

**Minutes of a meeting of Standards Committee
held on Monday, 8th March, 2021
from 6.00 pm - 6.14 pm**

Present: P Bradbury (Chairman)
C Ash-Edwards (Vice-Chair)

A Bennett	K Healy	B Von Thunderclap
R Clarke	A Eves	
D Denham St Pinnock	S Smith	

Absent: Councillors L Bennett

Also Present: Councillors N Webster and R De Mierre.

1. ROLL CALL AND VIRTUAL MEETING EXPLANATION.

The Chairman carried out a roll call to establish attendance at the meeting.

Tom Clark, Head of Regulatory Services provided information on the format of the virtual meeting.

2. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Cllr Bennett.

3. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.

The Chairman had no urgent business.

4. TO RECEIVE DECLARATION OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.

No declarations were made.

5. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2021.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18 January 2021 were approved as a correct record and electronically signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman noted a matter that was discussed at the previous meeting; the proposal to reinforce the Code of Conduct from Cllr. Denham St Pinnock in respect of Social Media and particularly the abuse and lack of manners on Social Media. He highlighted that the discussion was postponed until guidance was received from government in respect of the Code of Conduct. Although it was due to be received at

the meeting however its publication has been delayed until April and the Chairman confirmed his intention to have the discussion when the advice has been received.

6. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020.

Tom Clark, Head of Regulatory Services, introduced the report which detailed the work of the Standards Committee in 2020. He outlined that the Committee spent a lot of time considering the new Code of Conduct however the final advice from government won't be received until April so he believed it would be sensible to look at that when the advice is received. He highlighted that the year has in fact been busier than previous years and drew attention to Appendix A which detailed the various complaints. He added that Members may think penalties available are quite limited in reference to No.5 of the Appendix where it was unfortunate that further could not be taken against a Member from East Grinstead Town Council.

An Independent Person on Standards Matters noted that the Committee normally provides to training to Members of the District Council and asked for a reference in the report that due to the pandemic the Council wasn't able to provide the customary training opportunities for Members. He also asked that, whilst it is not a perfect science, the inclusion of the volume of complaints in relation to the total number of District Councillors and potentially Parish/Town Council Members would be welcome.

The Head of Regulatory Services believed that the comment on training difficulties is fair. He briefly noted the volume of complaints which a third pertained to District Council Members and the remainder to Parish and Town Council Members.

The Chairman recommended the inclusions from the Independent Person in the report. He stated that the training is normally very interactive which is hard to replicate in the virtual format. He hoped that later in the year, when permissible to meet other people, that a training session could be brought forward however he suspects that it may have to wait until the following year. He noted the two addition points for inclusion and then moved to the recommendation to forward the report to Council for information which was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED

That the Standards Committee forward the report, with the additional reference to the pandemic preventing training and the inclusion of more detailed volume of complaints, to Council for information.

7. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2 DUE NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN.

None.

The meeting finished at 6.14 pm

Chairman