

## **Trustee Code of Conduct**

### **1.0 Introduction and Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide a model for Trustees of Naphill Village Hall & Playing Fields Council (“the Council”) that ensures high standards of decision making and makes it clear how potential conflicts of interest are handled.

### **2.0 Selflessness**

- 2.1 Trustees have a general duty to act in the best interests of the charity as a whole. They must not act to gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, their family, their friends or the village organisation that they represent

### **3.0 Integrity**

- 3.1 Trustees should not:
- a) place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their role
  - b) Should avoid any impropriety or any appearance of improper behaviour
  - c) Must avoid accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence their judgement

### **4.0 Objectivity**

- 4.1 In carrying out their role, including making appointments, awarding contracts, recommending individuals for rewards and benefits or transacting other business, Trustees must ensure that decisions are made solely on merit.

### **5.0 Accountability**

- 5.1 Trustees have a duty to comply with the law on all occasions in accordance with the trust placed in them in such a way as to preserve public confidence in the Village Hall & Playing Fields Council.
- 5.2 Trustees are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public, funders and users of the facilities. They must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their role.

### **6.0 Openness**

- 6.1 Trustees should take care that confidential material, for example that which relates to individuals, is handled appropriately and with due care.
- 6.2 Mindful of the above, Trustees should be as open as possible about their decisions and the action that they will take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider interest clearly demands it.

## **7.0 Honesty**

- 7.1 Trustees have a duty to declare any interests relating to the trustee role and to take steps to resolve any conflicts that may arise. Where private interests of a trustee conflict with their trustee duties they must resolve this conflict in favour of the trustee role or withdraw from any decision making
- 7.2 Trustees must make relevant declarations of interest in the different circumstances and roles they play both within and outside the Council.

## **8.0 Leadership**

- 8.1 Trustees should promote and support the principles of leadership by example.
- 8.2 They must respect the role of Chairman as the elected leader of the Council.

## **9.0 Commitment**

- 9.1 Being a trustee involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy. Trustees will be active and involved, attend meetings regularly, share responsibilities and tasks fairly and send apologies when they cannot attend a meeting.
- 9.2 Many Trustees have other voluntary, charitable, family or work commitments. Trustees will understand this and support the Chairman to ensure that debate at meetings is pertinent and succinct. Good preparation and information circulated in advance of the meeting permits a more informed discussion and as a consequence, better decision making.

## **10.0 General Conduct**

- 10.1 Trustees will work as a team at all times and respect that decisions are made as a collective, by means of a vote. Once a decision is made it becomes the decision of the whole Council.
- 10.2 Trustees will only act on behalf of the Council when they have specifically been asked to do so.
- 10.3 Trustees will work within any agreed policies and regulations, including Financial Regulations.
- 10.4 Trustees will always be mindful of their responsibility to maintain the reputation of the Council.
- 10.5 Trustees will behave professionally and courteously to their fellow trustees at all times.
- 10.6 Trustees will raise any potentially contentious issues with the Chairman in advance so that they can be placed on the agenda. When called to make a decision the trustees must have all the facts they need and have had the opportunity to consider them before the meeting. It is not fair or appropriate to raise contentious issues for the first time at a meeting and then expect the other Trustees to make an instant decision.
- 10.7 Trustees use email as a convenient method of communication; however, they recognise that chains of email discussion copied to all or selective Trustees is not a positive or effective method to use as it inevitably results in ill-feeling, misunderstanding and lack of structured debate, the outcome of which is that

important points may be lost. For this reason, if Trustees receive a general email of this nature they should only respond to the Chairman and the sender. It is the Chairman's role to pull such debates together for the good of the whole Council. When using email to communicate Council business Trustees will be mindful that those emails could be subject to Freedom of Information requests and they would be legally obliged to allow access to them.

10.8 Trustees accept that they we owe a duty of mutual trust and confidence to the Council and to each other, which may be breached if unsuitable material is contained in any communication or correspondence, including all types of electronic communication, personal blogs, websites and social networking sites.

### **11.0 Equality and Diversity**

11.1 Trustees will treat everyone equally irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, disability, religious belief, sexual orientation, age, or any other recognised area of discrimination.

11.2 Trustees accept that we are all different and that we all think, behave and communicate in different ways. They will always consider this, and always treat others with respect.

### **12.0 Press Contact**

12.1 Individual Trustees are not authorised to give media statements of any kind regarding Village Hall business.

12.2 In the event that you are contacted by the media refer them on to the Chairman who will respond on our behalf after seeking advice from other Trustees.

12.3 The media are very clever at manipulating people to give responses that are later wilfully misinterpreted. The following are examples where this could happen:

- Taking your personal comments as representative of the Village Hall Council
- Taking a "no comment" as confirmation or denial
- Taking a photograph of you and then adding their own caption that looks as if you have condoned it
- Getting you to answer yes/no (confirm/deny) type questions that they later expand upon without your input
- Putting your hand in front of the camera or pushing it away it interpreted as a sign of guilt.

12.4 Be careful what you say to other residents and be especially careful as to what you put in emails as these can be passed on to the media without your knowledge or consent

### **13.0 Use of social media**

13.1 Trustees must be mindful that personal opinions shared through social media will reflect on their status as Trustees and not post anything that would be detrimental to the Village Hall Council.

13.2 Only official Village Hall business is to be shared on the village hall web site or Facebook page.

## **Approval**

This policy has been approved by the Council at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022

**Date for next review:            May 2024**