

**Minutes of a meeting of the Mid Sussex District Council
Standards Committee held on Wednesday 27th May 2009
From 7.00pm to 7.44 pm**

Present:- Sir Roger Sands (Chairman)*
David Brown (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Brenda Binge
Ian Church
Town Cllr Richard Goddard
Cllr Gina Field

Cllr Heather Ross
Parish Cllr Patrick Shanahan*
Cllr Christopher Snowling
Trevor Swainson

Cllr Mike Watts
Parish Cllr Pat Webster
Parish Cllr Jenny Forbes
(Substitute Parish Member)

* Absent

1. SUBSTITUTES

No substitutions were notified.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Sir Roger Sands and Parish Councillor Patrick Shanahan.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

David Brown proposed that Sir Roger Sands be elected as Chairman of the Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Mrs. Heather Ross.

RESOLVED

That Sir Roger Sands be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the 2009/10 year.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Mrs. Heather Ross proposed that David Brown be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Mrs. Gina Field.

RESOLVED

That David Brown be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

Mr David Brown in the Chair

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 1st April 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2008 – MARCH 2009

The Monitoring Officer introduced the annual report of the Committee for 2008/09. The annual return to the Standards Board for England was appended to the report. He noted that the area in the return where the Committee was possibly weakest was in relation to contact between the Standards Committee Chairman and the Group Leaders on the District Council.

David Brown noted that there was little detail in the report about the cases handled by the Committee in the year. He accepted that this was appropriate in a report of this nature but asked whether there should be an opportunity for the Committee to look at these cases in greater depth to consider any learning points for the Committee.

A general discussion took place regarding cases dealt with by Standards Panels over the year. It was noted that as it was a Committee meeting open to the public, it was important to ensure that no details were given from which individuals could be identified.

Members considered that it would be helpful if the issues surrounding the various cases could be discussed more openly. It was agreed that this could more satisfactorily be done in a training session. It was agreed therefore that the Monitoring Officer be asked to organise a further training session for Members of the Committee to examine issues that were of relevance to Standards Panels in their deliberations in the coming year.

It was noted that the Chairman of the Committee would be attending the next meeting of the Council on 17th June to present the annual report of the Committee. This would be an opportunity for Members of the Council to raise any issues of concern to them and this could assist in identifying any areas where further guidance or information for Members of the Council was required.

It was considered whether the Protocol on Member Officer Relations needed to be reviewed. It was agreed that this could be looked at as part of the training for the Committee.

It was agreed that the draft Annual Report of the Standards Committee be agreed and that it be included in the Agenda for the next Council meeting, to be presented by the Committee Chairman.

RESOLVED

That:-

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the report as drafted be included in the Council Agenda for the Chairman of the Committee to present.

Chairman