

Sandford St Martin Parish Council Gifts and Hospitality Register Guidance

Adopted by Sandford St Martin Parish Council on 17 March 2022
Last approved on 16 March 2023

INTRODUCTION

1. The Parish Council operates an electronic register of gifts and hospitality which is held by the Parish Clerk.
2. The registration requirement is limited to gifts or hospitality worth £10.00 or more.
3. Where the gift or hospitality has an estimated value below £10.00 you should consider whether the declaration would be appropriate in the circumstances. However, if you receive a series of gifts or hospitality from the same source that add up to £10.00 or more, then this must be registered as an accumulation.
4. You may have to estimate the value of the gifts or hospitality.
5. The declaration should be submitted to the Parish Clerk within 28 days of receipt of the item being registered. The declaration must include the following:
 - A full description of the gift or hospitality;
 - A best estimate of its market value or cost;
 - Who provided it;
 - When and where it was received.

The declaration should be signed and dated by the Councillor making the registration.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. The only proper reason for accepting any gift or hospitality is that you reasonably believe that there may be a benefit for the Parish Council.
2. No hard and fast rules can be laid down to cover every circumstance as to what is appropriate or inappropriate. If you are in doubt as to the motive behind a gift or hospitality, it is recommended that you register it or speak to the Parish Clerk.
3. You do not need to register gifts or hospitality which are not related to your role as a member, such as gifts from your friends and family. However, you should always register a gift or hospitality if it could be perceived as something given to you because of your position or if your authority requires you to.
4. Particular care should be taken in relation to gifts and hospitality offered by current or potential contractors for the Parish Council, developers within the parish, or businesses associated with the parish.
5. Cash or monetary gifts should always be refused without exception and the refusal notified to the Monitoring Officer.
6. You should also register any offer of gift and/or hospitality over £10.00 which you have declined, since this protects both your position and that of the Council.

LEGAL POSITION

1. It is a criminal offence 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 the Parish Council (Bribery Act 2010). The onus would be on you to disprove corruption in relation to a gift from a person holding or seeking to obtain a contract from the Parish Council.
2. 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 the Parish Council. If this occurs, you must immediately report to the 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.

SCOPE

1. Gifts and hospitality include:
 - The free gift of any goods or services;

- An opportunity to acquire any goods or services not available to the general public, or at a discount or at terms not available to the general public;
- The offer of food, drink, accommodation or entertainment or the opportunity to attend any cultural or sporting event.

APPROPRIATE GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

1. There are some circumstances where you may accept gifts and hospitality as being in the normal course of your duties as a Councillor:
 - Civic hospitality provided by another public authority;
 - Normal and modest refreshment in connection with any meeting in the course of your work as a Councillor (eg tea, coffee and other normal beverages and biscuits);
 - Tickets for sporting, cultural and entertainment events which are sponsored or promoted by the Parish Council or bodies to which you have been appointed by your Parish Council, and the tickets are offered in relationship to that sponsorship or promotion;
 - Small low value gifts (below £10.00 such as pens, calendars, diaries, flowers and mementos and tokens);
 - Drinks or other modest refreshment received in the normal course of socialising arising consequentially from Parish Council business;
 - Modest meals provided as a matter of courtesy in the office or meeting place of a person with whom the Parish Council has a business connection.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually.