

**Minutes of the  
Standards Committee**

**07 June 2010**

<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Independent Members</b>	<b>Parish Council Reps</b>
Janet Mockridge	Anthony Case (Chairman)	Ken Bashford (Sompting)
Ben Stride	Julian Cioffi	Ann Terry (Lancing)
Norman Wright	Mavis Macdougall	
	John Todd	

\*= Absent

**S/01/10-11            Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

**S/02/10-11            Questions & Statements by the Public**

There were no questions or statements by the public

**S/03/10-11            Confirmation of the Minutes**

**Resolved** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 March 2010 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairperson.

**S/04/10-11            Items Raised under Urgency Provisions**

There were no items to be considered under the urgency provisions.

**S/05/10-11    Applications for Dispensations**

There were no applications for dispensations.

**S/06/10-11            Publicity for the Code of Conduct and Local Assessment Process - update**

The Committee had before it a report by the Executive head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 6. The report informed Members on progress towards publicising the Code of Conduct and Local Assessment Process. Members were asked to agree the form and content of the publicity from examples placed before them.

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report to the Committee. As background to the report the Committee was apprised of events nationally. The Coalition Government had announced as part of its Decentralisation and Localism Bill, a proposal to 'abolish the

Standards Board Regime', it was stated that there was no certain knowledge of what the statement actually meant and furthermore potential repercussions could have had an effect on the work of the Committee. More specifically any changes could alter the advice contained within the publicity options before Members. Members were asked to accept an additional recommendation that the Monitoring Officer be delegated responsibility for changing the information within the publicity, subject to changes in legislation from central government.

Members discussed the options before them and felt that the leaflet and letter attached as annexes c and d contained the best information. It was felt that the posters before Members were too complex did not stand out enough.

Upon answering a question the Democratic Services Officer confirmed that he had no knowledge of when the exact details of Central Government intentions regarding the Standards Board would be released. The Committee stipulated that if no details were forthcoming from central government by the 1 September 2010, the publicity should be released as it stood.

**Resolved:**

- i) That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to submit to organisations the leaflet and letter attached as annex c and d to the report;
- ii) That the Monitoring Officer be delegated responsibility for changing the information within the publicity, subject to changes in the Standards Framework from Central Government.
- iii) That if no details are forthcoming from Central Government regarding changes to the Standards Framework by the 1 September 2010, the publicity shall be released as it stands.

**S/07/10-11                      Use of IT – Electronic Dispensations and Register of Gifts / Hospitality Returns**

The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 7. The report before Members detailed work carried out regarding the creation of 'e-forms' for dispensations and register of gifts / hospitality. Members were asked to comment on the forms, make suggestions for amendment and endorse the addition of the forms to the Council's Intranet website.

The Democratic Services Officer provided a demonstration to the Committee on how the forms worked and explained how the forms could reduce unnecessary customer contact , reduce postage costs and speed up the length of time taken to process requests for dispensation and declarations of gifts and hospitality.

The Committee discussed the value at which Councillors were expected to register gifts and hospitality and the benefits of the electronic system before them

**Resolved:**

- i) That the Committee note the contents of the report and the application for electronic dispensations and the register of gifts and hospitality;

- ii) That the application process for electronic dispensations and the register of Gifts and Hospitality be agreed.

### **S/08/10-11                    Members Register of Interest Form and Guidance**

The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 8. The Committee as part of its work programme kept under review the Register of Member's Interest Form and Guidance. A new amended form was approved for use on the 8 December 2008. As part of the ongoing review of the form a newly amended form was put before Members for comment.

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report to the Committee. The Committee were informed that the new form contained a voluntary registration section that enabled Members to disclose interests, which were not required to be disclosed under the statutory scheme but which they felt would promote transparency. It was also related to Members that under section 2 of the form an extra example has been added to highlight the need for membership of the Freemasons to be declared, this extrapolated on the Committees expressed desire at its meeting on 13 October 2008 to see illustrative examples under this section and advice issued by the Standards Board on the registration of membership to the freemasons.

The Committee discussed the form before them and felt that there needed to be a further example inserted relating to Membership of Residents' Associations under section 2 of the form.

The Committee noted that although the form had improved since its first introduction there were still instances when Members were unsure about making declarations. The Legal Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer informed Members that advice could be sought from the Monitoring Officer or Deputy Monitoring Officer if needed.

**Resolved:** That the updated Members register of interest form be approved as amended.

### **S/09/10-11                    New Role for Standards Committees – Politically Restricted Posts**

The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, copies of which had been circulated to all Members and a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of these minutes as item 9. The report informed the Committee of a new role for Standards Committees as a result of the abolition of the Independent Adjudicator under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIHA 2007).

Upon responding to a question the Democratic Services Officer related that an Officer application for dispensation had not been received at the Council in recent memory.

**Resolved:**

- i) That the Committee notes the requirements of the LGPIHA 2007 with regards to Officer applications for dispensation;

- ii) That the Committee notes the addition to its Terms of Reference;
- iii) That the Committee notes the dispensations process for politically restricted posts for officers will be a similar process to the dispensation application process for elected and co-opted members.

The Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 7:58pm, it having commenced at 7:00pm

CCD/Chairperson