

# EFFINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

## STATEMENTS OF GUIDANCE AND POLICY

### 2. Acceptance of Hospitality and Gifts

These notes give guidance on how to react if an Effingham Parish Councillor or Officer is offered hospitality and/or gifts in the course of their public duties. In all such cases the test of appropriate conduct is whether a member of the public, knowing the facts, would reasonably think that the councillor or officer might have been influenced by the gift or hospitality.

#### **GUIDANCE STATEMENT**

The following statement was adopted by Effingham Parish Council at its meeting of 28 February 2012.

#### **Gifts**

- (i) Gifts, other than items of very small intrinsic value such as business diaries or calendars, should not be accepted.
- (ii) A gift which is greater than a small intrinsic value should not be accepted, or if sent by post etc. should be returned.
- (iii) Any gift that is accepted by a councillor or officer which has a value over £25 should be notified to the Clerk and any gift accepted by the Clerk of a value over £25 should be notified to the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice Chairman).

#### **Hospitality**

- (i) Attendance in an official capacity at a function organised by a public authority, public body or by a local non-profit-making organisation is acceptable.
- (ii) Limited hospitality in the form of a meal or refreshments is also a normal courtesy from a business or commercial organisation seeking or providing information etc and is acceptable. However, you must not allow such hospitality to reach a level whereby it could be seen by others to have influenced a decision.
- (iii) If you are ever in any doubt as to what is or is not acceptable in terms of hospitality, the offer should be declined.

#### **WHAT TO DO IF OFFERED A GIFT OR HOSPITALITY**

Use the test of appropriate public conduct, that is, whether a member of the public knowing the facts would reasonably think that the councillor or officer might have been influenced by the gift or hospitality. If you think this might be the case decline the gift or hospitality. If the gift is of any intrinsic value (over £25) refuse it. If offered hospitality which is disproportionate refuse it.

- The Clerk should be notified of any gifts or hospitality of over £25 in value that has been accepted by a councillor or officer.
- Any gifts or hospitality over £25 in value accepted by the Clerk should be notified to the Chairman (or in his absence the Vice Chairman) and will be registered.