

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THURSDAY, 13TH DECEMBER, 2012

PRESENT:-

Independent Members: Susan Toland (Chair), Deborah Russell (Independent Member) and Dr Cyril Davies (Independent Member)

Parish Representatives: Tony Crouch and Reg Williams

Bath and North East Somerset Councillors: Sally Davis, Sarah Bevan, Eleanor Jackson, Nigel Roberts and Malcolm Lees

Officers: Vernon Hitchman (Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer), Ann Swabey (Democratic Services Officer)

49 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Mrs Sue Toland, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

50 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The clerk drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION

Apologies had been received from Parish Councillors Tony Marwood, Veronica Packham, Axel Palmer and Nick Stevens.

52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

53 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

54 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS

Mr Ian Barclay (a member of the public) asked the following question;

“In July 2012, the council approved "The Code of conduct for members and co-opted members together with the rules for registration of interests and conflicts of interest.

What guidance is given to elected members when they are appointed to the Cabinet and how they should reconcile their two roles and any conflicts of interest that this may raise, particularly when dealing with ward issues such as with local groups and constituents?”

The Monitoring Officer said that guidance was given to Cabinet Members on an ad hoc basis and that they were encouraged to seek advice. Following a request from Mr Barclay, the Chair agreed to provide a written reply to his question.

55 ITEMS FROM COUNCILLORS AND CO-OPTED AND ADDED MEMBERS RELATING TO THE GENERAL BUSINESS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Chair asked whether there had been any progress on the appointment of the Independent Person and was informed that it was hoped to appoint someone in the New Year.

56 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 20TH SEPTEMBER 2012

The minutes of the meeting on 20th September 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

57 LOCAL HEARINGS PROCEDURE

The Monitoring Officer introduced this report which sets out the procedure to be followed for Local Hearings of complaints against Councillors.

Councillor Reg Williams asked whether this procedure was applicable to Parish and Town Councils. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that it was. Councillor Tony Crouch asked whether the same rules applied regarding non-pecuniary interests as they did before and was informed that it was not necessarily the same system as Parish and Town Councils may have chosen to adopt slightly different codes from the one which applied to B&NES councillors. However, the Standards Committee's role remained the same.

Councillor Nigel Roberts thanked the Monitoring Officer for his clear and concise report.

58 COMPLAINT AGAINST A COUNCILLOR - 10-12B&NES

Before commencing this item, it was noted that several Members had not received the papers for the case in question before the meeting. On a motion proposed by Councillor Bevan, seconded by Councillor Lees, and agreed by the majority of those present, it was decided that in order to ensure a fair hearing, consideration of this complaint would be postponed until January 2013.

The Chair closed the meeting by wishing all present a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The meeting ended at 6.05 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services