

Pontesbury Parish Council – Gifts and Prizes Policy

Introduction

Councillors and council staff are required to act in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct and the seven principles of public life as set out in the Localism Act. Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Occasionally staff and councillors are invited to take part in promotional activities whilst taking part in training events, conferences and other workshops or whilst acting for the Council in another official capacity. Such activities, which may include quizzes, prize draws or competitions sometimes offer a prize to encourage participation or obtain contact details.

This policy is designed to guide the council and staff in the event that they win one of these prizes.

It also sets out the policy in relation to unlooked for gifts of appreciation made by the public or promotional products offered by suppliers. This is to protect staff and members from any suspicion of undue influence which might bring the Council into disrepute.

Gifts of appreciation

Small gifts of appreciation, with a value of less than £10.00, such as chocolates or wine given to staff or Councillors at Christmas, may be accepted and where appropriate, shared with colleagues. A record of the gift, its estimated value and the recipient shall be made and be kept available for inspection. No more than one gift should be accepted from any giver within a 12-month period.

Small gifts of hospitality, such as a hot drink or snack with a value not exceeding £10.00 may be accepted from suppliers, colleagues or Councillors in the course of a work-related activity providing this is an infrequent event. Such gifts need not be recorded.

Personal gifts with a value greater than £10, or a value to be set by the Council from time to time, shall NOT be accepted by staff or members of the Council at any time.

Free gifts or samples provided by suppliers shall only be accepted on behalf of the Council where they can be used by the Council for some official purpose. Such samples shall be approved by the Clerk prior to acceptance, recorded in the gift record and used for official purposes only.

The gift record shall be inspected by the Internal Checker at least annually to ensure that the policy is being complied with.

Prizes

Staff and members shall not be prevented from taking part in promotional activities as part of their working or training events. Such activities can result in a wide variety of items being offered, some of which are of a personal nature whilst others may be of value to the Council.

Examples of the latter might include electronic equipment, (laptops, tablets), street furniture, (litter bins, planters), or local council books. Should any prizes of this nature, with a value exceeding £10.00 (or such sum as may be determined by the Council from time to time) be won

by staff or members during a council funded event, it shall be reported to the Council and if accepted, shall be added to the asset register of the Council.

Low value branded gifts of a personal nature, such as mugs, water bottles, notebooks or other stationery given away by suppliers or presenters at exhibitions may be kept by the recipient or shared with colleagues, as appropriate.

Tendering and Competition

All contracts shall be let in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. In no circumstances shall staff or members accept a gift or prize of any value if there is any suggestion that it might be viewed as an incentive to provide preferential access to any commercial contract or tendering process being undertaken by the Council. Should any such gift be offered it shall be immediately declined and declared to Council. The supplier shall be excluded from the tendering process.

This policy shall be reviewed annually.

Date of adoption: 14 October 2024

Date of next review: October 2026