

DIOCESE OF EXETER

Disclosure of Interests: Code of ConductApproved by the Bishop's Diocesan Council: Saturday 4 July 2009Introduction

It is important that any "body" dealing with the sale, purchase or retention of assets, should be covered by a clear governance framework. This is essential for providing assurance to the public, the parent organisation and its members, and especially where the organisation is a registered charity. It also protects those who serve on that body. The key standards of public life published by the Nolan Committee provide a yardstick for the Diocese, viz:

- Selflessness (acting solely in the public interest);
- Integrity (under no financial or other obligation influencing decisions);
- Objectivity (decisions based solely on merit);
- Accountability (to the public);
- Openness (information withheld only when wide public interest demands);
- Honesty (private interests declared and conflicts avoided);
- Leadership (principles promoted by example).

Disclosure of Interests

Whilst no-one has any reason to question the honesty or integrity of any employee or of any member of the Diocesan Synod, Boards, Councils and other bodies (in this Code together called a "member"), the onus is on the Diocese to show that it has the procedures in place demonstrating that none of its members has a conflict of interest in any matter which is relevant and material.

The Code comprises three parts:

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| Part 1 | What constitutes a "relevant and material interest" |
| Part 2 | Declaring interests |
| Part 3 | Publication of the Code's requirements |

Part 1: "Relevant and Material" Interests

A "relevant and material interest" is one which could reasonably be perceived as being capable of influencing an individual's judgement. It can be direct or indirect, pecuniary or non-pecuniary. Examples of such interests are:

- Directorship of a PLC;
- Ownership of more than 5% of the shares in any company;
- Employment by any company with whom the Diocese does business;
- Consultant to any company with whom the Diocese does business;
- Purchaser or vendor in any property transaction with the Diocese;
- Any transaction by the Diocese which benefits a member personally.

- On the church electoral roll or otherwise holding any office in a parish which is the subject of specific proposals or discussions.

When considering the above, the interest of a spouse, of a person registered under the Civil Partnerships Act, or of a close relative or dependent of either, is deemed to be the interest of a member.

The following do not constitute relevant and material interests and therefore do not need to be disclosed:

- (a) Stipendiary clergy: discussions on stipends or clergy terms of service generally.
- (b) Matters forming part of the duties of archdeacons, rural deans and deanery lay chairs, acting in their official capacities.
- (c) Matters of policy, including financial policy, that will have an impact on parishes in general
- (d) Bishops and archdeacons: the work of the Diocesan Board of Patronage.

Part 2: Declaration of Interests

If a member becomes aware of a potential or actual conflict of interest (whether from the agenda and papers circulated prior to a meeting, or from discussion during the meeting), he/she must declare it forthwith. The meeting will decide whether or not it is appropriate for that person to withdraw, and shall note in the Minutes both the declaration and the decision. Subject to this, he/she may take part in any discussion, but may not vote or take part in any decision on the matter.

If a member is in doubt about the relevance of any interest, he/she should discuss the matter with the Chair of the meeting.

Part 3: Publication

A copy of this Code shall be given to every person on commencement of employment or appointment/election to any Synod, Board, Council or other Committee/Working Party.

The Agenda for every meeting of a Synod, Board, Council or other Committee/Working Party shall include the words: "If at any time you become aware of an actual or potential conflict of interest in any matter to be discussed or under discussion, you must declare it forthwith".

Because of the need for the Diocese to be seen to operate in an open and transparent manner, this Code is binding on all members.

Explanatory note (not part of the Code)

This Code covers the requirements for all diocesan bodies, except that a formal Register of Interests is not maintained, given the large number of people involved at Synod, BDC and committee level.