
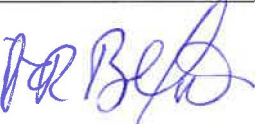



**AXE BRUE, PARRETT & NORTH SOMERSET LEVELS
INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS**

GOVERNANCE

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY POLICY

Version 2.0

Approved by the Boards:			
Axe Brue IDB		26/02/2026	Chairman
Parrett IDB		26/02/2026	Chairman
North Somerset Levels IDB		26/02/2026	Chairman

To be reviewed every 5 years

1.0 DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

In this Policy, unless the context otherwise requires, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

'The Board' or 'The Boards' means the Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board (IDB), The Parrett IDB or North Somerset Levels IDB either collectively or individually.

'Bribe' means a financial or other advantage offered, promised, given, requested or accepted with the intention of inducing or rewarding improper performance of a function or activity. Under the Bribery Act 2010, this includes both active and passive bribery and applies regardless of whether the advantage is actually received or the improper act occurs.

'Conflict of interest' arises when an individual's private interests—financial, personal or otherwise—could improperly influence, or appear to influence, their official duties or decision-making. This includes situations where loyalty to another organisation, person or cause may compromise impartiality, even if no actual misconduct occurs.

'The Consortium' means the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium (SDBC).

'The Clerk' means the Clerk of the Axe Brue, Parrett or North Somerset Levels IDB.

'Gift' is a voluntary transfer of something of value—such as money, goods, hospitality or services—given without expectation of return or compensation. In a public sector context, gifts must be assessed for appropriateness, declared where required, and scrutinised to ensure they do not create undue influence or the appearance of impropriety.

'Members' means any elected member or appointed member on any of the Boards within the consortium

'Employees' means any members of staff employed by the Consortium or by any of the constituent Boards

'Supplier' means a provider of goods and services;

'Contractor' means a provider of works.

'RFO' means the Responsible Financial Officer of the Axe Brue, Parrett or North Somerset Levels IDB

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The following paragraphs are given as guidance to Members and Employees who may be offered gifts or hospitality. Boards are required to have in place a policy on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and as a public sector organization, the Consortium and the Boards have a duty to ensure that resources are utilised effectively. The arrangements outlined within this policy apply to all Members and Staff employed by the Board and for those carrying out work on behalf of or at the request of the Board.

3.0 POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to staff on the action that can, or should, be taken in the event that they are offered gifts and/or hospitality. This policy sets out the standards and procedures that staff should follow to protect both themselves and the Board. In any case of doubt or uncertainty they should consult the Clerk/CEO.

3.1 Employees and Members should treat with extreme caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them personally. The person or organisation making the offer may be doing or seeking to do business with the Board or may be applying to the Board for some decision to be taken in their favour or someone with whom they are connected.

3.2 Gifts: Board Members and staff should not accept gifts above the value of £25. Any gifts from businesses should be of an impersonal nature ie diaries and calendars. Gifts above £25 should be very politely and courteously refused but if the potential recipient feels that a refusal will be received badly, they should refer the matter to the CEO/Clerk.

3.3 There are no hard and fast rules about the acceptance or refusal of hospitality. For example, working lunches may be an appropriate way of doing business provided they are approved by the Clerk and provided no extravagance is involved. In the same way it may be reasonable for staff to represent the Board at a social function or sporting event organised by outside persons or bodies. Persons attending such functions or events as part of an official Board delegation are exempt from the above registration requirement, providing their attendance has been approved by the Clerk.

3.4 Each member or employee is personally responsible for all decisions connected with the acceptance or offer of gifts or hospitality and for avoiding risk of damage to public confidence. The receipt and detail of gifts and hospitality should always be reported to the Clerk and any with an estimated value in excess of £25 must be entered into the Register of Gifts and Hospitality. (see appendix 1)

3.5 When hospitality has to be declined, those making the offer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operated by the Board and told why hospitality cannot be accepted.

3.6 Members and Employees should not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and outside suppliers, although the Board will allow Members and Employees to keep insignificant items or token value such as pens, calendars and diaries. These insignificant items do not require recording in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

3.7 Acceptance by Members and Employees of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal and where the Member or employee is satisfied that any purchasing decisions will not be compromised. Where visits to inspect equipment, supplies or services are required, Employees should ensure that the Board meets the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions.

4. Distinction Between Corporate and Personal Hospitality

For the purposes of this policy, hospitality is categorised as either **corporate** or **personal**, with distinct governance implications:

4.1 Corporate Hospitality Corporate hospitality refers to any benefit, entertainment, or event offered by an organisation, company, or third party in connection with the recipient's official role. This includes invitations to conferences, meals, receptions, sporting events, or other activities where the provider has, or may seek to have, a commercial or regulatory relationship with the Board.

- Acceptance must be subject to prior approval by the Clerk or Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), depending on value.
- All corporate hospitality exceeding the reporting threshold must be recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.
- Offers that may reasonably be perceived as inducements or that create a conflict of interest must be declined.

4.2 Personal Hospitality Personal hospitality refers to gestures of goodwill or social courtesy extended by individuals in a personal capacity, such as meals at a private residence, birthday gifts, or informal gatherings.

- If received in connection with official duties, personal hospitality must be disclosed and recorded where it exceeds the reporting threshold.
- Where the hospitality is unrelated to Board business and does not give rise to a conflict of interest, disclosure is not required.
- Members and staff must exercise judgement and seek advice from the Clerk or RFO if unsure whether personal hospitality may give rise to reputational or ethical concerns.

Appendix 1

Somerset Drainage Board's Consortium - Gifts and Hospitality Register

Ref	Date Received	Date of Event/Function	From/Host	Description	Invited/Given to	Accept/Decline
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gifts-and-hospitality-register>