

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**30 January 2012**

Attendance:

Mr P Smith (Independent Member - Chairman)  
Ms J Collins (Independent Member – in the Chair) (P)

Councillors:

Berry (P)	Lipscomb (P)
Clear (P)	Nelmes (P)
Chamberlain (P)	Pearson (P)
Laming (P)	

Independent Members and Parish Representatives in attendance:

Mr J Barnett (Independent Member)  
Ms C Hicks (Independent Member).

Ms J Bond (Parish Representative)  
Mr J Watson (Parish Representative)

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1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Peter Smith (Independent Member) and Mr Mike Evans (Parish Representative).

The Committee requested that its best wishes be conveyed to Peter Smith for his continued recovery.

2. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That, in the absence of the Chairman, Ms Collins (Independent Member) be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 4 July 2011 be approved and adopted.

4. **LOCALISM ACT 2011**  
(Report ST91 refers)

Further to consideration of the future of the Standards framework at the last meeting of the Committee (Report ST89 refers), the Corporate Director (Governance) summarised the main elements of the new Act, although he emphasised that there were still a number of areas where further Regulations from the Government were awaited. Therefore, he advised that definitive decisions should not be made at this stage, but a preliminary indication from the meeting about certain key issues would be helpful to officers, as they would be preparing a draft local Standards framework to be considered by the Council in the coming months.

Members discussed the report in detail and made the following comments:-

(i) to provide both continuity and experience, the existing Independent Members and Parish Representatives should be allowed to continue in office until such time as the new Standards framework was in place (currently anticipated to be 31 July 2012).

(ii) the requirements for a 'new' Code of Conduct were noted and all efforts should be made to agree one consistent version (preferably nationally but at least on a countywide basis) and that all Parish Councils be requested to await the outcome of discussions on this matter before adopting their own Code. If a model code was not produced nationally or regionally, then this Council should adopt a version based on the existing Code, with the minimum alterations needed to take account of the new Regulations.

(iii) at least initially, a Standards Committee continue to be appointed and any consideration about another body (e.g. Audit Committee) assuming Standards functions be deferred and considered at a later stage, in the light of experience.

(iv) that alternative titles to 'Standards' be considered (e.g. Ethics and Probity) although it be noted that 'Standards' was now a familiar title and still appeared to adequately describe the likely responsibilities of any new body.

(v) although they will not have voting rights in any new arrangements, the role of Parish Representatives was valued and they should continue to be appointed, albeit on a co-opted, non-voting basis.

(vi) the role of the new 'Independent Person' was noted and, for practical administrative reasons, it would be preferable if the Council appointed two or three people to this role.

(vii) opportunities should be taken to simplify and shorten the revised complaints system where possible, including the removal of a review stage on decisions made (although that would need initial monitoring to ensure that fairness had not been jeopardised).

(viii) the reduction in available sanctions to, effectively, just 'naming and shaming' or removal from a committee was noted with concern, as was the fact that, whilst Parish Councils must 'have regard' to the findings of the Monitoring Officer or Committee, there was no obligation on them to abide by the recommendations, or indeed to take any resultant action at all.

RESOLVED:

That the above comments be taken into account as part of the further work to be carried out to produce a draft Standards framework for consideration by the Council.

5. **REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS**  
(Report ST92 refers)

The Corporate Director (Governance) circulated at the meeting an appendix to the above report, which set out a list of Members who were seeking a dispensation to speak and vote, when the Council debated the annual budget for 2012/13. Shortly before the meeting, a request had been received from Councillor Stallard in respect of the Denmead Community Association; it was agreed that this should be added to the other requests for consideration.

In each of the requests listed, the Member had an involvement with an outside organisation(s) which may be affected by the budget debate. Therefore, he/she would need to declare a personal and prejudicial interest, followed by leaving the meeting, unless a dispensation was granted by the Committee.

Members noted that, in these circumstances, dispensations may be granted where the political balance of the Council would be upset, to the extent that the outcome of voting would be prejudiced. The meeting agreed that a dispensation should not be granted to Members who had a personal and prejudicial interest in circumstances where their office on the outside body would give rise to a significant risk of a personal financial liability for the Member concerned.

Councillors Clear and Pearson declared personal and prejudicial interests in respect of their dispensation applications set out in the appendix and left the meeting whilst those matters were determined.

RESOLVED:

1. That, having considered each case, dispensations be granted to the Members listed in Appendix A to the minutes, to speak and vote when the Council debated the annual budget for 2012/13, should issues arise in connection with the organisations specified.

2. That the dispensations in 1 above would not extend to circumstances where the office on the outside body would give rise to a significant risk of a personal financial liability for the Member concerned.

6. **STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND – QUICK GUIDE TO BLOGGING**  
(Report ST90 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the Quick Guide to Blogging be noted and drawn to the attention of all Members of Council.

The meeting commenced at 6.15pm and concluded at 7.30pm

Chairman

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE****30 January 2012****DISPENSATIONS – SCHEDULE OF REQUESTS APPROVED**

The following Members were granted a dispensation to speak and vote when the Council debated the annual budget for 2012/13, should issues arise in connection with the organisations specified below (the dispensations do not extend to circumstances where the office on the outside body would give rise to a significant risk of a personal financial liability for the Member concerned).

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Angela Clear	Wickham Community Association	Trustee
	CAB (new body)	Potential Future Trustee
Robert Johnston	Winchester CAB	Trustee
	Winchester/Giessen Twinning Association	Chairman
Margot Power	New Alresford Town Council	Councillor
	New Alresford Town Trustees	Trustee
	Enterprise Alresford	Member
Dominic Hiscock	Keystone Housing	Director
Jacey Jackson	Olive Branch	No longer Member but founder of group and still exercises some influence on decisions.
	Winchester Street Pastors	Husband serves on Management Committee
Jean Hammerton	Bishops Waltham CAB	Trustee and Vice Chairman
Jan Warwick	Winchester City Penguins Swimming Club	Vice Chairman

Kirk Phillips	Denmead Community Association	Trustee
Patricia Stallard	Denmead Community Association	Chairman
Linda Gemmell	Village Design Statement Funding	On steering body
Roger Huxstep	Village Design Statement Funding	On steering body
Frank Pearson	Bishops Waltham CAB	Chairman and Trustee (plus any financial matters affecting the new district body due to come into force 1/2/12)