Conflict of Interest Policy

CAMRA maintains a Register of Interests and Conflicts of Interest for volunteers serving on strategic committees. This forms an essential part of good governance, transparency and accountability, helping to protect both CAMRA and individual volunteers from actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

CAMRA's reputation rests on its ability to campaign in the best interests of consumers, maintain political independence, and avoid undue influence from any individual, organisation, business sector, or commercial interest.

Even the perception of a conflict of interest can undermine confidence in CAMRA's decision-making and damage the organisation's reputation. For this reason, all relevant interests must be declared, recorded, and managed appropriately.

Definition
A conflict of interest arises where a person's decision-making, actions, judgement, or ability to act solely in the interests of CAMRA could be influenced, or could reasonably be perceived to be influenced, by another interest, role, relationship, duty, or obligation.

Conflicts may be:

- **Actual**: A direct conflict exists.
- **Potential**: A conflict may arise in the future.
- **Perceived**: A reasonable person could conclude that a conflict exists, whether or not this is the case.
- **Conflicts of Loyalty**: Where a volunteer's loyalty to another organisation, employer, professional body, campaign group, family member, friend, or associate could influence, or appear to influence, their judgement.

A conflict of interest does not imply wrongdoing. Many volunteers bring valuable professional experience, industry knowledge, and external relationships to their role. The key requirement is that conflicts are identified early, declared openly, managed appropriately, and recorded.

Having an interest does not automatically mean a conflict exists or that participation is inappropriate. The key requirement is that interests are declared openly, assessed where necessary, and any appropriate management measures are agreed and recorded.

Duty to Declare
Strategic Committee members must:

- Declare all relevant interests on appointment.
- Review and update their declarations annually.
- Notify the Company Secretary promptly of any new or changed interests.
- Declare any conflict relating to a specific agenda item at the earliest opportunity.
- Withdraw from discussions and decision-making where required by the Chair or by the committee's governing procedures.
- Ensure that declarations and actions taken are properly recorded in the minutes.

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The Company Secretary will maintain the Register of Interests and may seek clarification where necessary.

Examples of Conflicts of Interest
The examples below are illustrative and are not exhaustive.

Financial and Commercial Interests
A volunteer may have a conflict where they, or someone closely connected to them, could benefit financially or commercially from a decision made by CAMRA.
Examples include:

- Ownership, part ownership, or directorship of a pub, club, brewery, cidery, drinks producer, wholesaler, distributor, hospitality business, or supplier relevant to CAMRA's activities.
- Shareholdings or other financial investments in businesses operating within the brewing, cider, hospitality, retail, or licensed trade sectors.
- Receipt of salaries, consultancy fees, expenses, gifts, hospitality, commissions, sponsorship, discounts, or any other financial benefit from organisations operating in sectors relevant to CAMRA's campaigning or commercial activities.
- Acting as an adviser, consultant, contractor, or supplier to a business that may benefit from CAMRA decisions.
- Having a spouse, partner, family member, close friend, business associate, or other connected person who falls within the examples above.

Personal Interests and Relationships
Personal interests may arise where relationships or affiliations could influence, or be perceived to influence, decision-making.

Examples include:

- Close personal relationships with individuals employed by, representing, or owning businesses operating within sectors relevant to CAMRA.
- Membership of organisations whose objectives may overlap with, compete with, or differ from those of CAMRA.
- Volunteering for, campaigning on behalf of, or holding office within another organisation operating in a similar policy or campaigning space.
- Personal disputes, grievances, or relationships that may affect objective decision-making.

Professional Interests

Volunteering often contributes positively to professional development. However, professional interests may create conflicts where an individual's professional role overlaps with CAMRA's activities.

Examples include:

- Employment within the brewing, cider, hospitality, licensing, tourism, retail, consumer affairs, regulatory, public affairs, public relations, marketing, or lobbying sectors.
- Employment by a government body, regulator, trade association, local authority, or other organisation whose responsibilities intersect with CAMRA's campaigning objectives.
- Membership or office-holding within a professional body relevant to CAMRA's activities.
- Acting as a trustee, director, committee member, or adviser for another organisation operating in the same sector.
- Using a CAMRA role or access to information to advance professional interests or career opportunities.

Conflicts of Loyalty
Conflicts of loyalty are often less obvious but can be equally important.

Examples include:
- Serving on the board, committee, or governing body of another organisation that has dealings with CAMRA.
- Representing another organisation, pressure group, trade body, or campaign group when participating in CAMRA discussions.
- Having obligations to an employer, client, sponsor, elected office, or external organisation that could affect independent judgement.
- Advocating for the interests of a particular external organisation rather than acting solely in the interests of CAMRA.

Managing Conflicts
Where a conflict is identified, CAMRA will follow the principles of:
- Identify the conflict.
- Declare the conflict.
- Record the conflict in the Register of Interests and meeting minutes.
- Manage the conflict appropriately.
- Remove participation from discussion or decision-making where necessary.

The appropriate action will depend on the nature and significance of the conflict and may include:
- Not receiving confidential papers.
- Leaving the meeting for the relevant agenda item.
- Abstaining from voting.
- Being excluded from particular decisions.
- In exceptional circumstances, stepping down from a role where a conflict cannot be adequately managed.

Perception of Bias
Members must be mindful not only of actual conflicts but also situations that could reasonably be perceived as creating bias.

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Even where an individual acts with complete integrity, public confidence can be damaged if decisions appear to be influenced by personal, professional, political, or commercial interests.

Maintaining transparency through declaration and proper management of conflicts helps protect both the individual volunteer and CAMRA as an organisation.

Further Advice
The examples contained within this policy are not exhaustive. If there is any uncertainty regarding whether an interest should be declared, members should err on the side of transparency and seek advice.

Please contact Anita Newland-Smith, Company Secretary, who will be pleased to discuss any circumstances and advise whether a declaration is required.

When in doubt, declare it. This approach supports openness, protects individual volunteers, and helps maintain CAMRA's reputation for integrity, independence, and good governance.