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Rhondda Fach Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board Member Code of Conduct

1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected from all members of the Rhondda Fach Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board. It supports the Terms of Reference and aims to ensure that the Board operates with integrity, mutual-respect and transparency and that it can be held accountable.

The Rhondda Fach Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board represents local residents and seeks to build stronger communities, create thriving places and empower people to take control to deliver local change.

The public have high expectations of the Neighbourhood Board and entrust its members to represent the Rhondda Fach by taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently.

Board members have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

The Code also sets out how conflicts of interest arising in the Board's work will be declared, recorded and managed. This is to protect the integrity of the Board and to give stakeholders confidence in the probity of the Board's decision-making. Therefore, it helps to protect the reputation of the Board and of its members.

2. Core Values and Conduct

Neighbourhood Board members are expected to adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life, known as the Nolan Principles, as published by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and outlined in the Terms of Reference.

They are:

a. **Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

b. **Integrity:** Holders of public office should 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 official duties.

c. **Objectivity:** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

d. **Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

e. **Openness:** Holders of public office 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 it.

f. **Honesty:** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

g. **Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Building on these principles, each Rhondda Fach Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board member must:

- Act with integrity and honesty;
- Act lawfully;
- Treat all persons equally, fairly and with respect; and
- Lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of Neighbourhood Board member;
- Exercise their responsibilities impartially and in the interests of the local community;
- Not improperly seek to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person;
- Avoid conflicts of interest;
- Not accept any gift or hospitality which could reasonably be perceived as influencing them in carrying out their Board role;
- Promote equality and not discriminate unlawfully against any person or group;
- Exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- Ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with Rhondda Fach Pride in Place requirements and in the public interest.

3. Application of the Code of Conduct

1. This Code of Conduct applies when a member is acting, claiming to act or giving the impression they are acting in their capacity as a member of the Board.

2. The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:
   - at face-to-face meetings;
   - in online or telephone meetings;
   - in written communication;
   - in oral communication;
   - in non-verbal communication; and
   - in electronic and social media communication where the member is acting, claiming to act or could reasonably be understood as acting on behalf of the Board.

4. Attendance, Participation and Conduct at Meetings

It is the responsibility of Neighbourhood Board members to:

- Prioritise attendance at meetings;
- Adequately prepare for meetings by reading all circulated materials in advance;
- Notify the secretariat in advance if they are unable to attend a meeting;
- Contribute to discussions in a professional and respectful manner, by following the direction of the Chair;
- Ensure that discussions remain focused and constructive; and
- Avoid using the Board for personal, political or organisational agendas.

5. Conflict of Interests

Glossary of terms:

Conflict of Interest	A conflict of interest may arise where a member's personal, financial, professional or organisational interests could affect, or could reasonably be perceived as affecting, their ability to participate impartially in the Board's work and decisions.

Following appointment to the Board, members must complete and maintain a Register of Interests, declaring any personal, professional, financial or other

interests that could reasonably be perceived as influencing, or having the potential to influence, their participation in the Board's work. The Council, as accountable body, will hold the Register of Interests. Appropriate information about members' interests will be published where necessary to support the transparency and accountability of the Board, subject to the Council's data protection obligations and any sensitive information considerations.

Board members are personally responsible for identifying and declaring any actual or potential conflicts of interest at the earliest opportunity, including at Board meetings where relevant matters are being considered. Early declaration allows any potential conflicts to be managed openly and appropriately, protecting both the integrity of the Board's decisions and the individual member concerned.

Declarations shall be recorded in the minutes of meetings.

In considering whether an interest should be declared, a member should take account of interests affecting themselves, a close family member, close associate, employer, business, organisation or other body with which they have a significant connection.

If a Board member is unsure whether an interest should be declared, they should seek advice from the secretariat at the earliest opportunity. The secretariat may obtain legal or other appropriate advice where necessary.

Board members must declare any financial or non-financial interest which gives rise, or could reasonably be perceived as giving rise, to a conflict of interest in relation to a matter being considered by the Board. The interest should be declared at the beginning of the meeting or as soon as the member becomes aware that it is relevant.

The declaration and the action taken to manage the interest must be recorded in the minutes.

Where the interest could reasonably call the member's impartiality into question, the member should not participate in the discussion or decision and should withdraw from the meeting for that item. For less significant interests, it may be sufficient for the interest to be declared and recorded before the member participates.

Where there is uncertainty about how an interest should be managed, the Chair, supported by the secretariat, will determine the appropriate and proportionate action, taking advice where necessary.

6. Decision-making

Board members must approach decisions with an open mind, consider the information and evidence presented, and take account of relevant community engagement. Members should not treat any matter as finally decided before the Board has considered it.

7. Communication Protocol

Official communications, including press statements and social media issued on behalf of the Board, must comply with the Board's Welsh language arrangements and be agreed by the Chair in consultation with the Council. Members must not give statements or give the impression that they are speaking on behalf of the Board unless they are authorised to do so.

8. Confidential Information

Members should not disclose information which has been identified as confidential or which they ought reasonably to understand is confidential, unless authorised or legally required to do so. The default position remains that the Board's business, papers and decisions should be open and transparent.

9. Respectful behaviour

Members must treat others with dignity and respect and must not engage in discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, abuse or other behaviour which could reasonably cause harm or undermine the safety, dignity or inclusion of others involved in the Board's work.

10. Failure to Comply

Any concern that a member may have failed to comply with this Code will be considered in accordance with the Board's Terms of Reference.

11. Acknowledgement and Acceptance

I …… as a Board Member of the Rhondda Fach Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board, have read, understood, and agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct when carrying out my functions as a Member of the Board

Signed: ……

Date: ……