

**Minutes of a meeting of the Mid Sussex District Council  
Standards Committee held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September  
2010.**

**From 7.00pm to 7:42pm**

**Present:-**

Ian Church  
Parish Cllr Jenny Forbes\*  
Town Cllr Richard Goddard  
Cllr Jacqui Landriani\*

Andrew Lewis  
Cllr Gordon Marples\*  
Cllr Heather Ross  
Sir Roger Sands

Cllr Susan Seward  
Trevor Swainson  
Cllr Mike Watts  
Parish Cllr Pat Webster

\* Absent

**5. SUBSTITUTES**

The Committee noted that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4 – Substitutes at Meetings of Committees etc. – Councillor Snowling had replaced Councillor Marples for the duration of the meeting.

**6. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Forbes, Landriani and Marples.

**7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**8. ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Snowling nominated Sir Roger Sands as Chairman of the Committee.

**RESOLVED**

That Sir Roger Sands be elected Chairman of the Committee.

**9. APPOINTMENT OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN.**

Trevor Swainson nominated Ian Church as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

**RESOLVED**

That Ian Church be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

**10. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 8<sup>h</sup> June 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **11. MEMBER TO MEMBER AND MEMBER TO OFFICER PROTOCOLS**

The Chairman noted that at the previous meeting there had been interest in a Member/Member Protocol.

Tom Clark, the Monitoring Officer introduced the report. He noted that provisions of the Model Code of Conduct dealt with Member/Member relations and that he had been unable to find an authority that dealt with Member/Member relations outside this area. He stated that he had compared the Council's Member/Officer Protocol with West Sussex County Council and Arun District Council and as a result suggested two changes to the Council Member/Officer Protocol.

Support was expressed for these proposed changes to the Member/Officer Protocol.

In response to a query from a Member concerning what sanctions were available for Members who breached the protocols, the Monitoring Officer stated that issues were normally dealt with by the group leaders. He added that a breach to the Code of Conduct occurred it would be dealt with by this committee.

The Committee then proceeded to consider a draft, prepared by the Chairman, of a new paragraph 6.3, concerning Member/Member relations. Concern was expressed about the reference to "private dealings", because it was felt that it would be difficult to control what Members said in private to one another.

The Chairman agreed that the key issue concerned what was said in public meetings. He also noted that the suggested addition could provide guidance to Council chairmen, resulting in more consistent chairmanship.

It was felt by some Members that it would be appropriate to include a section referring to Members private dealings with one another as it would encourage them to treat one another with respect outside formal committee meetings. After further discussion it was agreed to reword the proposed paragraph so that it was clear that Members should treat each other with respect at all times without referring specifically to "private dealings".

It was suggested by a Member that the suggested changes to the Member/Officer Protocol outlined in paragraph 5.2 of the report could be incorporated as bullet points in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 of the protocol.

Concern was expressed that this would imply that bad behaviour was expected from Members and Officers and that this would give less importance to paragraph 5.2 of the report.

It was clarified that it was felt the inclusion of 5.2 of the report into paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 of the protocol should be in addition to where it was proposed to be situated.

After further discussion it was agreed that it would be more appropriate to have paragraph 5.2 of the report only put in the protocol in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 and that Members would look at the finalised protocol before it was considered by Council.

In response to a query about the inclusion of whistle-blowing, the Monitoring Officer stated that this was covered in a separate protocol.

### **RESOLVED**

The Committee noted the report and agreed the additional clauses to the Member/Officer protocol recommended in paragraph 5 of the report with paragraph 5.2 to be included in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 of the protocol. It was also agreed that a new paragraph 6.3 should be inserted in accordance with what had been agreed by the Committee.

## **12. URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chairman made reference to the possibility that Standards Committee could be made defunct in the coming year with new legislation due to come through. The Monitoring Officer noted that until abolished the Committee still had a function to carry out.

Chairman