July 2026
Signature Of Chairman	C Mott
Date of next review	July 2027

Sourton Parish Council – Policy on death of a senior national figure

Aim

Local Councils are advised to be prepared and to have considered the actions that the council will take following the death of a senior member of state (HM King Charles III, Queen Consort). This policy sets out the arrangements that the Council is aware of however, any guidance from Buckingham Palace that deviates from this will be followed.

Operation London Bridge is the official code name given to the passing of HM King Charles III.

Period of State Mourning

Following the passing of HM King Charles III and the official announcement from Buckingham Palace, a ten-day period of state mourning will follow. D-Day being the date of the death and D+10 the date of the full state funeral, unless D+10 falls on a Sunday, then the funeral will be held on D+11, Monday.

Events

The Local Government Act 1972, s.243 excludes days appointed for public mourning from the calculation of the three clear days' notice of a council meeting, or anything that is required to be done. Therefore, Council meetings may need to be postponed until after the funeral has taken place. Similarly, if the four days between a council election and the day new Members take office fall within the period of mourning the taking of office will be delayed until after the funeral.

If Remembrance Sunday falls within the ten-day period of mourning, remembrance services will continue as normal with added prayers. If National Beacon Lighting and/or Bell ringing are planned these will be cancelled as they are a sign of celebration. Other activities such as performances, galas, opening events, carol service, markets, light switch-on will be cancelled or rescheduled.

Flags

Flag to be flown at half-mast on the Village Green flagpole. The exceptions being D+1 and D+2, Proclamation Day, when the new King is Proclaimed (Operation Spring Tide).

Flags will be returned to normal by 9am the day after the funeral.

Website

The home page of the council website will be overwritten with portrait of HM King Charles III.

The Chair, in conjunction with the Clerk, will prepare a statement on behalf of the Council. The statement will be posted on the council's website and noticeboards. Details of any cancellations will be included.

Portraits

A suitable portrait of HM King Charles III will be displayed alongside the Book of Condolence. The portrait will have a black ribbon placed diagonally across one top corner, as will any other portraits of HM King Charles III the Council may have on display at the time. These ribbons will be left in situ for one month.

Condolence Books

The Chairman, Clerk, and Churchwarden will place a Book of Condolence with appropriate photograph in Sourton Parish Church for residents to express their sympathy and thoughts.

Following D+11, the condolence book/folder will be collated, and a letter sent to the Private Secretary at Buckingham Palace advising that a Book of Condolence is held in the Council archive.

Floral Tributes

The Village Green is designated as a safe area for the laying of flowers.

Flowers should be left unwrapped, with cellophane removed. They will be collected the day after the funeral by the Clerk.

Proclamations

The National Proclamation will be read in London on D+1. Then on D+2 in Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff. County Proclamations are normally read by the High Sheriffs on D+2. The Chair can read the proclamation if they wish.

Flags should be flown at full mast for proclamation readings.

Bells

If the Royal death is announced before 12noon on D-Day, every Church will toll one bell for each year of the Kings life – if the announcement is made after 12noon the Bell will be tolled on D+1 at 12noon.

Church Service

The Dioceses will arrange civic services in cathedrals and major churches on the mid Sunday of the ten-day mourning period. Local parish churches will be encouraged to hold services on the eve of the state funeral.

Public Holiday

The day of the State Funeral will be a Public Holiday unless it falls on a Saturday.

This policy was adopted on	July 2026
Signature Of Chairman	C Mott
Date of next review	July 2027

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

SOURTON PARISH COUNCIL is committed to supporting the long-term environmental, cultural and economic health and vitality of the Parish.

1. Thriving plants and wildlife

- using native and sustainably sourced trees when planting
- creating dedicated spaces for wildlife
- leaving dead wood safely in place in woodlands to provide additional habitat.
- maintaining planted trees to give them the best chance of survival.
- reducing the use of herbicides, pesticides, peat, and water
- implementing measures to prevent the spread of invasive species and plant disease.
- Creating more joined up space for nature on land – protecting land and increasing interconnections to boost natural resilience.

2. Clean air

- Promote the use of greener transport alternatives.
- Review planning policies and proposals affecting the Parish and their likely environmental impacts and respond as appropriate.
- Safety for all road users, including pedestrians, especially around issues of speeding vehicles, HGVs, and air pollution.
- When considering new-build planning applications the Parish Council should require housing and business properties to function as carbon neutral either from the outset, or in the very near future, with a clear plan based upon sustainable energy use, and re-use of existing materials, as JLP and NPPF directs.

