



DISPENSATION POLICY 2026

Dispensation Policy

1 Introduction

Coveney Parish Council is responsible for determining requests for a dispensation by a Councillor under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011. The Parish Council is a “relevant Authority” under Section 27 (6)(d) of the Act.

This Policy explains the:

- a) purpose and effect of dispensations;
- b) terms of dispensations.
- c) procedure for requesting dispensations;
- d) procedure for considering dispensation requests;
- e) criteria which are applied in determining dispensation requests; and
- f) use of delegated authority to grant dispensations.

2 Purpose and Effect of Dispensations

In certain circumstances Councillors may be granted a dispensation which enables them to take part in Council business where this would otherwise be prohibited because they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Non-Registerable Interest. Provided that Councillors act within the terms of their dispensation, there is deemed to be no breach of the Councillor Code of Conduct or the law.

Section 31(4) of the Localism Act 2011 states that dispensations may allow the Councillor:

- a) to participate, or participate further, in any discussion of the matter at the meeting(s); and/or
- b) to participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on the matter at the meeting(s).

If a dispensation is granted, the Councillor may remain in the room where the meeting considering the business is being held.

Please note: If a Councillor participates in a meeting or votes on a matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and they do not have a dispensation, they may be committing a criminal offence under Section 34 of the Localism Act 2011.

3 Terms of Dispensations

Dispensations may be granted for:

- a) one or more meeting(s) of the Council, its Committees or Sub-Committees; or
- b) an agreed period not exceeding four years.

They may be granted for participation in a discussion only or for participation in a discussion and a vote.

4 Procedure for Requesting Dispensations

Any Councillor who wishes to apply for a dispensation must do so in writing. A template Dispensation Request Form is appended to this Policy.

The request must be submitted to the Parish Clerk as soon as possible before the meeting at which the dispensation is required.

Applications may also be made at a Full Council meeting, before commencement of the business to which the dispensation relates.

A Councillor who has been granted a dispensation must declare the existence and nature of the dispensation before the commencement of any business to which it relates.

5 Procedure for Consideration of Dispensation Requests

The Parish Council may grant a dispensation to a Councillor who has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Non-Registerable Interest to participate in the discussion of a matter at a meeting and/or to participate in any vote on the matter if they consider that:

- a) so many members of the decision-making body have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest that it would impede the transaction of the business (i.e. the meeting would be inquorate);
- b) the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the parish; or
- c) it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

A decision as to whether to grant a dispensation shall be made by a meeting of the Council, or Committee or Sub-Committee, for which the dispensation is required and that decision is final.

A dispensation request shall be considered before the meeting or, if this is not possible, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.

There will be a standing item on the Full Council agenda to consider dispensation requests.

The Councillor requesting the dispensation may participate in the discussion of the request at the meeting.

The Minute of the decision must include reference to Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 and the length of time of any dispensation granted.

The Councillor will receive confirmation of the Council's decision in writing.

The Monitoring Officer shall be notified of dispensations awarded and a copy of the application filed with the Councillor's Register of Interests.

6 Criteria for Determination of Requests

In reaching a decision on a request for a dispensation the Council will take into account:

- a) the nature of the Councillor's interest;
- b) the need to maintain public confidence in the conduct of the Council's business;

- c) the need for efficient and effective conduct of the Council's business; and
- d) any other relevant circumstances.

7 Delegated Authority to Grant a Dispensation at Committee Meetings

If the number of Members declaring an interest in an item during a Committee meeting of the Council would result in the meeting becoming inquorate, the Parish Clerk (or their nominee) has delegated authority to grant a dispensation to as many Councillors as necessary to enable the business to be transacted.

The Parish Clerk (or their nominee) shall award a dispensation to the Councillor who, in their opinion, has the least interest and their decision shall be final. This process shall continue until the meeting is quorate.

8 Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually and amended as necessary to reflect best practice.

COVENEY PARISH COUNCIL

DISPENSATION REQUEST FORM

Please complete all sections of the form, giving full details in support of your application. If you need help completing this form, contact the Parish Clerk.

Your name	
The business for which you require a dispensation (refer to meeting date(s) and/or agenda item number(s) if appropriate)	
Details of your interest in that business	
Date(s) of meeting(s) or time period (up to 4 years) for which dispensation is sought	
Dispensation requested to participate, or participate further, in any discussion of that business by that body	Yes / No
Dispensation requested to participate in any vote, or further vote, taken on that business by that body	Yes / No
Reason(s) for dispensation (indicate all that apply): a) Without the dispensation the number of persons unable to participate in the transaction of business would be so great as to impede the transaction of the business. b) The dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Council's area. c) It is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation (give details).	

Signed: Dated:

DECISION:	
Dispensation Granted: YES / NO	Length of Dispensation:
Date:	Minute Number:
Signed:	Parish Clerk