Selsey Community Forum
Conflicts of Interest Policy

Policy Statement

Conflicts of interest can arise in any organisation and do not necessarily indicate wrongdoing. However, they must be identified, declared and managed appropriately to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of Selsey Community Forum. A failure to identify or properly manage a conflict of interest can undermine effective decision-making, damage the Charity's reputation and, in some circumstances, result in regulatory or legal consequences.

This Policy applies where the personal, financial or other interests of a member of staff, volunteer or Trustee, or their loyalty to another person or organisation, conflict or may conflict with the interests of Selsey Community Forum. This is an unwanted circumstance as it may have heavy implications on the person's judgement and commitment to the Charity, and, by extension, to the realisation of the Charity's goals.

This Policy outlines the guidelines regarding conflict of interest and the responsibilities of everyone in resolving any such discrepancies.

Identifying Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest may be actual, potential or perceived. They may arise because of financial interests, personal relationships, employment, business interests, membership of another organisation, trusteeship of another charity, or another loyalty that could influence, or reasonably appear to influence, a person's judgement. All staff, volunteers and Trustees are expected to identify and declare conflicts as soon as they arise. If there is any doubt about whether a conflict exists, it should be declared so that it can be considered appropriately.

Scope

This Policy applies to all prospective or current members of staff, volunteers and Trustees of the Charity, as well as independent contractors and persons acting on behalf of the Charity. Trustees are subject to additional legal duties in relation to conflicts of interest and must comply with the Charity's governing document and applicable Charity Commission guidance.

Policy elements

All decisions made on behalf of Selsey Community Forum must be taken in the best interests of the Charity and must not be improperly influenced by personal, financial or other competing interests. A conflict of interest may arise where an individual's personal interests, relationships, outside activities or loyalties could affect, or reasonably appear to affect, their ability to act impartially on behalf of the Charity.

What is a conflict of interest?

A situation may take different forms that include, but are not limited to:

- Members of staff, volunteers or Trustees' ability to use their position with the Charity to their personal advantage, including
  - Direct financial gain or benefit to the individual;

  - Indirect financial gain;
  - Non-financial gain;
  - Conflict of loyalties
- Members of staff, volunteers or Trustees having a financial, employment, business or governance interest in another organisation whose interests may conflict with those of Selsey Community Forum.
- Members of staff, volunteers or Trustees using connections obtained through the Charity for their own private purposes
- Members of staff, volunteers or Trustees using Charity equipment or means to support an external business
- Members of staff, volunteers or Trustees acting in ways that may compromise the Charity's legality (such as taking bribes or bribing representatives of other organisations)

Declaring and Managing Conflicts

Any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest must be declared as soon as it arises. Trustees should also be invited to declare any relevant conflicts at the beginning of Board meetings and before discussion of any affected agenda item.

The Charity will manage conflicts in accordance with its governing document and applicable legal requirements. Depending on the circumstances, this may include the individual:
• providing relevant information about the conflict;
• withdrawing from the relevant discussion;
• not taking part in the decision or vote;
• not being counted in the quorum; or
• taking another proportionate step to remove or manage the conflict.
The nature of the conflict, how it was managed and any decision reached should be appropriately recorded.

Members of staff and volunteers should raise any actual, potential or perceived conflict with their manager or another appropriate senior person as soon as possible. Trustees must declare conflicts to the Board of Trustees, normally through the Chair or at the relevant Board meeting.

Where a conflict involves a member of staff or volunteer, the appropriate manager or senior person will determine how the conflict should be managed, seeking advice where necessary.

Where a conflict involves a Trustee, responsibility for managing the conflict rests with the Board of Trustees collectively, subject to the Charity's governing document and applicable legal requirements. A conflicted Trustee must not determine how their own conflict is managed.

In general, members of staff, volunteers and Trustees are advised to refrain from letting personal and financial interests and external activities come into opposition with the Charity's fundamental interests.

Register of Interests

Selsey Community Forum will maintain an appropriate Register of Interests. Trustees should provide relevant information on appointment and review and update their declaration at least annually and whenever circumstances change. The Register may include relevant employment, business interests, trusteeships, directorships, close personal or family interests and other matters that could give rise to a conflict of interest or conflict of loyalty.

The existence of an entry on the Register does not remove the need to declare a conflict when a specific matter arises.

Failure to Declare or Manage a Conflict

Where an employee deliberately conceals a conflict of interest, fails to comply with a reasonable instruction for managing a conflict, or acts improperly because of a conflict, the matter may be addressed under the

Charity's Disciplinary Policy and may, in serious cases, amount to gross misconduct. Concerns involving volunteers or Trustees will be considered under the Charity's applicable governance, volunteer or conduct procedures. Any action relating to a Trustee must be taken in accordance with the Charity's governing document and applicable legal requirements.

Other Matters

All staff and volunteers are to be provided with appropriate induction training and guidance on Selsey Community Forum's Policies. This Policy should be read alongside Selsey Community Forum's Staff Handbook, Trustee Code of Conduct, Anti-Fraud Policy, Gifts and Hospitality arrangements and any other relevant governance policies.

This Policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where there is a significant change in the Charity's governing document, legislation, Charity Commission guidance or organisational arrangements.

Version Control

Version Number	Date of Update	Amendments
1.0	October 2025	Policy reviewed
2.0	October 2026	Reviewed and updated in line with current guidance