

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH
2019, AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor B Deering (Chairman)
Councillors P Boylan and T Stowe

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors D Andrews, G McAndrew and
R Standley

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Peter Mannings	- Democratic Services Officer
Alison Stuart	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Nicholas Moss	- Independent Person
Mick Standley	- Representing Former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor
Jeanette Taylor	- Former Ware Town Councillor
Yvette Taylor	- Daughter of former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor

10 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor P Boylan and seconded by Councillor T Stowe that Councillor B Deering be appointed Chairman of the Standards Sub-Committee for the meeting.

RESOLVED – that Councillor B Deering be appointed Chairman of the Standards Sub-Committee for the meeting.

11 MINUTES - 30 JANUARY 2019

In response to a number of comments and concerns in respect of the minutes from former Ware Town Councillor J Taylor and Mr and Mrs Standley, the Chairman reminded all present that the formal minutes of meetings were not and had never been intended to be a transcript of proceedings.

Councillor P Boylan proposed and Councillor T Stowe seconded, a motion that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the addition of the name Jill Rowlinson to the list of attendees present at the meeting. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, this motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2019, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the addition of the name Jill Rowlinson to the list of attendees present at the

meeting.

12 DETERMINATION AND DECISION INTO A COMPLAINT OF FAILURE TO OBSERVE THE CODE OF CONDUCT - FORMER WARE TOWN COUNCILLOR JEANETTE TAYLOR

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report inviting the Standards Sub-Committee to deliver their decision on the complaint regarding former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor in accordance with paragraph 7.1.2 of the East Herts Council Councillor's Complaints Procedure.

The Chairman reminded those present that the Sub-Committee had adjourned the meeting on 30 January 2019 as Members had insufficient time to reach a decision given the time that the hearing closed and the requirement to give full consideration to the item.

The Chairman stated that, following a meeting of the Standards Sub-Committee on 30 January 2019, this meeting was for the Sub-Committee to present its decision as to whether there had been a breach of the Ware Town Council's Code of Conduct by the former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor.

The Chairman reminded everyone present that this was about Standards and the case was not about the circumstances that had led to this complaint or matters of that nature. The Sub-Committee was simply here to decide and give reasons as to whether there had been a breach of the Ware Town Council Code of Conduct.

The Chairman summarised the complaint that had been made to the Interim Monitoring Officer on 9 August 2016. He detailed the allegations that had been made about the former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor. The Chairman referred to the independent investigation that had been undertaken following the submission of the complaint and he reminded those present of the pre hearing that had taken place on 12 October 2018 and the more recent Sub-Committee meeting on 30 January 2019.

The Chairman stated that the request for an adjournment on 30 January 2019 had been considered and refused. The Chairman reminded those present that the hearing on 30 January 2019 had been held in private as the Sub-Committee had resolved to exclude the press and public. The Chairman summarised what had taken place throughout the hearing which had been conducted in line with the East Herts Council Councillor's Complaints Procedure.

The Chairman commented at length in respect of the status of the complainant and emphasised that the complaint had not been made on behalf of Ware Town Council but related to what the complainant alleged that she had experienced personally. The question for determination was whether the conduct of former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor had fallen below the prescribed standards of Ware Town Council's Code of Conduct.

The Chairman summarised the matters that related to whether former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor had been acting in her official capacity or as a private

individual. He referred in detail, to the appearance and submissions of witnesses and commented briefly on the financial aspect of the complaint. He also emphasised that there had been no pre-determination on the part of the Sub-Committee. The Chairman on behalf of Members' thanked the Independent Person for his ongoing counsel.

The Chairman referred to the "Nolan Principles" and commented that the standards imposed upon Members by the Ware Town Council Code of Conduct might be more taxing than those that applied to ordinary members of the public.

The Chairman advised that in this matter, and by reference to Ware Town Council's Code of Conduct, the Sub-Committee finds on the balance of probabilities, as follows:

- Former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor was acting in her official capacity; she took no steps to identify that her conduct in this matter was personal;
- Former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor used her office to secure financial advantage and to pursue a complaint in a way not open to a member of the public;
- Former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor breached the Ware Town Council Code of Conduct by failing to abide by the principles of selflessness, honesty and leadership;

- The principles of **selflessness** was breached because Former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor did not act solely in the public interest but instead, pursued the underlying issues in a manner which resulted in financial benefit to herself with no apparent reciprocal benefit to the Council, Ware Priory Trading or residents;
- The principle of **honesty**, as set out in the Ware Town Council's Code of Conduct was breached. There is no evidence that former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor took steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protected the public interest. There is no sufficient correspondence or evidence that she sought to clarify that she was acting solely as a private citizen;
- The principle of **leadership** as set out in the Ware Town Council's Code of Conduct was breached. Former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor did not provide leadership because if leading by example, she should not have sought or accepted an arrangement which meant that she gained an advantage which was not available to a member of the public;
- **Bullying:** the Investigator did not find evidence of bullying. However, the Standards Sub-Committee found that there had been a failure to treat people with respect contrary to the principles of selflessness, honesty and leadership, which amounted to a breach of the Ware Town Council Code of Conduct. Former

Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor's manner towards Officers was times not as respectful as is required in a professional or personal capacity.

At this point, the Sub-Committee along with the Independent Person, the Monitoring Officer and the Democratic Services Officer withdrew to consider the recommended sanctions. Following this, they returned and the Chairman announced the decision of the Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED – that (A) the sanctions that the Sub-Committee recommends are as follows:

- The above findings be reported to Ware Town Council;
- Former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor be censured by motion by Ware Town Council;
- That the Standards Sub-Committee publish its findings that former Ware Town Councillor Jeanette Taylor has breached the Ware Town Council's Code of Conduct as above.

(B) the underlying situation in this matter played out in the context of Ware Town Council. The Sub-Committee therefore encourage Ware Council to:

- provide training to ensure that all its

present and future Councillors are fully aware of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and why it is important for all Councillors at all times to meet those Standards;

- undergo an independent review of its governance arrangements generally including in respect of (a) the relationship between Members and Officers; (b) having and implementing an effective complaints procedure; (c) placing items of agendas for Committee and other Council meetings; (d) avoiding/managing conflicts of interest between Councillors' personal interests and those as a Councillor; and (e) the relationship between Ware Town Council, Councillors and Ware Priory Trading.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm

Chairman
Date