

## Watford Village Hall Trustees



## Trustee Code of Conduct

### 1.0 Introduction and Purpose

1.1 This Code provides guidance for Trustees and anyone else acting on behalf of the Watford Village Hall (WVH), to assist them in carrying out their functions in accordance with currently accepted standards of public service.

### 2.0 Public Service Values

The Nolan Committee's first report on standards in public life (1995) set out clear expectations of those serving the public in whatever capacity. The Seven Principles of Public Life are set out below. The WVH Trustees fully accepts these principles and in all its dealings regards them as key to its functioning.

- **Selflessness** - 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 or their friends.
- **Integrity** - Trustees should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their role. Trustees should avoid any impropriety or any appearance of improper behaviour. Trustees must avoid accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence their judgement
- **Objectivity** - In carrying out their role; including making appointments, awarding contracts, recommending individuals for rewards and benefits or transacting other business, Trustees must ensure that choices are made solely on merit.
- **Accountability** - 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. 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.
- **Openness** - Trustees should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands. Trustees should take care that confidential material, for example that which relates to individuals, is handled appropriately and with due care.
- **Honesty** - Trustees have a duty to declare any interests relating to their role and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the charity and public interests. 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

- **Leadership** - Trustees should promote and support these principles by leadership and example. Trustees must respect the role of Chairman as the elected leader of the Committee.

**Commitment** - 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. 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.

**General Conduct** – All Trustees will:

- Work as a team at all times and respect that decisions are made as a collective, often by means of a vote.
- Once a decision is made it becomes the decision of the whole Committee and Trustees are not expected to speak out against majority decisions in public or private outside of the Committee.
- Only act on behalf of the Committee when they have specifically been asked to do so.
- Work within any agreed policies and regulations, including financial regulations.
- Trustees will always be mindful of their responsibility to maintain the reputation of the Committee.
- Behave professionally and courteously to their fellow Trustees at all times.
- 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.

Trustees accept that they 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.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

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

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

**Date to be reviewed:** January 2023