Conflict of Interest Policy for Prestbury Hall.

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the commitment of Prestbury Hall managed by Prestbury Hall Users Group, to managing conflicts of interest. As a charity with a turnover under £20,000, we aim for transparency and accountability, ensuring that decisions are made in the best interests of the charity and the community it serves.

2. What is a Conflict of Interest?

A conflict of interest arises when a trustee's personal interests or loyalties could, or could be seen to, influence their decisions or actions as a trustee, potentially preventing them from acting solely in the best interests of the charity. This includes:

- **Direct Financial Interest:** A trustee (or their family member/close associate) stands to gain financially from a decision made by the charity (e.g., awarding a contract to their own company).
- **Indirect Financial Interest:** A trustee has a financial interest in an organisation that may benefit from a decision made by the charity (e.g., the trustee is a shareholder in a company that supplies services to the hall).
- **Non-Financial Interest:** A trustee has a personal interest that could influence their decision-making (e.g., a trustee wants to hire the hall for a family event at a discounted rate).
- **Perceived Conflict:** Even if there is no actual conflict, a situation could be perceived as a conflict by others, which can damage the charity's reputation.

3. Trustee Responsibilities

- **Declaration of Interests:** Individual Trustees must declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest to the Trustees as soon as they become aware of them. This includes both personal and business interests.
- **Register of Interests:** The charity will maintain a register of trustees' interests, which will be reviewed and updated regularly.
- **Withdrawal from Discussions:** Trustees must withdraw from any discussions or decisions where they have a conflict of interest. They should not attempt to influence the outcome of the decision.
- **Seeking Advice:** If unsure whether a conflict exists, trustees should seek advice from the Chair or another independent trustee.

- **Objective Decision-Making:** The Trustees will make decisions objectively, considering all relevant information and prioritizing the best interests of the charity.
- **Recording Decisions:** The Trustees will keep a record of decisions made, including any declarations of interest and how conflicts were managed.
- **Transparency:** The charity will be open and transparent about how it manages conflicts of interest.

4. Managing Conflicts of Interest

- **Avoidance:** The best way to manage a conflict is to avoid it altogether. If a potential conflict is identified, the trustee should not participate in the relevant decision-making process.
- **Disclosure:** If avoidance is not possible, the trustee must declare the conflict to the Trustees. The Committee will then decide how to proceed, which may involve:
    - Excluding the trustee from the discussion and decision.
    - Seeking independent advice.
    - Putting in place safeguards to ensure the decision is objective and fair.

5. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently if required by changes in legislation or charity best practice.

This policy aims to maintain public trust and ensure that all decisions are made in the best interests of Prestbury Hall and the community it serves.

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