

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 29 July 2008, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors: Ms Dean, Gifford, and Mrs Tyrrell.

Independent representatives: Venerable Paget-Wilkes (Chair) and Purser.

Parish and Town Council representative: Councillors; Mrs Gordon, Polgreen, Singh and Smart.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Guest.

(Councillor Ms Dean substituted for Councillor Mrs Knight)

292. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Minutes Number 294 – Dispensation Application – Whitnash Town Council

Councillor Smart declared a personal interest because he was a member of Whitnash Town Council.

293. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 27 February, 16 April and 11 June 2008 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

294. DISPENSATION APPLICATION – WHITNASH TOWN COUNCIL

The Monitoring Officer reported that he had been contacted by the Clerk to the Town Council regarding a potential need for dispensation.

The Monitoring Officer felt there was potential need for this Committee to consider an application for dispensation from Whitnash Town Council on this matter. However the Monitoring officer would need to meet with the Clerk to the Town Council first to ensure this was correct and to draft a report for the Committee.

The Monitoring Officer hoped to have this ready in time for the next meeting of the Committee in September.

The Senior Committee Services Officer reported that the Council was now in a position to video and record meetings held in the Council Chamber. The Committee were asked if they would be willing to be part of the trial for recording of meetings. During the discussion it was explained that this was the early stages of the trial and would be used to test the system and if appropriate devise a protocol for recording any Council meeting in the Council Chamber.

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RESOLVED that

- (1) the update from the Monitoring Officer was noted;
- (2) the next meeting of the Committee be recorded as part of the trial; and
- (3) a report be submitted to the meeting after next on the policy for recording meetings and at this meeting the recordings taken as part of the trial be shown to the Committee.

295. INDEPENDENT REPRESENTATIVES

The Committee received an update from the Senior Committee Services Officer about the recruitment of two further independent representatives and a substitute independent member.

The advert for the two positions along with substitute member to local media contacts, local community groups, all Parish and Town Clerks within Warwick District and all Warwick District Councillors. The advert would also be included in the Mid Week Courier, Leamington and Warwick Courier and Kenilworth Weekly News.

To date one request had been made for an application pack.

RESOLVED that

- (1) delegation was given to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman to recommend to Council the people they felt appropriate for the position of Independent Representatives; and
- (2) the Committee noted that the interviews would be taking place on 14 August 2008.

296. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – ANNUAL LETTER 2007/08

The Committee considered a report from Members' Services informing them of the Annual Letter to this Council from the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Senior Committee Services Officer informed the Committee of the current review of complaints handling at Warwick District Council and what the likely outcomes for this would be

RESOLVED that

- (1) content of the report be noted along with the information reported to them regarding the forthcoming changes to the handling of complaints within the Council; and

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES(Continued)

- (2) the Committee were impressed with the overall performance of the Council's work with the Local Government Ombudsman on complaints.

297. WORK PLAN

The Committee considered the suggested work plan for the ensuing municipal year.

The Chair circulated a letter he had received inviting the Committee to enter into the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) award for Standards and Ethics. The Committee discussed this and felt that it would not be in a position to enter this year, but would like to work towards entering the following year.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the work plan was agreed; and
- (2) the Committee work towards entering the LGC Standards and Ethics award in 2010.

(The meeting ended at 7.35pm)