3. Clean and plentiful water

- Not planting species that are heavily water dependent.
- When reviewing the neighbourhood plan consider adding water harvesting and recycling to newbuild houses
- Consider if planning applications affect streams or springs.

4. Managing exposure to chemicals and pesticides

- Ensuring chemicals are safely used and managed – recognizing that chemicals are an important part of our everyday life, manage any risks

posed by, and to continue to phase out the most harmful and persistent pollutants in favour of safer and more sustainable alternatives.

- the risks and impacts of pesticides - reducing their impacts on human health and the environment, while ensuring pests and pesticide resistance can be managed effectively.
- Request environmental policy statements from contractors, where appropriate

5. Maximises our resources, minimise our waste.

- Council events will try and minimise the use of non-recyclable products.
- Compostable tablecloths and non-dyed serviettes will be used.
- At the end of events all recycling will be taken away to be recycled.
- The council will try and minimise waste and only cater for approximate attendance. Unused food will be frozen, if possible, to be used for the next event.
- Seek to conserve resources wherever practicable.
- Reduce waste in its daily operations, particularly single use plastic.
- Be committed to recycling.

6. Using resources from nature sustainably

- Encourage environmental initiatives and engage residents in environmental projects and issues.
- Planting more trees is critical to achieving net zero, providing more habitat.
- Shifting to more sustainable supply chains- the council will consider the carbon footprint of items it orders and prefer suppliers who are Climate Pledge Friendly

7. Mitigating and adapting to climate change

- Follow the amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework to make sure that all sources of flood risk, including future flood risk, are considered in the planning. This should mean that any new development is safe for its lifetime and that it doesn't increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- Environmental enhancements such as tree planting can reduce the impact of extreme heat.

8. Reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards

- Mitigate surface water flooding by making sustainable drainage systems mandatory in new developments.
- Supporting sharing best practice and innovative approaches at a local level
- Building resilience to increasing wildfire risk
- We want to encourage everyone to be aware of their risk of flooding and/or coastal erosion, including as those risks change with a changing climate.

- Continue to promote take up of flood warning service. In England all places at high risk of flooding from rivers and seas will be covered by the flood warning service from 2022 to 2023. Check for Flooding provides access to issued flood warnings, together with information on rainfall, and river, sea and groundwater levels.

9. Enhancing biosecurity

- build and install nest boxes for birds, bats and other animals.
- Suggest adding green walls or roofs to existing or new buildings.
- plant native trees and shrubs
- plant wildflowers for pollinators
- Biodiversity including habitats and protected species.
- Value green spaces within the Parish, such as the village green and protect them for future generations.
- Encourage environmental initiatives and engage residents in environmental projects and issues.
- Tackling invasive non-native species – to protect native species and the ecosystems that rely on them.
- Protecting and enhancing animal and plant health

10. Enhancing beauty heritage and engagement with the natural environment.

- The character, identity and rural setting of the Parish.
- Conserve and enhance the natural, geological and cultural diversity of our landscapes, and protect our historic and natural environment for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.
- Nature for wellbeing – connecting with nature as a way of improving physical and mental health.
- Nature for wellbeing – connecting with nature as a way of improving physical and mental health.
- Continue to monitor our network of footpaths and bridlepaths to make sure that these can be enjoyed by as many people as possible.

These actions can save money while delivering benefits to biodiversity.

This policy was adopted on	July 2026
Signature Of Chairman	C Mott
Date of next review	July 2027

Green Action Plan July 2026

The Parish Council should do its part to improve the natural environment where it can. As the Parish Council does not own any land it cannot take any actions directly apart from on the village green and the closed areas of the Churchyard which the parish council manage.

1. Management of roadside verges for wildflowers

The Parish Council has been given permission by DCC to remove the brambles and treelets from the verge and see if the wildflowers which were historically there regrow.

If the parish wishes to take responsibility for the verge and do more work in 2026 then:

- Training would need to be undertaken by every member of the council who wishes to help.
- Transfer of responsibility would need to be achieved.
- If the land is transferred the council needs to take into consideration the cost of maintaining the verge.

