

Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a Code of Conduct for volunteers to Hythe Pier Heritage Association (HPHA), a community benefit society, regulated by the FCA, with exempt charitable status granted by HMRC. We recognise and value the importance of volunteers to HPHA, who give freely of their time and effort. Nevertheless, it is also accepted that conflicts of interest can and, indeed, do arise from time to time, and this Code aims to promote good practice. Our objective is to ensure high standards and make it clear how we will resolve any such issues should they arise.

Background

The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life. That Committee prepared a code entitled "the Seven Principles of Public Life". This Code is based on a form produced by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations ("NCVO") which itself took the framework from and adapted the Nolan Committee's code.

In addition, the NCVO has developed a recommended format of procedure to deal with the issue of conflicts of interest, if and when they arise, and set out below, following the Code, is a formal Procedure which is an adaptation of that recommended format.

Both the Code of Conduct and the Conflicts of Interest Procedure have been formally adopted by Board of Directors of HPHA (The Board).

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Selflessness

Volunteers in whatever role to Hythe Pier Heritage Association Society ("HPHA") have a general duty to act in the best interests of HPHA as a whole. They must not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family, their friends or any business or organisation they represent, own or for whom they work. The word "Volunteer" throughout this document refers to any voluntary role within HPHA including members of the Board of Directors.

2. Integrity

Volunteers:

- must not 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;
- must not benefit personally, either directly or indirectly, from the activities of HPHA (including, without limitation, by reason of their ownership, directorship or other involvement with any business or organisation which contracts with HPHA for the provision of goods or services). Indirect benefit can include a benefit being received by a spouse, partner, close relative or other person connected with the Volunteer;
- as well as avoiding actual impropriety, should avoid any appearance of improper behaviour;
- should avoid accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence their judgement.

3. Objectivity

In carrying out their role, including the making of appointments in relation to HPHA, awarding contracts, recommending individuals for rewards and benefits or transacting other business, Volunteers should ensure that decisions are made solely on merit.

4. Accountability

Volunteers:

- have a duty to comply with the law on all occasions in accordance with the trust placed in them and in such a way as to preserve public confidence in HPHA;
- will discharge their role with the skill and care appropriate to their position and responsibilities and with regard to any special knowledge or expertise which they bring to HPHA;
- are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public, to donors and other providers of funds, to those to whom grants and donations are made or to be made by HPHA and to members and employees of HPHA and others associated with it. They must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their role.

5. Openness

Volunteers:

- should ensure that confidential material, including material about individuals and organisations with whom HPHA has contact, is handled with due care and consideration;
- should be as open as possible about their decisions and the actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions, when appropriate, and restrict information only when the wider interest clearly demands.

6. Honesty

Volunteers:

- have a duty to declare any interests relating to their role and to take steps to resolve any conflicts that may arise in accordance with HPHA's Conflicts of Interest Procedure. Where the private interests of a Volunteer conflict with his/her HPHA duties, he/she must resolve this conflict in favour of the HPHA role;
- must make relevant declarations of interest in the different circumstances and roles they play, both within and outside HPHA.

7. Leadership

Volunteers:

- should promote and support the principles of leadership by example

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST PROCEDURE

General

If it becomes apparent to a Volunteer that due to circumstances, they are in a position to benefit in ways as described in this document, they will not accept the benefit, or allow others of their relations or friends to benefit, but instead report the matter to a member of the Board or to the co-ordinator of the event for resolution.

Meetings

Any Volunteer who has a direct or indirect financial interest in a matter under discussion **must declare the nature of their interest and withdraw from the room unless they have dispensation to speak**. Volunteers who are members should be aware that, subject to certain very specific exceptions in rules starting at 101 in the Rules of HPHA, they are not permitted to receive either directly or indirectly any benefit in money or money's worth from HPHA. Indirect benefit can include a benefit being received by a spouse, partner, close relative or other person connected with a Volunteer. Indirect benefit could, for example, include a situation where HPHA enters into a contract with a company of which a Volunteer (or a Volunteer's spouse, partner, close relative or other connected person) is a Director or has a direct or indirect ownership or shareholding.

If a Volunteer has any interest in the matter under discussion which creates a danger of bias (ie, the interest affects him/her or a member of his/her household or family more than others involved in making the decision), he/she should declare the nature of the interest and withdraw from the room unless he/she has dispensation to speak.

If a Volunteer has any other interest which does not create a real danger of bias, but which might reasonably cause others to think it could influence their decision, then the volunteer should declare the nature of the interest, but may remain in the room, participate in the discussion and vote (if relevant), if they wish.

If a Volunteer is in any doubt about the application of these procedural rules, he/she should consult with and seek a decision from the Chair of the meeting, whose decision should be considered as final and binding. If the Chair is in any doubt as to the applicability of these rules in any particular case, then professional advice and/or guidance should be sought from the Charities Commission prior to resolution of the matter.