



Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership Conflict of Interests Policy and Procedure

Scope

This document explains the Conflict of Interest policy in terms of

- General Principles
- Register of Interests
- Declarations of Interest at SEP Trustee meetings
- Representation
- Staff Conflict of Interest

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Confidentiality policy and the Code of Conduct for Trustees.

This policy was adopted from Churches Together in Milton Keynes.

Who it applies to

Any of the Partnership's Trustees or staff members.

Date of approval

By SEPC

Date ___23 November 2023_____

By Trustees

Date ___25 March 2024_____

Review date _October 2026_____

Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership (SEP) Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure

SEP Trustees want to prevent conflict of interest that may arise between their role as Trustees and their private or family interests or their association with other voluntary or community organisations, public authorities, commercial organisations or other bodies.

Similarly, the Trustees want to avoid any conflicts of interest that may arise for the trust staff, given that staff are or have been associated in a personal capacity with specific voluntary or community organisations, public authorities, commercial organisations or other bodies.

Conflicts of interest could include, but are not limited to:

- unfair access to information, influence, services or resources
- being a party to both sides of a contract or other agreement

Principles

- Trustees are elected, co-opted or appointed to the Trustee body to serve the interests of the trust.
- Members of the Trustee body should act in the charity's interests only and without regard to their own private interests and should not derive any personal benefit or gain from the charity.
- Organisations or bodies with which Trustees are associated should not benefit from their membership of the Board, other than the benefits that all, or significant groups of voluntary and community organisations can receive from the SEP and its work.
- Staff are employed to serve the interests of the SEP.
- Organisations and bodies with which staff members are associated in a personal capacity should not benefit from this employment, other than the benefits that all, or significant groups of voluntary and community organisations can receive from the SEP and its work.

Register of Interests

- All Trustees and staff on election, co-option or appointment are required to list in a Register all relevant interests which might influence their judgement or which could be perceived (by a reasonable member of the public) to do so.
- The Chair of the Trustees will ask all Trustees and staff to update their Register entry annually, but it is the responsibility of all Trustees and staff to notify the Chair of the Trustees of all updates as and when they arise. The Register of Interests shall be open to reasonable public inspection on application to the Chair of the Trustees.

Declarations of interest at SEP Trustee meetings

- All Trustees and staff present at a meeting (or sub-committee or working group) should make an oral declaration of any relevant interest if it relates specifically to a particular issue under consideration (and does not relate to all, or a significant group

of, voluntary and community organisations). Oral declarations should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

- If the outcome of any discussion at a Board meeting (or sub-committee or working group) could have a direct financial effect on a Trustee or on a voluntary or community organisation or other body in which the Trustee has a relevant interest (other than an interest which relates to all, or a significant group of, voluntary and community organisations), the Trustee should not participate in the discussion or determination of matters and should withdraw from the meeting. Withdrawals shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- If the outcome of any discussion at a Board meeting (or sub-committee or working group of the Board) could have a direct financial effect on a staff member or on a voluntary or community organisation or other body in which the staff member has a relevant interest (other than an interest which relates to all, or a significant group of, voluntary and community organisations), the staff member should not participate in the discussion and should withdraw from the meeting. Withdrawals shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- If a Trustee has any other interest which does not create a real danger of bias, but which might reasonably cause others to think it could influence their decision, they should declare the nature of the interest, but may remain in the room, participate in the discussion, and vote if they wish.

This paragraph does not apply to disciplinary; grievance or similar procedures as separate arrangements apply.

- The Chair of the Trustees should include in their report for each Trustees' meeting details of any contracts/agreements to be entered into prior to the next meeting of the Trustees and any potential conflicts identified from a check of the Register.

Representation

- Trustees and staff attending meetings and conferences on behalf of SEP should at all times act and speak in the best interests of SEP, following the agreed policy of SEP.
- Trustees and staff attending meetings and conferences in a personal capacity, or on behalf of a voluntary or community organisation or other body, may at times be able to usefully support the best interests of SEP. In such circumstances they should make it clear in which capacity they are acting or speaking.
- Trustees and staff who may be placed in any conflict of interest while attending meetings and conferences should discuss their concerns at the earliest possible opportunity with the Chair of Trustees

Staff Conflict of Interest

- Staff must avoid activities, investments or associations which might interfere with their independent exercise of judgement in SEP best interest. Staff must not hold formal Trustees/Management Committee/Company Director positions with related voluntary organisations, unless agreed by the Trustees of SEP.

- Staff may not accept, directly or through a member of their immediate family, any gratuitous payment, loan at other than at fair market rate, service or gift, accommodation of value from any other party doing or seeking to do business with SEP.
- All offers of gifts will be politely declined unless this is likely to cause offence. In any event, all offers of gifts, even if trivial, will be reported to the relevant officer.
- Acceptance of entertainment, travel or gift of a character which reasonably might be deemed by others to affect the judgement or actions of staff members would also violate this policy.
- Staff must devote the whole of their time attention and abilities during their hours of work to their SEP duties. Staff must not undertake, directly or indirectly, any other duties during their hours of work unless they have the previous written authority of the Chief Officer

Any exceptions, or potential exceptions, to this policy must be discussed at an appropriate meeting of the Trustees of SEP.