2. Planting more trees

Consider planting more trees-

- Location needs to be considered.
- Time of year for planting as spring planting causes watering issues
- Type and size of planting to be discussed as small whips not necessarily surviving.
- Set up a sponsor a tree program.
- Offer a voucher scheme to part buy trees with residents that they can plant on their land – you save all the maintenance and planting costs but the whole community still benefits from increased biodiversity and canopy cover.

3. Further enhance the opportunities in the closed churchyard by adding bird boxes and feeders.

The present grass cutting regime in the close churchyard has been responsible for the most fantastic display of wildflowers in the spring. Future management of the area should ensure that the grass cutting regime continues to maintain and enhance the presence of the wildflowers.

4. Plant more bulbs on the Green

The Green already has daffodils planted in it, but there is room for more to be planted. All bulbs planted should be native UK species.

- Change the planting schemes to pollinator-friendly varieties, no doubles or hybrids.
- Encourage residents to use native or pollinator friendly plants.

5. 'Bees' Needs Week'

The council can promote and follow the steps we can all take to protect pollinators in Bees Needs Week, an annual event in July raising awareness

1. Grow more flowers, shrubs and trees.
2. Let your garden grow wild.
3. Cut your grass less often.
4. Don't disturb insect nests and hibernation spots.
5. Think carefully about whether to use pesticides.

We'll also be encouraging as many people as possible to spend 10 minutes in the sun to count insects for the UK's Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS)

6. Become a Hedgehog Friendly parish.

- Share the link to Hedgehog Highways online www.hedgehogstreet.org.
- Put up a notice on the website about their decline and action that can be taken on your fence line.
- Part-buy hedgehog homes with residents to install on their properties e.g., the parish council buy several and sell at reduced rate to residents.
- Install hedgehog homes on parish council managed land.
- Ensure all planning applications receive a comment about hedgehog access needed for all boundary fencing. Produce a standard statement that the whole community can use, the more comments the better

7. Log Piles

- Make Stag Horn Beetle pyramids.
- Mulch green waste generated by mowing the village green discreetly on the public open space.
- Encourage residents to install them on their land.

This policy was adopted on	July 2026
Signature Of Chairman	C Mott
Date of next review	July 2027

SOURTON PARISH COUNCIL

Events Working group.

Terms of Reference

Purpose

This working group has been created to plan and organise events in Sourton. The Working Group will be led by Councillors, the Clerk can be tasked with providing information and include members of the public.

This Working Group has no statutory role and has no formal decision-making powers. It makes recommendations to the Council.

Membership of Committee

- a) A minimum of three Councillors, any Councillor is entitled to be a member.
- b) The quorum for Working Group meetings shall be at least two Councillors supported by the Clerk.
- c) The Working Group may appoint its own Chairman.
- d) Community representatives, subject to the Working Group's view that their input adds value. Non-Councillors do not have voting rights on any financial matter.

Frequency of Meetings

As and when required.

Scope of Working Party

1. Work in partnership with residents and community organisations to determine type of celebrations, format, date, time, and location.
2. Prepare an Event Plan for the council's approval.
3. Investigate costs and report back to the council.
4. Secure sufficient voluntary and community organisation support to run the event in a co-ordinated and safe manner.

In delivering these objectives, the Working Group shall have authority to:

- a) Liaise with parishioners.
- b) Through the Clerk seek professional advice such as advice licensing, H&S and financial matters.
- c) Promote the event to the community once event funding is secured.
- d) Instruct the Clerk to make applications for grant funding.

Full Council retains overall responsibility:

1. The Working Group must provide regular progress reports to Council.
2. The Working Group does not have authority to agree or sign any contracts or deeds.

3. The Working Group does not have delegated financial authority; however, the Clerk or may liaise with Working Group members on financial matters which fall under the Clerk's delegated authority.
4. The Working Group must acknowledge Sourton PCs duty to provide for all demographics within the community and must not discriminate against protected characteristics.
5. Conflicts of Interest - Working Group members should declare an interest where there is a potential financial or pecuniary benefit to themselves, or their company/organisation arising from the decisions or recommendations of the group.
6. Data Protection – the Working Group's work must comply with the Data Protection Act and member must have regard to Sourton PC's Data Protection Policies. Documents will be subject to requests for public inspection in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

This policy was adopted on	July 2026
Signature Of Chairman	C Mott
Date of next review	July 2026

