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**Hemswell Cliff  
Parish Council**

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# **Hemswell Cliff Parish Council**

## **Gifts and Hospitality Policy**

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### 1. Introduction

The aim of the Gifts and Hospitality policy is to guard against the risk of allegations of impropriety by Councillors or staff, however contracted, by providing advice on a number of key issues relating to the rules of regularity and propriety. The rules are based on the fundamental requirements of Parliament, HM Treasury and the National Audit Office.

Under the Bribery Act 2010, it is a criminal offence for employees in an official capacity to accept any gift or consideration as an inducement or reward for:

- doing or not doing anything; or
- showing favour or disfavour to any person.

The policy applies to all Councillors and staff as members of a public body, are required to abide by the highest ethical standards. All Councillors and staff must be seen to act with complete honesty and integrity, and must not put themselves in a position where they could be accused of acting improperly.

Councillors and staff are responsible for their decisions on the acceptance of gifts or hospitality and for ensuring that any gifts or hospitality accepted can stand up to public scrutiny and do not bring their public office into disrepute.

Councillors and staff should exercise the utmost care in accepting hospitality or gifts where there could be a real or perceived conflict with their official duties. Councillors and staff must not accept any gifts or hospitality which might, or might reasonably appear to, compromise their personal judgement or integrity or place them under an improper obligation. Councillors and staff must never canvass or seek gifts and hospitality.

### 2. Gifts

The acceptance of gifts from interested business parties could be presented as promoting a conflict of interest that might arguably have compromised the impartiality of Councillors and staff in the decisions that they were required to make.

Offers of gifts should be reported to the Parish Clerk and, if of any significant value, should be declined.

It is not possible to put forward hard and fast rules for when gifts may be accepted, since in practice this will depend upon the circumstances.

The general principles for the acceptance of gifts are:

- The gift must be of a nominal or notional value. Typically, a gift should not be accepted if the cumulative value from any one organisation or individual exceeds £20.00.

- The gift must be given for an appropriate reason.
- The gift must be given at an appropriate time (e.g. not in advance of the issuing of an opinion or determination, or in advance of the award of a contract).
- The gift must be of a “one-off” or irregular nature (i.e. that could not be viewed as a regular source of income by HMRC for personal taxation purposes).
- The details of all gifts accepted or declined should be fully recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register (see Appendix), which will be published on the Council’s website.

### **Use of Accepted Gifts**

Retention of accepted gifts by the recipient is at the discretion of the Clerk. In reaching their decision consideration should be given as to whether the gift should be put to another use (i.e. donated to a charity or a library, displayed in public offices etc) and the risks to the reputation of the Council with the retention of the gift by an individual. In no circumstances may an individual sell an accepted gift for monetary gain.

### **Making Gifts**

Reciprocal gifting is not allowed.

### **Donations**

Donations to a Councillor or staff member, for example a fee for a speech or a presentation, should not be accepted. It should be requested they are donated to a charity or other cause instead. It would be a conflict of interest to accept a donation when performing a duty or role.

## **3. Hospitality**

Councillors and staff should not encourage business contacts to provide hospitality to them, or indirectly to friends or relatives.

Offers of hospitality should be reported to the Clerk. Some examples of hospitality which should be refused are payments for lunch or dinner, and tickets to sporting or leisure events.

In the following circumstances, it may be considered appropriate to accept a working lunch, dinner or attendance at an annual event, where it is:

- not lavish in nature; not a frequent occurrence; and there is no suspicion of a conflict of interest.

Such hospitality must be recorded in the Register. The details required in that form must be completed as fully as possible.

### **Providing hospitality (working lunches, refreshments etc.)**

It is not considered appropriate to provide refreshments or working lunches at the Council expense for meetings.

## Hemswell Cliff Parish Council – Gifts and Hospitality Policy

This document is available free online at: [Policies - Hemswell Cliff Parish Council](#)

In accordance with the Parish Council's Publication Scheme this document can be purchased for 5p per page, plus postage and packaging. To get a quote for a copy of this document please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council.

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**Appendix 1 – Gifts and Hospitality Register template**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Gift/Hospitality</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Accepted/Declined</b>