

# The Chapels Society

## *Avoidance of Conflicts of Interest: A Policy Statement*

1. As a charity, and as a custodian of members' subscriptions, the Chapels Society's officers and Council should always seek to ensure that everyone working for or on behalf of the organisation acts transparently in the Chapels Society's interest. It should always strive to avoid situations in which any conflict of interest may exist or may be *perceived* to exist.
2. The seven Nolan principles of public life (appendix A), though they apply to holders of public office, provide a sound basis on which the work of organisations such as the Chapels Society should be conducted.
3. This document sets out guidelines for the conduct of the Chapels Society's governance and activities. It seeks to influence the behaviour of all those acting for, or on behalf of, the Society.
4. The potential for a conflict of interest might arise in financial matters (for instance the Society's use of a commercial supplier who is a friend of a trustee) or in non-pecuniary matters (for instance the Society's representations in a planning application with which a member of the Society's Council is professionally involved).
5. 'Declarations of interest' should be a standing item at the start of the agenda of each meeting of the Society's Council. If any individual could be considered to have a potential interest, directly or indirectly, in any matter discussed in a meeting, the potential conflict of interest should be declared at the earliest opportunity. Such disclosure should be recorded in the minutes of any meeting. The individual concerned should not participate in the deliberation of any matter in which a clear conflict of interest is likely, and would normally leave the meeting during discussion of the matter.
6. On rare occasions, it may happen that individuals realise only after a meeting that they have participated in discussion of a matter in which they have a conflict of interest. In such circumstances, the matter must be reported to the Secretary or President at the earliest opportunity in order that it may be noted in the minutes and/or raised as a matter arising at the following meeting.
7. While acting on behalf of the Chapels Society in any capacity, each individual must declare at the earliest opportunity to any third party if a potential conflict of interest arises.
8. Particular care must be taken in all financial transactions. Authorised signatories of the Society's bank accounts should not normally sign a cheque payable to themselves or a family member.
9. These guidelines shall be reviewed regularly by the Society's Council.

## **Appendix A**

### **The Nolan Seven Principles of Public Life**

#### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

#### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### **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.

#### **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.

#### **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.

#### **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.

#### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.