Sourton Parish Council Training and Development Policy

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1 Introduction

1.1 This document forms the Council's Training and Development Policy. It sets out:

- The Council's commitment to training
- The identification of training needs
- The minimum recommended training requirements for employees and councillors
- Financial assistance
- Study leave
- Short courses/workshops
- Evaluation of training
- Links with other policies
- Reporting on progress

1.2 The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Encourage Councillors and staff to undertake appropriate training

- Allocate training in a fair manner
- Ensure that all training is evaluated to assess its value

- **Commitment to Training**

- Sourton Parish Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all Councillors and employee(s) to enable them to make the most effective contribution to the Council's aims and objectives in providing the highest quality representation and services for the people of the parish.

2.2 According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2007), training can be defined as:

"A planned process to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy current and future needs of the organisation."

- Sourton Parish Council recognises that its most important resource is its Councillors and employees and is committed to encouraging both Councillors and employees to enhance their knowledge and qualifications through further training. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with all legal and statutory requirements.

2.4 The Council expects employees to undertake a programme of continuing professional development (CPD) in line with the requirements of their requisite professional bodies. In order to ensure CPD, the clerk is encouraged to attend relevant training courses as and when these arise, the cost of which will be met by the council. Such training courses will usually be run by DALC and take place locally.

2.5 Providing training yields a number of benefits:

- Improves the quality of the services and facilities that Sourton Parish Council provides;
- Enables the organisation to achieve its corporate aims and objectives;
- Improves the skill base of the employee(s), producing confident, highly qualified staff working as part of an effective and efficient team; and
- Demonstrates that the employee(s) are valued.

- Training and development will be achieved by including a realistic financial allocation for training and development in the annual budget, as well as taking advantage of any relevant partnership or in-house provision available.

2.7 The process of development is as follows:

1. Training needs should be identified by considering the overall objectives of the organisation, as well as individual requirements.
2. Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs.
3. Designing and delivering the training.
4. Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

3. The identification of Training Needs

3.1 Employees will be asked to identify their development needs during meetings with Councillors on the Staffing Committee and at the annual appraisal. Councillors training needs will be identified upon election and during their term of office, as detailed in 3.2

Other circumstances may present the need for training:

- Legislative requirements i.e. First Aid, Fire Safety, Manual Handling
- Changes in legislation
- Changes in systems
- New or revised qualifications become available
- Accidents
- Professional error
- Introduction of new equipment
- New working methods and practices
- Complaints to the Council
- A request from a member of staff
- Devolved services / delivery of new services

4. Minimum training requirements:

4.1 Employees (the Clerk)

On appointment

Training needs will be discussed with the recruitment panel. If the Clerk is new to the job of clerk, they should attend the DALC course for new clerks within six months of appointment. The cost of this will be met by the Council.

During employment

Consideration will be given to the Clerk undertaking the "Introduction to Local Council Administration Course" offered by SLCC. This is a web-based training course the cost of which will be met by the council.

Upon a request from the Clerk, consideration will be given to the Clerk undertaking the "Certificate in Local Council Administration" (CiLCA) as offered by SLCC. This is the professional qualification for Clerks and must be completed within a year of registration.

Consideration will be given to the Clerk attending the DALC online course which assists with the CiLCA qualification

4.2 Councillors

New councillors (elected or co-opted) should attend the new councillor training course run by DALC within six months of appointment. The cost of attendance will be met by the Council.

New councillors will receive a Councillor Reference pack. If required a briefing on the Code of Conduct can be arranged

4.3 Chairman

Consideration should be given to the Chairman attending the Chairman course run by DALC. The cost of attendance will be met by the Council

5. Corporate Training

Corporate training is necessary to ensure that employee(s) are aware of their legal responsibilities or corporate standards e.g. Health and Safety, Risk management and Equal Opportunities. Employees will be required to attend training courses, workshops or seminars where suitable training is identified.

6. Financial Assistance

6.1 It is important to note that all training funded by the council must be appropriate to the needs of the Council, be relevant to the individual's role and is subject to the availability of financial resources.

Each request will be considered on an individual basis and the benefits to the individual and the council will be identified.

Where possible, all training courses will be attended locally in the interest of operational effectiveness and obtaining best value.

