

Diocesan Synod

Report Title	Code of Conduct for Synod Members, Trustees and Committee Members
Agenda Item	10
Date	1 July 2025
Purpose	To present the Code of Conduct for discussion.
Author	Tim Sweeting, Diocesan Secretary
Recommendation	That the Code of Conduct is considered and if appropriate, adopted.

Background

1. We encourage synod members, Trustees and committee members to adhere to the Nolan Principles of the Seven Standards of Public Life which form the basis for this Code of Conduct (Appendix One). We believe that this Code of Conduct builds on this and represents a powerful reminder and encouragement to us all in our calling as fellow servants of Christ and His Church. These include and encompass Christian values, selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

Introduction

2. This Code will form part of the induction pack for synod members, Trustees and committee members and will also complement the Governance Code for Larger Charities¹ which is a useful, albeit imperfect, guide to the governance of a charity as large and as unusually complex as ours, which is used by the National Church.
3. This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour which synod members, Trustees and committee members should expect of themselves, and their colleagues, in carrying out their roles in their committees and proposes some of the rules to be followed in specific circumstances.
4. Members are asked to ensure that they are familiar with the Code of Conduct and that they seek guidance from the Diocesan Secretary at an early stage if they are uncertain as to what is asked of them.

Scope

5. This Code applies to all synod members, Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance Trustees and committee members, and those working in our Diocesan synodical governance structure, including those nominated by the Bishop.

Related Policies

Declarations of Interest

6. Declarations of interest are important because they disclose context which may be relevant to the way in which the member's arguments may be heard and evaluated by other members. Trustees are asked to complete and sign a declaration of interest form each year.

Safeguarding

7. Safeguarding is at the heart of the Christian faith and is of vital importance in governance processes, decisions and relationships within the Diocese to ensure the protection and

¹ [Download the Code – Charity Governance Code](#)

dignity of all involved, and those impacted by our activities. Synod members, Trustees and committee members are expected to foster a culture of transparency, openness and ethical behaviour, supported by practice, which enables all to be safe, especially children and vulnerable adults.

Equality and Diversity

8. The Diocese encourages synod members, Trustees and committee members to lead by example in fostering an environment that values different perspectives and experiences, including by demonstrating respect for others without prejudice, and valuing diversity.

Conduct of Trustee and Committee Meetings

9. Meetings allow for debate and discussion, and views may be expressed with which others disagree or by which they may be offended. However, when speaking on controversial matters, members are urged to express themselves responsibly, being aware of how their views may be received by others. In particular, members are reminded that they should not use abusive, insulting or demeaning language or make personal remarks about other members. The Chair has a right to call a member to order and can prevent them from speaking should they use 'unbecoming language'.
10. The Diocese urges members to use the same level of consideration when commenting on social media or via electronic means as they would do at a meeting.

Relationships between different constituent parts of the synodical governance structure

10. Ensuring that synodical governance is upheld with unity of purpose across the bodies under synodical oversight is the responsibility of the Diocesan Secretary guided by the Bishop as President of Diocesan Synod. In doing so the Diocesan Secretary works collaboratively to enable meetings in the governance structure to be conducted in a manner that is fruitful, expeditious and worthy of the Vision that we share.
11. The Diocesan Bishop and Diocesan Secretary reserve the right to exceptionally cancel or postpone meetings where good relationships between parts of the diocesan governance structure are at risk, so that further attempts can be made to resolve the issues.

Treatment of the Parish Support Team

12. The effectiveness of the Diocese turns partly on the way that members and Parish Support Team colleagues work together. Members and staff have a shared responsibility to behave towards each other in a professional and respectful manner. Appendix Two shows the Parish Support Team's Ethos, Values and Principles.
13. As an employer, the Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance (NDBF) has a legal duty of care to ensure that all its staff are safe and are treated with courtesy, dignity and respect, and members are encouraged to support this in all interactions.
14. Equally, members should at any time feel at liberty to contact the Diocesan Secretary, who is operationally the Chief Executive, if they believe that a member of the staff team has not treated them with courtesy, dignity and respect. Trustees may contact the Diocesan Bishop direct regarding any concerns they have in this regard in relation to the Diocesan Secretary.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

15. If any member believes that another member has acted in a way that conflicts with this Code of Conduct, they are encouraged in the first instance to speak directly to their brother or sister in Christ. If a member continues to act in such a manner, this should be referred to the Diocesan Secretary who will consult the Diocesan Bishop if it is considered appropriate. The Diocesan Secretary may choose to write to members if this Code is considered to have been breached, with a request that the member ceases to do so in future.

Appendix One

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

1.1 Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

1.2 Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

1.3 Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

1.4 Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

1.5 Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

1.6 Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

1.7 Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix Two

PARISH SUPPORT TEAM ETHOS, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Our **vision**, as part of the Diocese of Norwich, is to see people Transformed by Christ: Prayerful, Pastoral and Prophetic.

Our **core purpose** is to serve the local parish mission and ministry of Church of England churches, schools and chaplaincies across Norfolk and Waveney.

The Parish Support Team plays a key role in enabling the national, diocesan and local aspirations and vocation of the Church of England.

Our ethos

- We seek to follow Jesus' example in all of our values and behaviours, setting high standards for our service to, and treatment of, others.
- We seek to gather Christians (with people of other faiths and none) in working together to further the Christian mission and ministry of the Church of England.
- We seek to celebrate the importance of the Christian faith in people's lives and actively promote it in all our activities, while valuing those in our team who do not share these beliefs.
- We seek to be an inclusive team where all feel part of supporting our core purpose and are known and accepted for who they are and what they contribute.

Our values

- **Kindness** - we are considerate, compassionate, and empathetic towards each other and those we serve. We are understanding, promoting a positive, inclusive, and respectful environment that fosters strong relationships. We encourage and support one another, creating a sense of community and belonging.
- **Commitment** - we are committed to our purpose and work with dedication and loyalty. We embody a sense of responsibility and perseverance, following through on our promises and obligations. We stay focused on our goals, even in challenging circumstances.
- **Collaboration** - we work together with churches, schools, and chaplaincies to achieve their goals. We foster great teamwork, open communication, and the sharing of ideas and resources. We harness the strengths of the whole team, which leads to innovative solutions and great outcomes.

Our principles

- **Safe** – we work to ensure the safety of all those involved in the church, seeking to create a culture of openness, transparency and accountability.
- **Local** – we encourage activity to happen at the most local level where mission impact and efficiency can be maximised.
- **Democratic** - we actively support the voice of those in our parishes in the decision-making structures of the Church of England, within the context of being episcopally led and synodically governed.
- **Value for money** – we are thankful that much of our income as a diocese comes from the generous giving of those in our churches. Our diligent investment and careful expenditure reflects our appreciation of this.