

Policy on Conflicts of Interest

In line with recommendations from the Charity Commission, on 10th June 2020 the Trustees and Committee of the Belsize Society approved and now maintain a policy on conflicts of interest for Trustees, Committee Members, and Members of the Society as follows:

In general, Trustees, Committee Members, and Members of the Society are required by the Constitution of the Society always to act in the best interests of the Society in any of its affairs.

In particular:

1. The Belsize Society is a non-political body and maintains a stance of political neutrality in its activities and contacts with political or representative bodies. The details of the implementation of this stance, including the obligation on Trustees and Committee members to declare their political affiliations and resign as committee members or trustees as soon as they are adopted as party candidates for election, are set out here.
2. The Belsize Society monitors planning and development applications, including those related to trees. In order to maintain parity of treatment for all applicants it does not enter into pre-application discussions with developers about potential applications except where public consultation meetings are organised by Camden Council. Trustees, Committee members, and members of the Society may not use the Society's name or refer to the Society in any discussion or comment on any application in which they have a personal interest. Trustees and Committee members are expected to declare an interest when any relevant matter is raised in Committee discussion and should not participate in any minuted decisions on any such matter.
3. Trustees and Committee members must avoid any personal conflict of interest in relation to the Society's financial transactions, in particular purchases and the award of contracts, for example for printing, IT services or stationery supplies. They must declare an interest when any relevant matter is raised in Committee discussion and should not participate in any minuted decisions on any such matter. They must also declare an interest when the awarding of grants or donations to any other body is under discussion.
4. Trustees, Committee members, and members of the Society may not use their membership to achieve any kind of material or non-material personal gain for themselves as individuals or their relatives (for example discounts from retailers or tradesmen, or influence with Local Council officers or elected members.)
5. In order to avoid any possibility of conflict of interest or bias, membership of the Society is not open to local businesses or corporate bodies. This allows the Society to comment freely where appropriate and in line with its charitable objectives on any local development or business activity. Owner, directors, and managers of local businesses or corporate bodies are welcome to join the Society on a personal and individual basis.
6. The Society publishes an annual list of members' personal recommendations for tradesmen and businesses. The conditions attached to the submission of recommendations make it clear that no person may recommend a business in which they, or a relative, has a financial or similar interest.