

**Minutes of a meeting of the Mid Sussex District Council  
Standards Committee held on Wednesday, 8 October 2014  
from 7:00 p.m. to 7:25 p.m.**

**Present:** Denis Jones (Chairman)  
Town Cllr Christopher Ash-Edwards (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Liz Bennett*	Parish Cllr Duncan Cunningham*	Cllr Simon McMenemy
Parish Cllr William Blunden	Parish Cllr Jenny Forbes	Cllr John O'Brien*
Cllr Jack Callaghan*	Cllr Gordon Marples	

\* Absent

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

**9. SUBSTITUTES**

None.

**10. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bennett and Callaghan.

**11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**12. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 17 June 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**13. A REVISED MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The Solicitor to the Council introduced the report and outlined the discussion at the previous meeting. The Committee had agreed to keep a comprehensive Code of Conduct but would seek improvements to the way it was set out and explained. He referred Members to the West Sussex County Council Members Code of Conduct as an improvement, save for the requirement that Members declare interests at each meeting.

In response to a Member's question, the Solicitor to the Council explained that the Council should consider any changes to the West Sussex Code of Conduct to make it clearer and easier to understand.

A Member suggested some amendments, and a more simplistic structure for ease of understanding, by explaining disclosable pecuniary interests after paragraph 5.

In response to a Member's question, the Solicitor to the Council explained that the Council no longer had powers to suspend a person in regards to an online attack using social media, which would be regarded as a breach of the Code of Conduct. Some amendments to Item 6 on page 14 of the report were suggested by Members, as well as some discussion on other Codes of Conduct.

Some Members felt that Councillors could be subject to a less detailed Code of Conduct but the consensus was to retain a detailed Members Code of Conduct. It was further agreed that these changes should be put to the Council this year so the new Code of Conduct was in place well ahead of May 2015. It would also be shared with Town and Parish Clerks in the District, since a common Code at every level of local government would have benefits to both the elected Members and the public.

The Vice Chairman explained that the Code of Conduct was designed to be transparent. The Chairman added that the public declaration of interests was also important.

The Solicitor to the Council added that the number of complaints had reduced in the last six months but a new complaint had recently been received.

As there were no further questions, the Chairman took Members to the report's recommendations, which were agreed.

## **RESOLVED**

That:

- (1) Council be recommended to adopt the Member's Code of Conduct, at Appendix A to the report, including the requirement to declare all relevant interest at a meeting where they relate to a matter being discussed and paragraph 4(3) be amended accordingly; and
- (2) subject to Council agreeing the adoption of the revised Code of Conduct, to circulate the revised Code to Town and Parish Clerks and to ask them to ask their Members to consider the revised Code of Conduct in place of their existing Members' Code of Conduct.

## **14. FUTURE MEETING DATES**

Members noted the future meeting date of 17 February 2015.

Chairman