BIRSTALL NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

Management Committee Code of Conduct

Standards of conduct, integrity and accountability

Status: Draft for formal adoption by the Management Committee

Governance Document

1. Purpose and application

This Code sets the standards expected of every member of the Birstall Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee. It applies equally to the Chair, Vice-Chair, officers and all other committee members whenever they act, or could reasonably be understood to be acting, on behalf of the Forum.

Committee membership is a position of trust. Members must act in good faith, support the Forum's purposes and place the interests of the Forum and the community it represents ahead of improper personal advantage.

2. Core standards

Management Committee members must:

• act honestly, reasonably, responsibly and in the best interests of the Forum;
• treat fellow members, residents, volunteers, organisations and public bodies with dignity and respect;
• support lawful and properly made decisions of the Management Committee, while retaining the right to express disagreement through the Forum's proper processes;
• avoid behaviour that obstructs the effective operation of meetings or the work of the Forum;
• be accountable for responsibilities they accept and communicate promptly where they cannot carry them out;
• comply with the constitution, policies and formally adopted procedures of the Forum.

3. Personal interests, political activity and misuse of position

No committee member shall use, or seek to use, their position, the Forum's name, activities, membership, communications, contacts, resources or reputation primarily to secure improper personal, financial, commercial, political or other advantage for themselves or another person or organisation.

Committee membership does not prevent a member from standing for elected office, holding elected office, taking part in lawful political activity, or referring factually in their own personal or election material to their role, work, experience or achievements with the Forum. Any such reference must make clear that it is made by the individual and must not state or imply that the Forum endorses that individual, their candidacy, a political party or a political campaign unless the Forum is lawfully entitled to do so and the Management Committee has expressly authorised the statement.

The Forum itself must remain politically impartial. Forum funds, membership or subscriber data, mailing lists, official social media accounts, website, logo, letterhead, meetings, volunteer time and other official resources or channels must not be used to promote or oppose a candidate, political party or election campaign.

Members must not imply that the Forum endorses a private business, campaign, organisation, product, service or personal project unless the Management Committee has expressly authorised that endorsement or involvement.

Nothing in this section prevents a member from having employment, business, political, charitable or community interests. The requirement is that relevant interests are declared where appropriate and that Forum resources or authority are not improperly used to advance them.

4. Conflicts of interest

A member must declare any actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest as soon as it becomes apparent. The declaration should be recorded in the minutes where it relates to committee business.

• A conflicted member must not seek to influence how the Forum handles the matter.
• The Chair may require a conflicted member to withdraw from the relevant part of a meeting where appropriate.
• Where the Chair is conflicted, the Vice-Chair or another non-conflicted committee member shall manage the matter.
• Where there is uncertainty, openness and declaration should be preferred.

5. Respectful conduct and meetings

Members may disagree robustly on policy and decisions, but disagreement must not become bullying, intimidation, harassment, threats, personal abuse or persistent disruption.

Members should follow the Chair's reasonable directions concerning meeting procedure. The Chair must exercise those powers fairly and for the purpose of enabling orderly and effective discussion, not to suppress legitimate disagreement.

6. Confidentiality and information

Information identified as confidential, or which a reasonable person would understand to be confidential, must not be disclosed without authority unless disclosure is required by law. Personal data and information concerning complaints or disciplinary matters must be handled carefully and only shared with those who reasonably need it.

Members must not use confidential or privileged Forum information for personal advantage.

7. Representing the Forum

No member may present a personal view as the agreed position of the Forum. Public statements made in the Forum's name must reflect decisions properly made or authority properly delegated.

Use of the Forum's logo, mailing lists, website, social media accounts, letterhead and other official channels must be authorised and consistent with the Forum's purposes.

8. Communications and social media

Members remain entitled to personal opinions and private political or community activity. Where a member identifies themselves with the Forum, they should take reasonable care to distinguish personal views from official Forum positions.

Members must not publish confidential information, knowingly misrepresent Forum decisions, impersonate the Forum, or use official channels to pursue a personal dispute.

9. Resources, contacts and opportunities

Forum funds, equipment, databases, mailing lists, volunteer time, events and opportunities obtained through the Forum must be used for legitimate Forum purposes. A member must not divert an opportunity belonging to the Forum for improper personal gain.

10. Duty to raise concerns

Members who reasonably believe that serious misconduct, misuse of Forum resources, an undeclared conflict or other material breach has occurred should raise the matter through the Conduct & Disciplinary Procedure. Concerns should be raised in good faith and supported by relevant information where available.

Knowingly making a false or malicious allegation may itself amount to misconduct. An allegation that is not upheld is not, by itself, evidence that it was malicious.

11. Compliance and consequences

Alleged breaches will be considered under the Forum's Conduct & Disciplinary Procedure. Any action must be proportionate, procedurally fair and consistent with the powers contained in the Forum's constitution.

This Code is prospective. Conduct occurring before its adoption may provide context, but formal disciplinary sanctions under this Code should ordinarily be based on conduct occurring after adoption unless an existing constitutional or legal power separately applies.

Adoption

Adopted by the Birstall Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee on: _____

Chair: _____ Vice-Chair: _____

Review date: _____

This document should be read alongside the Forum's constitution. Where there is any conflict, the constitution and applicable law take precedence.

Adoption & Review Record

Management Committee Code of Conduct

This record confirms the formal adoption, version control and scheduled review of this governance document by the Birstall Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee.

Version number	1.1
Approval / adoption date	_____
Effective from	_____
Next review date	_____
Approved by	Birstall Neighbourhood Forum Management Committee
Chair signature	_____
Vice-Chair signature	_____