

THAKEHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Protocol relating to Gifts and Hospitality received by Councillors

1. General

This protocol is subsidiary to these general responsibilities under Council's *Code of Conduct*:

- 5 You must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or authority into disrepute.
- 6 You ... must not use or attempt to use your position as a member improperly to confer on or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage.

Councillors should treat with extreme caution any offer or gift, favour or hospitality that could be perceived to be in connection with their position as a parish councillor. The acceptance of gifts and hospitality is not always unlawful or inappropriate – the decision in every case is whether or not it is appropriate to accept any gift or hospitality that might be offered, having regard to how it might be perceived. It is a criminal offence corruptly to solicit or receive any gift, reward or advantage as an inducement to doing or forbearing to do anything in respect of any transaction involving your Parish Council. This Protocol does not apply to gifts given to your Parish Council that you accept formally the Council's behalf and are retained by the Parish Council. Matters within the remit of this protocol include:

- The free gift of any goods, equipment or services.
- The opportunity to acquire any goods or services not available to, or discounted rates/terms not available to the general public.
- Offers of food, drink, accommodation, entertainment or opportunity to attend cultural or sporting events.

2. Permissible gifts and hospitality

Councillors may accept gifts/hospitality provided in the normal course of duties as a member, including:

- Civic hospitality provided by another public authority;
- Normal and modest refreshment in connection with any meeting in the course of your work as a parish council member (e.g. tea, coffee and other normal beverages and biscuits)
- Tickets for sporting, cultural and entertainment events which are sponsored or promoted by your parish council or bodies to which you have been appointed by your parish council, and the tickets are offered in relation to that sponsorship or promotion.
- Small low value items (below £25 e.g. pens, calendars, diaries, flowers and other mementos/tokens).
- Drinks or other modest refreshment in the normal course of socialising arising consequentially from parish council business (e.g. inclusion in a round of drinks after a meeting). Modest meals provided as a matter of courtesy in the office or meeting place of a person with whom your parish council has a business connection.
- Souvenirs and gifts from other public bodies intended as personal gifts (e.g. arising from twin-town and other civic events).

3. Gifts and Hospitality to avoid

Do not accept a gift or hospitality as an inducement or reward for anything you do as a parish council member. If you have any suspicion that the motive behind the gift or hospitality is an inducement or reward you must decline it, and you should avoid giving any perception of soliciting such reward.

This includes gifts or hospitality:

- of significant value or whose value is excessive in the circumstances.
- from any of these sources:

- parties involved with your parish council in a competitive tendering or other procurement process;
 - applicants for planning permission and other applications for licences, consents or approvals;
 - applicants for grants, including voluntary bodies
 - parties in legal proceedings with your parish council.
- if you believe it will put you under any obligation to the provider as a consequence.

4. Registration of Gifts and Hospitality

A member must, within 28 days of receiving any gift or hospitality over the value of £25, provide written notification to the Proper Officer (normally the Clerk) of the existence and nature of that gift or hospitality, and must complete the gifts and hospitality registration form below for all notifications.

5. Reporting of Inappropriate Gifts and Hospitality offered

It is a criminal offence for a person corruptly to give or offer any gift, reward or advantage as an inducement or reward to you for doing or forbearing to do anything as a member of your parish council. You must immediately report to the Clerk (for onward reporting to the District Monitoring Officer) any circumstances where an inappropriate gift or hospitality has been offered to you. You may thereafter be required to assist the Police in providing evidence.

6. Gift/Hospitality registration form

To: The Proper Officer

Notification of Receipt of Gifts or Hospitality

What was the gift or hospitality? (Give full description)	
What is your best estimate of its market value or cost?	
Who provided it?	
When and where did you receive it?	
Signed	
Name in Capitals	
Dated	

Adopted: 19 September 2016

Next review: May 2019