

NORTH EAST KITE FLYERS

CODE OF CONDUCT

North East Kite Fliers is an open group whose main aim is to promote the hobby of kite building and kite flying in the North East of England.

It welcomes anyone to join in their activities regardless of age or experience, and caters for everyone from the absolute beginner up to the most experienced kite flyer. The members meet regularly at venues around the North East of England to fly kites. They also run workshops in kite making to help people get into the hobby or to extend their skills and where members share their knowledge and expertise in a friendly atmosphere.

The group offers its services to put on static and flying displays at public events.

It is also the home of the European Air gallery

Kiting is a rapidly growing hobby that combines the best of creative arts and crafts with an environmentally friendly outdoor activity.

It is in the interest of the club to develop some ground rules of acceptable behaviour, not in an attempt to stifle debate and deny individuals an option but in order to manage the process and ensure that decisions can actually be made. These rules about how to behave are called a **code of conduct**.

It is the responsibility of all individuals operating within the North East Kite Flyers framework, whether Committee, member, statutory, private or voluntary sectors, to work together to **actively** promote appropriate behaviour at all times. The Code therefore applies to everyone and is not just about controlling the behaviour of the club and committee members.

It is important to remember that the conduct of all representatives of the club affects the public's and organisations perception of their reputation, standing and effectiveness in managing the money, assets and events in their control.

1. Introduction

- This code is intended as a guide, to indicate the standards of conduct and accountability, which are expected of the Committee, and other members and individuals involved with the North East Kite Flyers.

- The code is designed to assist the club as a whole, and all associated groups, to function efficiently, and to understand what conduct is expected of individuals when they are operating as representatives of the club at *meetings events and activities which takes place under the auspices of the club.

This Code has been developed in line with the **NOLAN PRINCIPLES** outlined below and seeking to recognize that:

1. Any club is made up of a diverse set of individuals with varying and sometimes **conflicting** interests, motivations, expectations and characters.
2. Any club is made up of a diverse set of individuals with varying, but potentially **similar** interests, motivations, expectations and characters.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends,

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Governance

The code should not be confused with any technical procedures such as the (code of practice for safe kite flying) or procedures for the operation of the club covering areas such as eligibility for committee membership, quorum and other governance detail covered in the club constitution.

2. Equal Opportunities:

Individuals must not discriminate against people they come into contact with during their work with, or on behalf of, The North East Kite Fliers on the basis of their ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, religion, disability or age.

All individuals will be expected to comply with Equal Opportunities legislation and the agreed Equal Opportunities policy of the North East Kite Fliers.

We are all different and it is expected that this diversity will be respected and welcomed.

In all the clubs work this will be demonstrated by:

- Not making **assumptions** about a person or group of people
- Not making **judgements** about a person or group of people
- Not **discriminating** against any person or group of people on the basis of their ethnic origin, gender, religion, sexuality, disability or age.

Behaviour

During Meetings

Some of the work of the North East Kite Fliers will be undertaken at meetings, small and large. The effectiveness of these meetings is critical because they will be:

- The principle decision making tool of the club
- The principle method of the wider community and partner involvement

The behaviour of the participants at a meeting is important to the success of the meeting. Many people lack the confidence to express themselves fully in a meeting with other people, whereas some find it all too easy to dominate.

Effective meetings can be achieved if all individuals are committed to some simple ground rules for behaviour before and during meetings.

- Individuals have a responsibility to be properly prepared for meetings by reading the paperwork beforehand and by committing themselves to attending meetings as required.
- Individual and personal disputes should not be allowed to affect conduct within the meeting but should be resolved elsewhere.
- All contributions should be addressed to the meeting via the Chair. Individuals wishing to speak should seek the attention of the Chair and wait their turn to speak only when directed by the Chair.
- Individuals should not have meetings within meetings by discussing issues with other individuals or groups of individuals when another person has been directed by the Chair to speak. All comments and queries should be directed to the whole meeting via the Chair.
- Individuals should respect the contributions of others by not interrupting when someone is speaking even when you may not agree with what they are saying.
- In contributing to the meeting individuals will ensure that comments they make do not amount to a personal attack on another individual and should avoid using heated, emotional and value loaded language and behaviour.
- Individuals should be constantly aware in their remarks of their equal opportunities responsibilities and avoid the use of potentially offensive language and comments.
- Individuals should above all remember that club work means not always getting the decision **you** want and accepting the responsibility of abiding by majority Decisions.

It is very important that decisions taken in meetings are well informed by having appropriate, accurate information and debate on the topics concerned. The Members and wider community must be able to feel that decisions particularly those affecting the spending of club funds, are fair and have not been influenced by the vested interests of those making the decisions or based on misinformation. For this reason one of the most important areas of appropriate behaviour during meetings, in addition to the above, relates to declaration of interest.

Declarations of interest

At the beginning of a meeting the chair will ask individuals in attendance to declare whether they have any personal financial or other material interest in any item on the

agenda (More detailed information about what kinds of areas may constitute a conflict of interest and need to be declared is covered in a separate section below). The Chair and the other voting members of the meeting will then decide whether individuals declaring an interest must leave the meeting for the relevant item or just not take part in the discussion or decision making.

3.2 Outside Meetings

It is just as important that individuals conduct themselves appropriately outside of official meetings since they will be seen as representatives of the club and its views in a number of other circumstances involving non club meetings. Some of the issues to consider are outlined below.

Confidentiality

Club meetings may occasionally receive information, which is not in the public domain often relating to individuals, organisations or financial matters. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that this information remains confidential to the meeting unless prior authorization has been given by the Chair for this to be discussed elsewhere. Individuals must never use confidential information for their personal advantage or the advantage or disadvantage of anyone known to them or to disadvantage or discredit the Club.

