

# Otter Vale Mission Community

## Conflict of Interest policy

The Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) of the Otter Vale Mission Community (OVMC) are all individual charities and the individual members of the PCC are all charity trustees under a legal obligation to act in its best interests. The OVMC churches do not, however, operate in a vacuum and form an integral part of the life of the community. This can give rise to conflicts of interest for individual members of the PCC.

A conflict of interest is any situation in which a member's personal interests or loyalties could prevent, or could be seen to prevent, the member from making a decision only in the best interests of the PCC.

Examples of conflicts of interest (though this list is not exhaustive) include:

- A PCC member who owns, has shares in or is employed by a business that may be awarded a contract to do work or provide services for the organisation
- A PCC member who is employed by the PCC, or supplies goods and services to the church (i.e. the charity) in exchange for payment
- A PCC member who is also a user of a church facility, who must decide whether fees from users should be increased
- A PCC member whose spouse is on the committee of another organisation that is competing for the same funding.

Such conflicts may create problems; they can:

- inhibit free discussion
- result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of the church and
- risk the impression that the PCC has acted improperly.

This policy applies to all members of the PCCs, the Standing Committees and any other committees or working parties set up by the PCCs of the OVMC.

1. Any conflicts of interest must be declared to the Chair of the meeting as soon as the agenda is circulated. They must also be declared at the meeting when the relevant agenda item is reached.
2. The PCC member concerned must withdraw from the meeting for that item and not take part in any discussions relating to it.
3. Where a conflict of loyalty arises, the PCC will consider what level of participation, if any, is acceptable on the part of the conflicted member, having regard to the duty to act in the best interests of the PCC. However, the normal expectation will be that the conflicted member should withdraw from the meeting during discussion of the item of business in question.
4. The existence of a conflict of interest must be recorded in the minutes, together with the decision as to how it should be dealt with.