

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON WEDNESDAY 6 JULY 2022,
AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT:

District Council Members:

Councillors T Stowe, R Bolton,
R Buckmaster, B Deering, A Huggins and
P Ruffles

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Jane Dodson – Datchworth Parish Council
Councillor Vicky Smith – Hertford Town Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

James Ellis	- Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer
Katie Mogan	- Democratic Services Manager

72 APPOINTMENT OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor Bolton and seconded by
Councillor Buckmaster that Councillor Deering be
appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Standards

Committee for 2022/23. After being put to the meeting and a vote taken, the motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED – that Councillor Deering be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee for 2022/23.

73 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Pope, Parish Councillor Hunt and Nicholas Moss, the Independent Person.

74 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Standards Committee.

He reminded Members to use their microphones when speaking.

75 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

76 TRAINING - MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

Paul Hoey from Hoey Ainscough Associates Limited gave a presentation to Members on the Model Code of Conduct.

Councillor Stowe referred to the section on the difference between acting as a Councillor and acting in private life. He said being a Councillor in a small village

meant the community were aware of their role as a Councillor which meant it became a grey area.

Paul Hoey said that behaviour only falls under the Code of Conduct if it relates to council business. He gave examples of behaviour that would and would not fall under the Code of Conduct.

Councillor Ruffles said that some Members use the phrase "if in doubt, declare it" and asked if Paul Hoey could provide some guidelines.

Paul Hoey said it was quite common for Members to over declare. He advised that if Members were in doubt about their interest, then they should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer. He said that democratically elected Councillors should be making decisions for the community and should only be excluded in decisions where there was a clear and absolute conflict of interest.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said he was happy to provide advice to Members if they were unsure about whether they should declare an interest.

Councillor Deering asked if the Nolan principles still applied in the Code of Conduct.

Paul Hoey said that they still applied and the Model Code of Conduct was prefaced by the Nolan Principles. However, these were not enforceable rules so the Code of Conduct was created to translate the principles into a set of standard rules.

Councillor Huggins asked how often a Member needed

to re-sign their register of interest forms and how often the Council needed to review its Code of Conduct.

Paul Hoey said that Members must complete their register of interest forms within 28 days of their election. If a Member's interests change, the Monitoring Officer must be notified within 28 days. He said that some Monitoring Officers may remind Members every year to check their interest forms.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services said that each Member was responsible for maintaining their own registers. He said it was a good idea to send a reminder every year and was something the team could adopt. He added that the Code of Conduct was an ever evolving document that he was constantly looking at.

Councillor Huggins said he thought it was a good idea to remind Members every year to check their register of interest forms and would give weight to the importance of standards.

The Chairman thanked Paul Hoey for his presentation.

77 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

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Chairman
Date