

Shropshire Rural Housing Association



**SHROPSHIRE
RURAL HOUSING**
ASSOCIATION

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY



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CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to all Shareholding Members of the Association (The Members).

2. WHY WE HAVE A POLICY

Members have a legal obligation to act in the best interests of Shropshire Rural Housing Association. In accordance with the rules of the association, the code of governance and the code of conduct, it is important to avoid situations where there may be an actual or potential conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interests may arise where the interests of an individual member, a member of their family or some other person closely connected to them has interests and/or loyalties which conflict with those of the Association. Such conflicts can create problems if they:

- Inhibit free discussion
- Result in decisions or actions that are not in the best interests of the Association
- Risk the impression being given that the Association has acted improperly.

The aim of this policy is to protect both the organisation and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety.

3. THE DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Members are required to:

- 3.1. Complete an annual Declaration of Interests form (see appendix 1).

Once completed, signed and dated, the form must be returned for review to the Secretary. The interests will be recorded in a Register of Interests and will be available for inspection by the Board and executive officers of the Association.

The Register of Interests shall be supplemented by the register of offers of gifts and hospitality, whether accepted or declined. For the avoidance of doubt, any offer to a shareholding member of a value greater than £25 must be declared and entered in the register which will be maintained by the Secretary. Any offers received by the Secretary must not only be entered into the Register but drawn promptly to the attention of the Chief Executive.

3.2. Declare any change in their circumstances during the year that may lead to a conflict of interest.

3.3. Declare any gifts or hospitality offered in connection with their role at Shropshire Rural Housing Association, whether the offer(s) is/are accepted or declined.

3.4. Declare any potential conflict of interest that may arise at a Board or committee meeting.

4. DATA PROTECTION

The information provided will be processed in accordance with the data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 (updated by General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018).

5. WHAT TO DO IF A MEMBER FACES A CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If a member believes they have a potential or actual conflict of interest they should:

- Declare the interest at the earliest opportunity
- Withdraw from any discussion and decisions relating to the conflict.

The Secretary should take special care to ensure that minutes and other documents relating to the matter presenting a conflict are, where necessary, appropriately redacted. A balance needs to be struck between openness and transparency and avoiding the disclosure of such sensitive information as may place either the person making the declaration or the Association in an unduly difficult situation.

If the member is a user of Shropshire Rural Housing Association's services, or the carer of someone who uses Shropshire Rural Housing Association's services, they should not be involved in decisions that directly affect the service that they, or the person they care for, receive(s). They should declare their interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from any subsequent discussion, unless expressly invited to remain in order to provide information. In this case they may not participate in, or influence, the decision or any vote on the matter. They will not be counted in the quorum for that part of the meeting and must withdraw from the meeting during any vote on the conflicted item.

There are situations where they may participate in discussion from which they could indirectly benefit, for example where the benefits are universal to all users, or where their individual benefit is minimal. This action will be agreed by the Chair of the meeting and minuted accordingly.

If the member fails to declare an interest that is known to the Secretary and/or the Chair of the Board or committee, the Secretary or Chair of the Board or Committee will declare that interest.

All decisions relating to declarations of a potential or actual conflict of interest will be recorded by the Secretary and reported in the minutes of the meeting. The report will record:

- The nature and extent of the conflict
- An outline of the discussion
- The actions taken to manage the conflict

6. HOW THE ASSOCIATION DEALS WITH CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Where the declared matter at a meeting represents a clear and substantial conflict of interest – for example, where it is a financial interest or where a personal benefit may arise or be seen to arise, the member should offer to remove themselves from the meeting for the duration of the item.

They should only remain if the meeting decides that it is appropriate and the meeting's decision in this regard is recorded in the minutes. Where the individual is invited to remain, he or she should refrain from participating in the discussion and in any decision. If the individual is invited to participate in the discussion, this should be minuted. Actions taken to prevent any conflict of interest arising should be recorded in the minutes.

Where declarations are made regularly on an ongoing basis covering matters which are substantial or commercially sensitive, and where taking no action could create significant reputational and/or regulatory risk, the member will be required to step-down from the Board or committee.

Appendix 1:

Declaration of Interest Form

SHROPSHIRE RURAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION

DECLARATION OF INTEREST FORM

I, as a Shareholder of Shropshire Rural Housing Association Ltd, have set out below my interests in accordance with the organisation's Conflict of Interest Policy.

Category of Interest	Please give details of the interest and whether it applies to yourself or, where appropriate, a member of your immediate family, connected persons or some other close personal connection.
Current employment/self employment and any previous employment in which you continue to have financial interest.	
Membership of another Association or unregistered not for profit body with interest in the area of operation of the Association	
Tenancy of or leasehold interest in a property owned or managed by the Association	
Position of public responsibility (e.g. local Councillor, Magistrate, Tribunal member, etc.)	
Appointments (voluntary or otherwise) e.g. trusteeships, directorships, partnerships.	
Membership of any professional bodies, special interest groups or mutual support organisations, political parties, secret societies or pressure groups	
Investments in unlisted companies, partnerships and other forms of business, major shareholdings.	
Significant ownership of land and/or property in the area of operation of the Association. (i.e. ownership of land or property other than the principal home)	
Disqualification from acting as Company Director or Charity Trustee	
Gifts or hospitality offered to you by external bodies within the past 12 months, stating whether this was declined or accepted.	
Any contractual relationship with the Association	
Any other actual or potential conflicts of interest that are not covered by those listed above?	

1. To the best of my knowledge, the above information is complete and correct. I undertake to update as necessary the information provided and to review and where necessary amend the accuracy of the information on an annual basis or when a change has occurred. I give consent for the information

provided to be used for the purposes described in the conflicts of interest policy and for no other purpose without my express prior consent.

2. I confirm that to the best of my knowledge, I do not place the Association in breach of the adopted Rules of the Association. (National Housing Federation Model Rules 2015). Register Number: 21543R

Please also provide next of kin details to include name, address, contact details and relationship to you.

Signed

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Date

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Secretary

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Date

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