



CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Why have a policy at all? Trustees have an obligation to act in the best interests of *The Village MCC* and in accordance with *The Village MCC's* governing documents [Staff and volunteers have similar obligations]. Conflicts of interest can happen when an individual's personal or family interests and/or loyalties conflict with those of *The Village MCC*. Conflicts of interest can inhibit free discussion, result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of the church, and risk giving the impression that *The Village MCC* has acted improperly. The aim of this policy is to protect both the organisation and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety.

Handling potential conflicts of interest is not an exact science but at *The Village MCC* we seek to follow these guidelines:

1. It is the responsibility of everyone to point out potential conflicts of interest. Individuals may not see a possible conflict because their focus is elsewhere. If you are aware of a conflict of interest that could affect your own judgement, or somebody else's; or could possibly be seen to affect your own judgement, or the judgement of someone else, (even if it would not), then you are responsible for reporting this to the board of trustees. This is less about any possible impropriety on anyone's part and more about safeguarding the reputation of the church.
2. It is the role of the board of trustees to decide whether or not a particular situation constitutes a conflict of interest. In what way is the church disadvantaged by a given relationship? How will this look from the outside? Could this damage the trust that the organization enjoys in the community, or from its members and friends?
3. We should ask ourselves whether or not a given conflict is temporary or permanent. Is it a specific decision that is compromised, (in which a person may have to be excused from decision making in that single process), or is it an ongoing conflict, in which case the church would be better served by someone else.

Ultimately it is the responsibility of the board of trustees to assess the risk in each situation and come to a decision. It is everybody's responsibility to acknowledge possible conflicts of interest and ensure that the board is made aware. It is the responsibility of all of us to protect the integrity and reputation of the church.