



**Woolwich Gardeners**

(Elmira & District Horticultural Society)

**Code of Conduct**

**Oath of Office & Confidentiality Agreement**

**Oath of Office and Confidentiality Agreement**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, a Board Member of the Woolwich Gardeners, declare that, in carrying out my duties as a Board Member I will:

1. Exercise the powers of my office and fulfill my responsibilities in good faith, to the best of my abilities and in the best interests of the Woolwich Gardeners, herein referred to as “The Society”.
2. Carry out these responsibilities exercising all reasonable care.
3. Respect and support the Constitution and By-Laws, Policies and Procedures, Code of Conduct of The Society and the decisions of the Board and the membership of The Society.
4. Review all related meeting information prepared in advance, attend and participate in discussions of the Board and various standing committees, at all times keeping in mind the best interests of The Society as a whole.
5. Conduct myself in a spirit of collegiality and respect for the collective decisions of the Board and set aside my personal interests to the best interests of The Society.
6. Immediately declare any personal conflict of interest that may come to my attention.
7. Maintain strict confidentiality of discussions at all meetings of The Society’s Meetings including Board Meetings, Committee Meetings, Teleconferences, etc. by rule or request. This obligation to protect confidential information persists indefinitely.
8. If an issue of breach has been raised by either the Board or any member of The Society against me, I understand that I may be required to step aside until such time as a review has been completed. If upon a full review and decision by the Code of Conduct Committee and following any subsequent appeal to the Officers, if any, I am found in breach of the Code of Conduct, comply with the decision of the Board and/or appeal body.
9. Cooperate fully and honestly if I am interviewed or asked to provide information regarding an actual or perceived breach. I may not interfere with individuals who may be witnesses to a matter under investigation, nor conceal or destroy any information pertinent to an investigation.

## **Code of Conduct**

Board members and staff of the Woolwich Gardeners (hereafter referred to as The Society) will at all times conduct themselves in a manner that:

1. Supports the objectives of The Society.
2. Serves the overall best interests of The Society.
3. Brings credibility and good will to The Society.
4. Respects the principles of due process and fair play.
5. Respects and gives fair consideration to diverse and opposing viewpoints.
6. Demonstrates due diligence and dedication in preparation for and attendance at meetings, special events and in all other activities on behalf of The Society.
7. Demonstrates good faith, prudent judgment, honesty, transparency and openness in their activities on behalf of The Society.
8. Ensures that the financial affairs of The Society are conducted in a responsible and transparent manner with due regard for all fiduciary responsibilities and public trustees.
9. Avoids actual and perceived conflicts of interest.
10. Conforms with The Society's Constitution and By-Laws and any other Policies and Procedures approved by the Board.
11. Publicly demonstrates acceptance, respect and support for decisions legitimately taken in transaction of The Society's business.
12. Adheres to the *Agricultural and the Horticultural Organizations Act R.S.O. 1990 c. A.9.*
13. Encourages a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
14. Contributes from personal, professional and life experiences to enhance the decision making process of the Board.
15. Refrains from trying to influence other Board Members outside of Board Meetings that might have the effect of creating factions and limit free and open discussion.
16. Acts in a manner which cannot be perceived as or that is not actual harassment or abuse as defined here in.

## **Conflict of Interest Guidelines**

A Conflict of Interest refers to a situation in which personal, occupational or financial considerations may affect or appear to affect a Board Member/Employee or Contractor's objectivity, judgment or ability to act in the best interests of The Society. A Conflict of Interest may be actual, potential or perceived in nature.

Examples of Conflict of Interest may include but are not limited to:

1. Personal interests which conflict with the interests of The Society or are otherwise adverse to the interests of the The Society.
2. Accept payment or benefit financially through The Society's involvement, other than reimbursement of out of pocket expenses pursuant to The Society's Financial Policy and Procedures and/or generally acceptable financial practices and/or through the normal business practices of the Board.

### **Complaint Process**

1. The Board shall, at the Board Meeting held after the AGM form a Review Committee comprised of a minimum of three Board Members.
2. Any member of The Society, who is In Good Standing, may file a complaint regarding an alleged breach of the Code of Conduct to any Board Member or Volunteer of The Society.
3. The complainant shall deliver a written complaint with the complainant's signature, and present it to a Board Member of The Society. The written complaint should include details of the alleged behaviour including dates, times, places names of individuals involved and any witnesses.
4. The Chair of the Review Committee shall advise two members of the committee, and cause an investigation to be made regarding the complaint. A third member may be advised and act as a silent member.
5. The Review Committee will make a finding as to whether the complaint is substantive and then specific decisions will be made in result of it by the Board.
6. The decision of the Officers of the The Society regarding an appeal of the decision of the Review Committee shall be final and there is no further appeal process available within the structure of the The Society.
7. Were it is determined that corrective action or disciplinary action is to be taken against a member or volunteer, such actions may include but are not limited to:
  - a) an apology, b) further training, c) warning, d) suspension, e) termination, f) cancellation of Membership and return of member fee.

### **Definitions**

#### **a. Harassment:**

Harassment consists of offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening behaviour directed at a person or people, because of a particular characteristic of that person or people, including the person or peoples' level of empowerment relative to the harasser. The behaviour must be unwelcome and the sort of behaviour a reasonable person would recognize as unwelcome and likely to cause the person to feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated.

#### **b. Sexual Harassment:**

A person is deemed to have sexually harassed another person (the person harassed) if

- a. the person makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the person harassed, or
- b. the person engages in unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the person harassed, in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated, or intimidated. "Conduct of a sexual nature" includes making a statement of a sexual nature to a person, or in the presence of a person.

c. Behaviour Constituting Harassment:

Can take many different forms and may be explicit or implicit, physical, verbal, or non- verbal.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. jokes or comments directed at a person's body, looks, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, or disability;
- b. abusive behaviour aimed at humiliating or intimidating someone in a less powerful position;
- c. unwelcome remarks including teasing, name-calling, or insults;
- d. innuendo or taunting;
- e. homophobic comments and/or behaviours;
- f. uninvited touching, kissing, embracing or messaging;
- g. unwelcome staring, leering or ogling;
- h. unwelcome smutty jokes and comments;
- i. unwelcome persistent or intrusive questions about a person's private life;
- j. repeated invitations to go out, especially after prior refusal;
- k. unwelcome sexual propositions;
- l. the use of promise or threat to coerce someone into sexual activity;
- m. sexual insults, taunts, or name-calling;

d. Abuse:

Abuse can be defined as, but not limited, to any act of threat involving molestation, harassment, corporal punishment or any form of physical, sexual or mental abuse; the misuse of power or authority; treatment of an individual or persons in a harmful, injurious, and or offensive manner; speaking insultingly, harshly and /or unjustly to or about another person(s); or committing an act of sexual assault.

Once read, the lower right corner of each page should be initialed by the member to indicate that each page has been read.

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)