

## Members' Interests Quiz

1. You have just won the lottery and bought a flat in London. You know that land ownership is one of the statutory Disclosable Pecuniary Interests. What should you do?
  - a. Declare this on your Members Interest Form
  - b. Do nothing
  - c. Declare it at the next Council meeting
  
2. You have just accepted a new job. You previously worked in Wokingham where you were an accountant, but after endless arguing about the Council's budget, you never want to see another budget again. Your job will be based in Reading working in John Lewis's flooring department. Which one of these options is correct?
  - a. Do nothing. You are still a qualified accountant so really nothing has changed
  - b. Change your Member's interest form, under 'Employment' to say that you work for John Lewis as a floor adviser
  - c. Tell the Leader
  
3. You are a Member of the Planning Committee. One of the applications on the Agenda is an application submitted by your partner, who owns the land. You are worried he may not get permission and you are therefore reluctant to declare an interest. What is the right thing to do?
  - a. Do nothing, you registered your partner's land interest on the form so that should be enough, you feel that you don't need to declare the interest. You can vote on the matter
  - b. You have a think about it whilst the application is being discussed, and stay in the room. Just as the Chairman asks for the vote, you ask for the matter to be put on hold whilst you ask the Council's legal adviser what you should do.
  - c. You declare the interest when the Chairman asks, at the very beginning of the Planning Committee meeting. Just before the item is discussed, you leave the room until the vote has been taken.
  
4. You have just entered into a licence agreement to occupy business premises, for six months. Which one of the following should you do?
  - a. Declare it on your Member's interest form under 'licences'.
  - b. Do nothing, as it's only a temporary arrangement
  - c. Make a note to declare it on next year's Related Party Transaction form.
  
5. You had a contract with Wokingham Borough Council to supply them with all the paper for their Agendas, but the contract ended two years ago when there was a move to paperless Agendas. You know that contracts with WBC should be declared. Which is the right thing to do?
  - a. Declare it at the next Council meeting as you are fairly sure they are using your paper for the Agenda

- b. Do nothing
  - c. Declare it on your Member's Interest form.
6. You are employed by Microsoft in the United States. You know that the law with regard to declaring any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain is required by a law of the United Kingdom. What should you do?
- a. You do nothing. You are not employed by Microsoft UK, but by Microsoft USA. This is outside the United Kingdom and therefore you presume that it isn't a DPI.
  - b. You declare it as a DPI under 'employment' just in case.
  - c. You declare it under part 2 of the Members interest form, as a 'Pecuniary Interest and other personal interest'.
7. You are a member of your local church. You have done a great deal of work for the Church, and this involves collecting money for various charitable causes. You wonder if this is an interest that needs to be declared. What do you do?
- a. Do nothing.
  - b. You register it as a DPI under employment. You don't get paid, but the Church receives money for charity as a result of your work.
  - c. You register it under 'Membership of Other Bodies' in the Members Interest form because of the Charity work.
8. You are a Member of the Planning Committee and your vet has an application to build an addition to his practice. You have very healthy pets and last saw him 2 years ago. What sort of interest should you declare, if any?
- a. A personal interest which is also pecuniary
  - b. No interest
  - c. A disclosable pecuniary interest
9. As luck would have it, at the very same Planning Committee, your dentist has an application on the Agenda. You are very good friends with your dentist, you are Godmother to his daughter and you share family holidays. What sort of interest should you declare?
- a. A personal interest which is also pecuniary
  - b. No interest
  - c. A disclosable pecuniary interest
10. You are at a Council meeting ready to vote on all Members allowances. It is obviously something on which all of you will get paid, but you don't see anyone declaring an interest. You are worried. What do you do?
- a. You do nothing, no one else is, and you don't like to ask the Monitoring Officer as he looks busy.
  - b. You stand up and declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest while staring pointedly at the other members to do so.
  - c. You decide to run off to the pub just before the discussion on the matter.

Answers:

1. b. Do nothing. You are only required to disclose land which is situated in the area of your authority.
2. b. You need to change your members interests form within 28 days of starting your employment. (s31(7) Localism Act) Under s34(1) a person commits an offence if he or she does not comply with s31(7).
3. c. You must declare the interest when the Chairman asks if there are any interests to declare, or, as soon as you are aware of the interest. It is an offence under s34(1)b) to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter where you have a DPI. If you therefore choose a or b, you are at risk of criminal sanction.
4. a. Declare it on your Member's interest form under 'licenses'. This is one of the DPIs. Information on the Related Party Transaction form is required under a different law, and for different reasons.
5. b. Do nothing. The DPI for contracts only applies to contracts which are not 'fully discharged', in other words, if the contract has not run its course.
6. b. The regulations with regard to 'any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain' do not differentiate between employment in this country or outside the UK, so any employment must be registered as a DPI. You will risk prosecution if this is not done under 30(1) of the Localism Act.
7. a. Do nothing. The church's primary object is for worship, and not for charitable purposes, so you don't need to register it under 'Membership of Other Bodies'. There isn't an issue either with regard to employment, as you are not paid by the church for this work.
8. b. Strictly, you don't need to do anything because you do not have a close association with the vet. He is not therefore a 'relevant person' See clause 9.2.14.2. However, most members feel more comfortable with volunteering to declare this as a personal interest with the caveat that they last saw their vet 2 years ago. It would not be a pecuniary interest that would necessitate you leaving the room and taking no part in the discussion or vote.
9. a. This is a personal interest because he is a person with whom you have a close association (see rule 9.2.14.3). In addition, under 9.2.15.1 you would have a pecuniary interest because it would be reasonable for a member of the public to think that this close association would be likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest, and that the decision on the application would affect his financial position. You should

therefore declare the interest and leave the room when the matter is discussed and a vote taken.

10. a. You don't need to do anything, as Members Allowances are not for profit or gain. Allowances for members are expressly excluded in rule 9.2.15.4d). However, do ask the Monitoring Officer, he is never too busy to answer questions about interests.