

**Minutes of a meeting of the Mid Sussex District Council  
Standards Committee held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2011.  
From 7.00pm to 7.33pm**

**Present:-**

Town Cllr Christopher Ash-  
Edwards  
Parish Cllr William Blunden  
Cllr Jack Callaghan

Ian Church  
Parish Cllr Jenny Forbes\*  
Cllr Denis Jones  
Cllr Andrew Lea  
Andrew Lewis

Cllr Gordon Marples  
Sir Roger Sands  
Cllr Susan Seward  
Trevor Swainson

\* Absent

**1. SUBSTITUTES**

None.

**2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Ian Church nominated Sir Roger Sands as Chairman of the Standards Committee for the 2011/12 Council year. This was seconded by Councillor Jack Callaghan.

**RESOLVED**

That Sir Roger Sands be elected Chairman of the Standards Committee for the 2011/12 Council year.

**3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Sir Roger Sands nominated Ian Church as Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee for the 2011/12 Council year.

**RESOLVED**

That Ian Church be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee for the 2011/12 Council year.

**4. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Jenny Forbes.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**6. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 26<sup>th</sup> January 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **7. THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE TODAY AND THE LOCALISM BILL 2010**

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report, highlighting the likely timeframe for any changes to come into effect if the Localism Bill 2010 is passed into law. It is likely that responsibility for Town and Parish Council standards would no longer be a District function.

The Chairman said that various amendments have been proposed to the original Bill and so there is no recommendation to take action at this stage but the Committee must consider what direction it wishes to take if the Bill is passed into law. One Member queried whether the Council could retain its current Code of Conduct under the new legislation. The Monitoring Officer said that some parts may not be retained, such as on declarations of interest, due to provisions in the Localism Bill, but other elements could be retained.

Another Member said that the Localism Bill places a duty on local authorities to encourage good standards but would move towards self-regulation. Members said that having a Code of Conduct was useful for highlighting reasonable behaviour and there was a public expectation that these standards should be outlined in such a document. There was concern that otherwise the proposed changes would create a void in the standards process. The Monitoring Officer said that Town and Parish Councils might want to come to an arrangement where they would review each other's complaints.

The Monitoring Officer said that more effort may need to be put into training and awareness of the standards process for new Parish Councillors. In response to a Members question the Monitoring Officer said that a training session had been held in June 2011 for District and Town and Parish Councillors but there might be an opportunity to repeat that session in September 2011 if there was enough interest.

### **RESOLVED**

That the contents of the report be noted.

Chairman