Collective Decisions

Individuals will inevitably have differences of opinion on issues debated at meetings. After full discussion when the meeting has reached a conclusion all individuals must uphold this decision whether they voted for it or against it. Speaking against agreed decisions in public will only serve to undermine the club and individuals have a responsibility to stand by the collective decisions of the club and to present a united front.

Communications with other agencies

There will be occasions when individuals will be asked to, or wish to communicate with external agencies e.g. Councils, funding bodies, event organizers, press etc. In order to ensure that they are fully apprised of the latest information and that communications are consistent throughout the club this should be done through the Chair/Secretary.

Hospitality and Gifts

Individuals must declare any gifts or hospitality they are offered in connection with their role within the club to the Secretary/ Chair. Anything, which could be construed as a means of influencing the way in which decisions of the club are made should be refused. Advice should be sought from the Secretary/Chair if in doubt before accepting.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Some issues of behaviour and conduct relate to a lack of understanding of the various roles and responsibilities of the different individuals within which the club operates.

Chair

This is a key role within the club and the individual plays an important role in the management of meetings and the conduct of the individuals representing the club. Their responsibilities in relation to this issue include:

- Keeping order and making sure that the agreed rules of conduct are followed
- Minimising any sense of confusion and frustration by ensuring that the agenda is properly covered, that jargon is not used or is explained and that individuals understand the debate and what decisions are required and why.
- Making sure that everyone who wants to contribute is encouraged to do so.
- Summarising the decisions taken and the action points which arise from this.
- Acting as an independent referee when required.

Secretary

The secretary is responsible for accurate minutes of meetings. The secretary will dealing with correspondence on behalf of the club. The secretary is authorized to locate, book appropriate club events and produce an events list for the members

Treasurer

The treasurer must keep up to date accurate accounts, which shall be available for reasonable inspection. Maintain an up to date membership list. Bank any monies on behalf of the club and raise cheques for prompt payments on behalf of the club

Committee Members

The Committee's function is to decide the strategy, policies and overall direction of the club for the benefit of its members.

Webmaster/newsletter editor

The webmaster will maintain and manage the club website on behalf of the club. The newsletter editor will produce a quarterly newsletter on behalf of the club. Both mediums will comply with the code with any potentially sensitive issues referred to the committee members for approval.

Custodians

The custodians are responsible for the safe keeping of the articles of the club, the air gallery, tea tents and boiler etc. the custodians must ensure the items are available for club meetings if required.

BKFA Representative

The BKFA representative will be a NEKF club member. They will attend BKFA meetings and give a report to the committee of the meetings they attend. This shall be made available to club members.

Club members

The club members must ensure they are fully paid up and act in accordance with the code.

5. Conflict of Interest

It is a requirement within most funding agreements that there is a formal written procedure for the avoidance of conflicts of interest. This covers committee members, partners and persons connected with the same household.

It is acknowledged that all those involved in the club will, due to its nature, have an interest of some sort. Such interests must not be allowed to result in actual or perceived undue benefit or conflict and to unsound decision-making.

Where a conflict of interest exists or potentially exists a declaration of interest should be made to the chair of the meeting as outlined above in the meeting behaviours section. The types of conflict include:

- Where an individual or a connected person stands to gain financially from a club decision. Any interest of the individual or a member of the household or a related company or organisation etc would be covered by this **Pecuniary Interests** category. For example where a project approval or decision on a letting of a contract would benefit an individual directly or an organisation or company the individual was involved with. This would also apply if a member of the individual's household would benefit or if they were similarly involved with an organisation or company who would benefit.
- Many individuals wear more than one hat i.e. some residents in decision-making positions will also be employees of potential beneficiaries and some committee members will be employees of partner organisations bidding for funds or contracts etc.

This can seem a confusing area for those not used to operating within these types of guidelines and if in doubt as to whether a potential conflict of interest exists this should be clarified with the Secretary or Chair either before or during the relevant meeting.

6. Breaches of the Code

It is always preferable for breaches of the code to be dealt with in a timely manner.

Where this occurs during a meeting:

- Participants should raise breaches of the code as a point of order through the chair
- If the chair agrees that a breach has taken place, a first oral warning will be issued to the person concerned. This will be noted in the Minutes.
- If an individual breaches the code for a second time they will be asked to leave the meeting. This will be noted in the minutes, explaining briefly the reasons for the exclusion from the meeting.
- Following exclusion from the meeting the Chair will arrange a meeting of the committee to discuss the breach. The committee will meet within 14 working days of the original meeting.
- The meeting will decide whether it is appropriate for the individual to attend any committee meetings or events or fly ins during this review period depending on the nature of the complaint.
- A copy of the complaint will be sent to the individual and any other committee members 7 days before the review meeting.
- The committee will allow the individual to attend the meeting and to speak in reply to the complaint.
- If it is agreed that the code has been breached then the appropriate sanctions will be taken. The committee are authorized to give:
 - A written warning concerning future conduct.
 - A fixed term suspension from involvement in specific/all meetings of the committee.
 - A permanent expulsion from the club. A report will be taken to the AGM. This process will take into account any other relevant requirements regarding suspension/expulsion as contained in the club constitution.

There will be no right to appeal unless included in other governance agreements.

Where a breach in the code takes place outside the meeting then complaints must in the first instance be made in writing to the Chair of the Club. The Chair and Secretary will then, in consultation decide whether to convene a committee meeting to investigate as outlined above. The letter and decision will be notified to the committee.

***A meeting is the committee meetings or a gathering of two or more people. A Fly in or kite event is a meeting .**