



Conflict of Interest Policy

This Policy is effective from September 2020 and applies to Trustees and senior staff of The Canon Collins Trust (the "Trust").

Why we have a Policy

Trustees have a legal obligation to act in the best interests of the Trust, and in accordance with the Trust's governing document, and to avoid situations where there may be a potential conflict of interest. Senior staff (members of the Senior Management Team ("SMT Members")) have similar obligations.

Conflicts of interest may arise where an individual's personal or family interests and/or loyalties conflict with those of the Trust. Examples of conflicts include:

- The receipt of gifts or hospitality, whether pecuniary or in kind, from persons or organisations with whom the Trust has a relationship including, but not limited to, the receipt or award of grants, and/ or the purchase of goods or services.
- Having a financial interest such as a shareholding or other type of ownership interest in an entity with whom the Trust has a relationship.
- Having a leadership role in an entity to or from which the Trust awards or is in receipt of grant income.
- Having a relationship with a scholar who is supported by the Trust.

Such conflicts may create problems. For example, they can:

- inhibit free discussion
- result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of the Trust
- risk creating an impression that the Trust has acted improperly

The aim of this policy is to protect both the Trust and the specified individuals involved from the appearance of impropriety. Transparency in all discussions and decisions taken where conflicts may arise is paramount.

Conflict of Interest Policy

Our Policy is as follows:

1. Trustees and SMT Members are required to maintain an awareness of actual or potential conflicts of interest, and to declare such conflicts and take appropriate action to avoid, manage and/ or mitigate that conflict, at the earliest opportunity, following the guidance provided herein.
2. Any person who has an interest relating to a contract that the Trust enters into (or is considering entering into) must not be involved in managing or monitoring that contract. Monitoring arrangements for such contracts will include provisions for an independent challenge of bills and invoices, and termination of the contract if the relationship is unsatisfactory.
3. Trustees and SMT Members are required to make an annual Conflict of Interest Declaration.

4. We fully disclose details of any related party transactions and interests in contracts, in our Annual Report and Accounts.
5. We maintain an awareness of possible circumstances in which notification to the Charity Commission is required.
6. Data relating to conflicts of interest is managed subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

In the following paragraphs we provide guidance on application of the Policy.

What to do if you identify a potential conflict of interest

If you believe you have a perceived or real conflict of interest you should:

- declare the interest at the earliest opportunity
- withdraw from discussions and decisions relating to the conflict

The Chief Executive should take special care to make sure that minutes or other documents relating to the item presenting a potential or real conflict are appropriately redacted for the potentially conflicted person.

A balance is required to make sure that the person still receives sufficient information about the activities of the Trust generally, without disclosing sensitive information.

If you are closely involved with one of the Trust's project partners, you should not be involved in decisions that directly affect the Trust's dealings with that partner. You should declare your interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from any subsequent discussion, unless expressly invited to remain in order to provide information. In such cases you may not participate in, or influence, the decision or any vote on that matter. You will not be counted in the quorum for that part of that meeting and must withdraw from that meeting during any vote on the conflicting item.

There are situations where you may participate in discussions from which you or the project partner concerned could indirectly benefit; for example, where the benefits are universal to all partners, or where your benefit is minimal. This action will be agreed by the Chair and minuted accordingly.

If you fail to declare an interest that is known to the Chief Executive and/or Chair of the Board, the Chief Executive or Chair will declare that interest.

Decisions taken where a trustee or member of staff has an interest

In the event of the Board having to decide upon a question in which a Trustee or SMT Member has an interest, the Chair of that meeting should request the conflicted party to leave the meeting while the discussion takes place, or to abstain from comment. All decisions will be made by vote, in accordance with the Governance Manual of the Trust.

Interested parties will not be counted when deciding whether a meeting is quorate.

Interested board members may not vote on matters affecting their own interests.

All decisions where a conflict of interest is notified will be recorded by the Chief Executive and reported in the minutes of the meeting. The report will record:

- the nature and extent of the conflict
- an outline of the discussion
- the actions taken to manage the conflict

Independent external moderation will be used where conflicts cannot be resolved through the usual procedures.

Annual Conflict of Interest Declaration

The Trust requires Trustees and SMT Members to declare their interests, together with gifts or hospitality offered and/or received relating to their respective role with the Trust.

A Declaration of Interests form is attached for this purpose, listing the types of interest which should be declared.

The Declaration will normally be requested annually, at the time of the annual audit, when it is also required for statutory reporting purposes. However, it must also be updated when any material changes occur. If you are not sure what to declare, or whether/when your declaration needs to be updated, please err on the side of caution. If you would like to discuss this issue, please contact the RGS Chair for confidential guidance.

The Register of Interests shall be used to record all gifts of a value over £20 and hospitality over £50 received by the Trustees and SMT.

Interests and gifts will be recorded in the charity's Register of Interests, which will be maintained by the Chief Executive. The register will be accessible by the Board and CEO.

Disclosure

In accordance with the current Charities SORP, appropriate disclosure will be made in the Trust's Annual Report and Accounts where:

- a Trustee benefits from a decision of the Trust, or a transaction entered into by it;
- there are notifiable payments or benefits in kind to Trustees, with amounts for each Trustee listed;
- a SMT Member is connected to a party involved in the supply of a service or product to the Trust

Involving the Charity Commission

The Trust is obliged to ask the Charity Commission to authorise a decision in advance if:

- the decision involves any benefit to a Trustee that is unauthorised;
- the conflict of interest is serious but there is no alternative way forward that will remove it; or
- most or all of the Trustees share the conflict of interest

Data protection

Any information provided by Trustees or SMT Members in compliance with this Policy will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. Data will be processed only to make sure that Trustees and SMT Members act in the best interests of the Trust. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.