



MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL **GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY**

Introduction

This policy provides guidance for Councillors of Marden Parish Council (MPC) on accepting gifts and hospitality in their roles as Councillors. It also provides guidance for employees of MPC.

General Caution

Treat with extreme caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to you personally, which may possibly be perceived to be in connection with your position as a Parish Councillor.

Your personal reputation and that of MPC can be seriously jeopardized by the inappropriate acceptance by you of a gift or hospitality.

The acceptance of favours, gifts and hospitality that might be offered to you, is not always unlawful or inappropriate, but you must have regard to how it might be perceived.

Criminal Law

It is a criminal offence corruptly to solicit or receive any gift, reward or advantage as an inducement of doing, or forbearing to do anything, in respect of any transaction involving MPC.

The onus would be on you to disprove corruption in relation to a gift from a person holding or seeking to obtain a contract from MPC.

Limits of Guidance

This policy does not apply to the acceptance of facilities or hospitality provided to MPC, or gifts given to MPC that you accept on behalf of MPC and are retained by MPC.

Meanings of Gifts and Hospitality

Gifts and hospitality include, but are not limited, to:

The free gift of any goods or service;

- The opportunity to acquire any goods at a discount or terms not available to the general public;

Office Opening Times:

Mondays, Tuesdays & Fridays 10am - 12 noon

Email: clerk@mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

Website: www.mardenkent-pc.gov.uk

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- The offer of food, drink, accommodation or entertainment or the opportunity to attend any cultural or sporting event;
- Offer of favours, or the promise or implied promise of future favours, gifts or hospitality;
- Use of a free car

Common gifts include pens, diaries, calendars and other business stationery; articles of clothing; books; flower and bouquets. You should, however, be cautious when purchasing anything, when additional services, privileges or advantages are offered, which might be related to your position as a member of MPC.

Appropriate Gifts and Hospitality

There are some circumstances where you may accept gifts and hospitality as being in the normal course of your duties as a Councillor, for example:

- Small low value gifts (below £50 in value)
- Drinks and modest refreshments in connection with a meeting or socializing in the course of your work as a Parish Councillor;
- Civic hospitality provided by another public authority;
- Normal and modest refreshment in connection with any meeting in the course of your work as a Parish Councillor (eg tea, coffee, and other normal beverages and biscuits);
- Tickets for sporting, cultural and entertainment events which are sponsored or promoted by MPC and the tickets are offered in relation to that sponsorship or promotion;
- Modest meals provided as a matter of courtesy in the office of meeting place of a person with whom MPC has a business connection;
- Souvenirs and gifts from other public bodies intended as personal gifts (eg arising from twin-town and other civic events).

Principles to Apply in Relation to Gifts and Hospitality

Do not accept a gift or hospitality as an inducement or reward for anything you do as a Parish Councillor.

Do not accept a gift or hospitality of significant value or whose value is excessive in the circumstances.

Do not accept a gift or hospitality if acceptance might be open to interpretation eg from applicants for planning permission; from parties involved in competitive tendering; from applicants for grants; or from parties in legal proceedings with the Council.

Do not accept a gift or hospitality if you believe it will put you under any obligation to the provider as a consequence.

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Do not solicit any gift or hospitality and avoid giving any perception of so doing.

Registration of Gifts and Hospitality

Any member of MPC must, within 28 days of receiving any gift or hospitality over the value of £50, provide written notice to the Monitoring Officer via the Clerk, of the existence and nature of that gift or hospitality.

Whilst the notification requirement is limited to goods over £50 in value, Councillors are encouraged to give notification of any significant gift or hospitality they receive.

Reporting of Inappropriate Gifts and Hospitality Offered

It is a criminal offence for a person to offer any gift, reward or advantage as an inducement or reward to you as a Parish Councillor.

You must immediately report to the Monitoring Officer, via the Clerk any circumstances where an inappropriate gift or hospitality has been offered to you.

Adopted by Marden Parish Council on: 12th March 2024

Reviewed/Amended on: 14th January 2025

Review date: March 2026

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