- Other considerations include the following:
 - Implication of employee release for training course(s) on the operational capability of the Council
 - The most economic and effective means of training
 - Provision and availability of training budget
-
- For approved courses employees can expect the following to be sponsored:
 - The course fee
 - Examination fees
 - Associated membership fees
 - One payment to re-take a failed examination
-
- Councillors and officer(s) attending courses are required to inform the Clerk or Training Officer immediately of any absences, giving reasons.
-
- Failure to sit an examination may result in the Council withdrawing future course funding and/or requesting the refunding of financial assistance. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.
-
- Any employee undertaking post-entry qualifications funded by the Council must be aware that should they leave Sourton Parish Council employment within two years of completion of the qualification they will be required to repay all costs associated with the undertaking of such training. In addition, all costs must be repaid if the employee leaves before completion of the qualification or fails to complete it.
 - If the employee takes up employment with another Local Authority an exemption to this clause may be granted.

7. Study Leave

Employees who are given approval to undertake external qualifications are granted the following:

- Study time to attend day-release courses
- Time to sit examinations
- Study time of one day per examination (to be discussed and agreed by the Council in advance)
- Provision of study time must be agreed with the Council prior to the course being undertaken.

8. Short Course/Workshops/Residential Weekends

- a. Where attendance is required at a short course, hours attended may be claimed if appropriate.

8.2 Councillors and employees attending approved short courses/workshops/residential weekends can claim for the following:

- The course fee (usually invoiced following the event)
- Travelling expenses in accordance with the Council's current policy
- Subsistence in accordance with the Council's current policy

9. Evaluation of Training

- a. Records of all training undertaken by employee(s) and councillors will be kept.

- As part of Sourton Parish Council's continuing commitment to training and development, employee(s) are asked to provide feedback to the Clerk or Council on the value and effectiveness of the training they undertake highlighting in particular the key implications of new legislation, guidance and/or best practice for the ongoing efficiency and effectiveness of the authority.

10. Linking with other Council Policies

How will this link to the Council's other policies?

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of Councillor and officer development;

- A 'Statement of Intent' on training for both Councillors and staff is a requirement for the Local Council Award Scheme;
- Risk Management Policy – a commitment to Training and Development greatly assists in achieving good governance and an effective system of Risk Management;
- Health and Safety – ongoing training and development is key to ensuring a positive approach to Health and Safety is embedded throughout the council;
- Undertaking training is a clear indication of Continuing Professional Development.
- Under the new assertion on the Agar councillors will need to demonstrate GDPR training and compliance.

11. Reporting on Progress

The Clerk will report annually to the full Council detailing attendance at training over the year.

12. Conclusion

The adoption of a training policy should achieve many benefits for the Council. It will assist in demonstrating that the Council is committed to continuing professional development and enhancing the skills of both Councillors and staff.

13. Freedom of Information

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this Document will be posted on the Council's website and copies of this document will be available for inspection on request.

This policy was adopted on	July 2025
Signature Of Chairman	C Mott
Date of next review	July 2026

Sourton Parish Council

Unreasonably Persistent or Vexatious Complaints Policy

1. Introduction

Sourton Parish Council does not tolerate bullying, harassment or intimidation, in any form, of any of their employees or Councillors. This applies to such behaviour from members of the public and Parish Council employees/Councillors alike. A small percentage of people may correspond with, or complain to, Sourton Parish Council in a way that could reasonably be described as obsessive, harassing, bullying, intimidating or abusive

2. Harassment

Under the Protection from Harassment Act 1977 S1(1)

A person must not pursue a course of conduct—

- (a) which amounts to harassment of another, and
- (b) which he knows or ought to know amounts to harassment of the other.

Such action can be:

Physical Conduct;

Verbal Conduct;

Non-Verbal Conduct.

3. Bullying

The council defines bullying as a pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious, insulting, humiliating behaviour intended to undermine an individual or group, gradually and as a consequence eroding their confidence and capability possibly with the intention to force them to resign and this will not be tolerated.

Such behaviour may also be designed to annoy and/or to create extreme workload for a Parish Council which normally employs a part-time officer up to a total of 7 hours per week, and to meet only 11 times a year as a full council.

Such behaviour might also be designed to cause extreme distress.

Such behaviour might also be repetitious.

Such behaviour from a minority of individuals can take up a disproportionate amount of limited council resources and can affect the Parish Council's ability to do its work and provide a service to the community and can result in unacceptable stress for the Clerk and Councillors.

