STILTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Dispensation Policy

Introduction

This Dispensation Policy sets out the framework for granting dispensations to Parish Councillors under the Localism Act 2011, enabling them to participate in discussions and vote on matters where they have a disclosable pecuniary interest or other interests that would otherwise prevent them from doing so.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that decisions of the Parish Council are made in a transparent, accountable, and lawful manner, while allowing the Parish Council to function effectively.

Legal Framework

Under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011, the Parish Council may grant a dispensation to a member to allow them to participate in discussions and/or vote on matters where they have a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest.

Circumstances for Dispensation

A dispensation may be granted in the following circumstances:

- **Quorum**: Without the dispensation, the number of Councillors prohibited from participating would impede the transaction of the business (i.e., the meeting would be inquorate).
- **Fair Representation**: Granting the dispensation is in the interests of people living in the parish and ensures that their views are fairly represented.
- **Decision-Making**: The dispensation is considered necessary to enable the Council to make an informed decision, where otherwise the decision could be impeded by the number of members unable to vote.
- **Legal or Ethical Compliance**: Ensuring that the Council acts within its legal obligations or adheres to its ethical standards.
- **Other Reasons**: Any other circumstance in which the Council believes that granting the dispensation is in the best interests of the parish.

Applying for a Dispensation

Councillors who have an interest that may prevent them from participating in a discussion or vote must:

- Submit a written request for a dispensation to the Clerk as soon as possible, ideally before the meeting where the matter will be discussed.
- Clearly state the nature of the interest and the specific grounds for the dispensation as outlined in Section 4.
- The Clerk will then circulate the dispensation request to all members.

Granting a Dispensation

- **Authority**: The Parish Council will grant dispensations with the Chairman having a casting vote in the event of an equal number of votes being cast. A councillor is able to vote on their own dispensation request.

- **Consideration**: The decision to grant a dispensation will be based on the criteria set out in this policy. Each application will be considered on its merits.
- **Conditions**: A dispensation may be granted for a specific item of business or for a specific period of time, not exceeding four years.
- **Record Keeping**: All dispensations granted will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the dispensation is used and kept on record by the Clerk.

Duration and Scope of Dispensation

A dispensation can be granted for a single meeting, a specific item of business, or a fixed period (up to four years).
A dispensation only permits participation in discussions and/or voting on the specific matters outlined in the dispensation request. It does not extend to other matters unless explicitly stated.

Review and Revocation

Dispensations may be reviewed at any time and can be revoked if the circumstances under which the dispensation was granted change.
Councillors must notify the Parish Clerk immediately if they become aware of any change in circumstances that may affect their dispensation.

Compliance and Breaches

Failure to adhere to the terms of a granted dispensation, or failure to declare an interest, may result in a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct and could be subject to investigation and sanctions.

Policy Review

Reviewed: 12 May 2026
Next review date: May 2027