

Weston Parish Council – Code of Conduct Notes

The Localism Act 2011 abolished the existing Standards Board regime for conduct within public life. As a result of this, all Parish Councils must put into place their own Code of Conduct which provides an opportunity for Weston to adopt a simplified version of the previous moral code. NSDC has provided a suitable format and it is my suggestion that the Parish Council adopt this version. A copy is attached for your review prior to the July meeting.

In addition:

1. The Parish Council must also agree a procedure for dealing with dispensations as this will no longer be dealt with at a District Council level under the new Act. I have reviewed a draft process (provided by NALC) and would suggest that the Parish Council adopt this process and documentation (copies attached).
2. NSDC recommends that provision is made for the registration of gifts and hospitality to a suggested limit of anything over £100. However, if the Parish Council decides to make such a provision, NSDC states that an agreed and approved description of what constitutes a 'gift, benefit or hospitality' must also be in place. Should the Council decide to proceed with the provision, I have draft documentation for registering such gifts, benefits or hospitality however definitions would have to be agreed. I would suggest this point is discussed at the July meeting.
3. The Register of Interests has also changed and now only requires the declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DIPS). However NSDC advises that the definition of DIPS is significantly different than before, in that
 - a. it applies to the interests of the member **and** their spouse or partner but omits references to member's family and friends
 - b. it is a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest even if there is no likelihood that it might prejudice the member's perception of the public interest, potentially meaning that a decision which has only a minimal impact on say the member's property or employer could trigger a criminal offence
 - c. it only applies to very defined categories of interests and omits reference to matters that might affect the wellbeing or financial standing of the member and/or family or friends

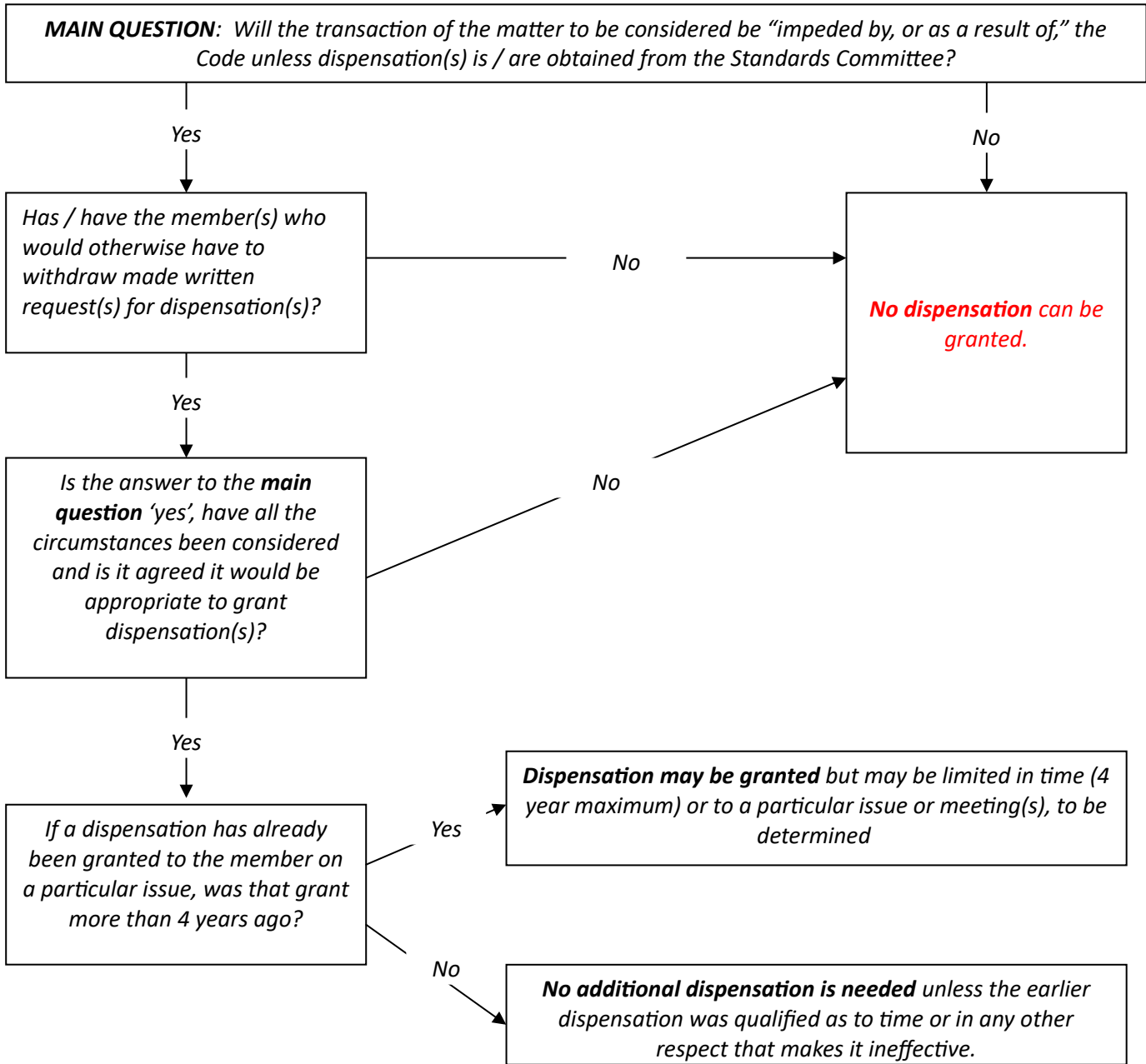
New Register of Interest forms will need to be signed at the July meeting. I will ensure copies are available to all Councillors for completion along with a copy of the descriptions provided by NSDC.

Finally, I understand that the Register of Interests will be published on the internet. NSDC is able to host a Weston village page linked within their website and I am awaiting contact as to how this can be arranged. This link will give you some ideas as to what other parish councils include on their pages: <http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/parishcouncils/> and as you will see content varies considerably.

Initially, and subject to discussion with NSDC regarding hosting, I suggest we include the following information:

- Councillor names and main contact details (to include those of the Clerk)
- Links for both Cllr. B. Laughton and Cllr. S. Michael
- Future meeting dates, times and location
- Link to village area planning portal

Suggested process for dealing with dispensations



Draft

Application for Dispensation

<i>To:</i>	
<i>Name of Member seeking dispensation:</i>	
<i>Nature of interest for which dispensation is sought:</i>	
<i>Nature and duration of dispensation sought (e.g. speaking or speaking and voting):</i>	
<i>Reasons why the request for dispensation should be granted:</i>	

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Decision: _____

Signed: _____

Dated: _____