



## Conflicts of Interest Policy

This policy applies to all Elders/Trustees at Bolton Villas *Family Church* in Bradford.

### Why we have a policy

The Elders/Trustees have a legal obligation (sometimes called a “fiduciary duty”) to act in the best interests of Bolton Villas *Family Church* and in accordance with its governing document/constitution.

Trustees must make decisions based only on what is best for Bolton Villas *Family Church*. Conflicts may arise where a Trustee’s personal or family interests or employment and/or loyalties to some other individual or group conflict with those of Bolton Villas *Family Church*.

Such conflicts may create problems. They can:

- inhibit free discussion
- result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of Bolton Villas *Family Church*.
- risk the impression that Bolton Villas *Family Church* has acted improperly.

The purpose of this policy is to protect both Bolton Villas *Family Church* and its Trustees from these things.

### Types of Interest which May Give Rise to Conflict

#### *Financial Benefits or Interests*

**Direct financial benefits** or interests include, for example, decisions around employment of Trustees as staff, consultant or advisor, or a situation where a company of which a Trustee is a director or shareholder, may be considered for a contract by the church.

Other matters of financial interest include the sale of land, the use of a Trustee’s property by the church, or granting of loans by the Trustees to the church. Conflicts of interest in such cases are particularly serious and any financial benefit requires authorisation, usually by the Charity Commission.

**Indirect financial interests** may arise where such potential financial benefits accrue to a close member of the Trustee’s family, or even a friend, business partner or colleague.

Not all benefits enjoyed by Trustees need to be authorised by the governing document/constitution, the Charity Commission or the Courts. It is perfectly acceptable to repay reasonable out of pocket expenses to Trustees. Any costs that are necessary to allow a Trustee to carry out his or her duties as a Trustee can be classed as expenses and recovered from the charity or met directly by the charity. Benefits that are available to all, or that are of inconsequential or little measurable value, will not normally need to be authorised.

## *Conflicts of Loyalties*

This is when another appointment or employment or association (of the Trustee or of a close relative or friend) may potentially influence the decisions of the Trustee in directions which may not be in the best interest of Bolton Villas *Family Church*. It is expected that other charity roles, particularly as Trustee or employee, should be declared.

Ultimately, it is not possible to define all the circumstances which may lead to a potential conflict of interest. It is the responsibility of each individual Trustee to declare any matters which he or she feels may present actual or potential conflicts, or the perception of such conflicts. If in doubt, it is better to make a declaration so that any potential conflict can be managed appropriately.

## **Disclosing on-going conflicts of interest**

Each year every Trustee will make a related party disclosure (see appendix 1), such as relationships, and posts held, that could potentially result in a conflict of interest. This written disclosure will be kept on file.

## **Handling conflicts of interests**

The declaration of conflicts of interest will be a standing item on the agenda of Elders (Trustees) meetings, encouraging Trustees to consider whether any items on the agenda where there may be a conflict between the organisations' best interests and the Trustee's best interests or a conflict between the best interests of two organisations that the Trustee is involved with.

All conflicts of interest, whether actual or potential, should be declared promptly at the earliest possible opportunity:

- Any Trustee who has a financial interest in a matter under discussion must declare the nature of their interest and withdraw from the discussion.
- If a Trustee has any interest in the matter under discussion, which creates a real danger of bias, that is, the interest affects the organisation which they represent, or a member of their household, more than the generality affected by the decision, they should declare the nature of the interest and withdraw from the discussion.
- If a Trustee has any other interest which does not create a real danger of bias, but which might reasonably cause others to think it could influence their decision, they should declare the nature of the interest, but may, if this is acceptable to the chair of the meeting, remain in the room, participate in the discussion, and vote if they wish.

If in doubt, the potential conflict must be declared anyway and clarification sought. Records will be kept of all such discussions.

All matters related to the employment of staff, some of whom are also Trustees, will be dealt with by the remaining Trustees without the employee being present. The committee will not include any staff or connected persons. Trustees who are staff, or who are closely related to staff, must not seek to influence discussions of the employment committee in any way.

## **Data Protection**

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the General Data Protection Regulations. Data will be processed only to ensure that Trustees act in the best interests of Bolton Villas *Family Church*. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

<b>Policy Approved By</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Next Review date</b>
Elders' Meeting	7 <sup>th</sup> August 2025	October 2026



## APPENDIX 1

### Related Party Disclosure: Year \_\_\_\_\_

1. Except for matters listed below, I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I, or any relative\*\*, have no personal, material or pecuniary interest, direct or indirect, in any contract affecting Bolton Villas United Reformed Church charity, also known as Bolton Villas *Family Church*, or any firm or company supplying goods or services to the Trust.

Exceptions referred to above are:

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2. In the event that I have a direct or indirect financial interest in a contract or other matter at some future date, I confirm that I shall disclose such interests to the Church Secretary when it is considered and that I shall withdraw, if requested to do so, from any discussion or vote.

3. I confirm that I shall not accept any offer, gift, favour, or hospitality on a personal level from any organisation providing, or seeking to provide, goods or services to the Church.

Signed:

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Elder/Trustee

Print Name:

Date:

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**NOTE:** \*\* "relative" may be a child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, brother, sister, spouse, or civil partner of the Elder/Trustee or any person living with the Elder/Trustee or his or her partner.