

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY AND REGISTER

This document has been produced to enable Hutton Parish Council to record offers of gifts or hospitality made to councillors or staff within Hutton Parish Council.

The aim of the Gifts and Hospitality Register is to guard against the risk of allegations of impropriety of councillors or staff, however contracted, by providing a log of all such gestures, whether they are accepted or not.

Legal Responsibility & Policy Support

Under the Bribery Act 2010, it is a criminal offence for employees in an official capacity to accept any gift or consideration as an inducement or reward for:

- doing or not doing anything; or
- showing favour or disfavour to any person.

Gifts

The acceptance of gifts from interested business parties could be presented as promoting a conflict of interest that might arguably have compromised the impartiality of councillors and staff in the decisions that they were required to make.

Offers of gifts should be reported to the Clerk and if of any significant value, should be declined.

It is not possible to put forward hard and fast rules for when gifts may be accepted, since in practice this will depend upon the circumstances and business needs of individual areas of the parish council.

The general principles for the acceptance of gifts are:

- The gift must be of a nominal or notional value.
- The gift must be given for an appropriate reason.
- The gift must be given at an appropriate time (e.g. not in advance of the issuing of an opinion or determination, or in advance of the award of a contract).
- The gift must be of a “one-off” or irregular nature (i.e. that could not be viewed as a regular source of income by HMRC for personal taxation purposes).
- The details of all gifts accepted or declined should be fully recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register (see Appendix below), which will be published on Hutton Parish Councils website.

Hospitality

Councillors and staff should not encourage business contacts to provide hospitality to them, or indirectly to other colleagues, friends, or relatives. Offers of hospitality should be reported to the Clerk. Some examples of hospitality which should be refused are payments for lunch or dinner, and tickets to sporting or leisure events. In the following circumstances, it may be considered appropriate to accept a working lunch, dinner or attendance at an annual stakeholder event, where it is:

- Not lavish in nature.
- Not a frequent occurrence; and
- There is no suspicion of a conflict of interest.
- Such hospitality must be recorded in the Register. The details required in that form must be completed as fully as possible.
- Providing hospitality (working lunches, refreshments etc.)
- It is permissible to provide hospitality in the form of refreshments or working lunches for meetings with external partners such as other parish councils, associations, suppliers, or customers. However, it should be noted that alcohol should never be provided as part of a working lunch.

Appendix – Register of Gifts and Hospitality

- Date Councillor/Staff details
- Gift/Hospitality From Description/Occasion/Location
- Value
- Accepted/Declined

This policy is reviewed every two years, or earlier if required due to legislative changes or updates to best practice and submitted to full Council for approval.

This policy was adopted on 1st June 2026.