4. Defining Vexatious or Unreasonably Persistent Complaints

Vexatious or persistent complaints and correspondence can be characterised in the following ways:

Behaviour which is obsessive, persistent, harassing, prolific, repetitious and/or

Behaviour which is designed to cause extreme distress, bully, humiliate and intimidate specific individuals and the Corporate Body and/or

Frequent correspondence timed to cause the council maximum disruption and workload and/or

Behaviour which displays an insistence on pursuing unmeritorious issues, trivial points and/or unrealistic outcomes beyond all reason and/or

Displays an insistence upon pursuing complaints or issues in an unreasonable and abusive manner and/or

Repeated and/or frequent and/or simultaneous requests for information, whether or not those requests are made under the access to information legislation, and/or

Behaviour where ex-employees are contacted to try to undermine councillors and/or

Behaviour which has the effect of hindering the council's ability to go about its democratic business due to the extreme workload generated.

Behaviour where the aim is character assassination.

Behaviour characterised by a refusal to accept that issues raised are not within the power of the Council to investigate, change or influence

5. Use of this Policy

In the first instance the Clerk will consult with the Chairman of the Council. With the Chairman's agreement, the complainant will be contacted in writing (also providing a copy of this policy), to explain why the behaviour is a concern and ask them to change their behaviour.

If the behaviours persist and Clerk or Councillors identify behaviour that they think exhibits these characteristics, and which they believe may be vexatious or unreasonably persistent, they should refer it to full council under closed session.

In exceptional circumstances (for example significant time until the next available meeting), the policy can be triggered by e-mail consultation with a minimum of 5 Councillors including the Chairman or Vice-Chairman

If the council agrees with the assessment, it should prepare a brief statement of why it considers the complaint or correspondence to be vexatious, including its effect upon the Clerk, Councillors and/or the village. This should be accompanied by a report for the Council showing the workload effects and resource impact, and, if resources allow information about the related correspondence via email, telephone and letter, including information about whom the correspondence was addressed to, who it was copied to, and a brief description of each piece of correspondence.

Sanctions can include:

Being allowed to communicate with one nominated member of the council or staff

Receiving no responses further enquiries and communications on the same matter if no substantive new issue is raised

Receiving no responses to all enquiries and communications made to the council for 6 months if no substantive new issue is raised

6. Handling correspondence and complaints deemed to be vexatious

The Clerk/Council will write to the correspondent advising them that their complaint and/or correspondence has been determined to be vexatious and giving the reason for that decision.

7. Residents of the Parish

If the complainant is a local resident of the parish, the notification letter should state which sanction the council has imposed. They should be advised that the decision will be reviewed in six months from the date of the letter advising them that their complaint/correspondence has been determined to be vexatious. There is no route of appeal against the decision that a complaint or correspondence is vexatious. The District and County Councillors will be informed that a constituent has been designated as an unreasonably persistent or vexatious complainant.

Sanctions can include:

Being permitted to only communicate with one nominated member of the council or staff

Being permitted to only communicate in a specific way, for example, letter rather than e-mail or telephone.

Receiving no responses further enquiries and communications on the same matter if no substantive new issue is raised

Receiving no responses to all enquiries and communications made to the council for 6 months if no substantive new issue is raised

Review of Sanction:

At the following full parish council meeting which occurs six months after the correspondent has been advised that their complaint and/or correspondence is vexatious, that decision should be reviewed. The council should consider whether there has been any improvement in the vexatious behaviour over that time. The Clerk should write to the correspondent advising them of the outcome of the review. If the behaviour has improved, future correspondence can be treated in the normal way. If there has not been a significant improvement, the correspondence will continue to be treated as vexatious and will be reviewed annually

8. Non-Residents of the Parish

If the complainant(s) does not reside in the parish, they will be advised that all future correspondence will be ignored and left unread. There is no route of appeal against the decision that a complaint or correspondence is vexatious.

9. Persistent communication on the same matter from multiple complainants.

If the persistent communication on one matter is from 4 or more complainants, rather than from one complainant, the Clerk or Councillors identifying the behaviour will draft a standard response to all further communications on that matter. As no sanctions are being imposed, this action can be triggered without approval at a full council meeting.

This policy was adopted on	July 2026
Signature Of Chairman	C Mott
Date of next review	July 2027