

**Minutes of a meeting of the Mid Sussex District Council  
Standards Committee held on Wednesday, 19th February 2014  
from 7:00 pm to 7:15 p.m.**

**Present:**

Town Cllr Christopher Ash-Edwards*	Cllr Jack Callaghan	Cllr Denis Jones
Cllr Liz Bennett	Parish Cllr Duncan Cunningham*	Cllr John O'Brien*
Parish Cllr William Blunden	Parish Cllr Jenny Forbes	Cllr Gordon Marples
		Cllr Simon McMenemy

\* Absent

Also present: Sir Roger Sands and Gerard Irwin, Independent Persons on Standards Matters.

**14. SUBSTITUTES**

None.

**15. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Town Councillor Ash-Edwards and Parish Councillor William Blunden was appointed Vice-Chairman for the duration of meeting.

**16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**17. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 9th October 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

In response to a question from the Independent Person, Tom Clark, the Solicitor to the Council, confirmed that the Judicial Review of the Standards regime was still underway.

**18. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Solicitor to the Council, introduced the report. He explained that the majority of complaints had been made against Parish Councillors, with one Parish Council accounting for four of the complaints. He added that all Parish Councils should make every effort to comply with the Members' Code of Conduct and that when Parish Councils have applied the provisions, difficult situations have been resolved. He also confirmed that no allegations of financial gain had been made against Members.

In response to a Member's question, the Solicitor to the Council explained that there had been no requests to train new Parish Councillors on the Members' Code of Conduct following the recent by-elections. He further explained that for the Parish Council that had generated the majority of the complaints, the issue was not one of training but of communication between Councillors and with a new Parish Clerk now in place, some of these issues may be resolved.

In response to another Member's questions, the Solicitor to the Council agreed to amend the report to make it clear that all the cases had been closed. He also confirmed that there was no requirement to provide an Annual Report, but that the report was an effective way to inform Council about the work of the Committee. Sir Roger Sands, the Independent Person for Standards Matters, added that the Annual Report was very useful and ensured the information was available to everyone. This was supported by Members.

In response to a Member's question about one of the complaints, the Solicitor to the Council explained that an independent investigator had been appointed because both the Solicitor and the Deputy Solicitor to the Council had already been involved in complaints process and therefore could not investigate the complaint further. He added that the solicitor from West Sussex County Council had offered best value for money and had provided a thorough report.

As there were no further questions or comments, the Chairman took Members to the recommendation, which was agreed unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the 2013 Annual Report of the Standards Committee be referred to Council for information.**

#### **19. FUTURE MEETING DATES**

Members noted the future meeting dates for 2014 -15.

Chairman