

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 4 FEBRUARY, 2010 AT 4.00PM
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT:

Betteridge, Mr. R. (Chairman) Independent Member

Councillors:

Ansell, Mrs. P.A.	Collis, C.
Burnett, J.	Williams, A.
Elliott, Mr. M.	Independent Member
Chapman, Mrs. J.	Independent Member
Pearson, A.	Hednesford Town Council
Todd, R.	Heath Hayes & Wimblebury Parish Council
Williams, Mrs. P.	Rugeley Town Council

(Apologies for absence were received from: Mr. M. King and Mr. G. Sindrey, Independent Members; Councillors Mrs. D.J. Bennett; Mr. M.J. Holder; and Mrs. P.Z. Stretton; Councillor Mrs. M. Allen (Cannock Wood Parish Council); Councillor K. Baker (Brindley Heath Parish Council); Councillor D. Clarke (Norton Canes Parish Council); Councillor P. Fisher (Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Council); and Councillor E. Smith (Bridgtown Parish Council).

18. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

No declarations of interests were submitted.

19. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November, 2009 be approved as a correct record.

20. Training Needs in Respect of the Code of Conduct and Standards Matters

The Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer that Standards for England appeared to be making no progress in this matter and were unlikely to publish anything further until after a UK

Parliamentary Election had been called. No implementation date had been given, and no guidance in respect of any proposed changes to the guidance.

The Chairman suggested it might be worth making a formal complaint to Standards for England to make known the dissatisfaction with the lack of progress.

The Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer advised that there was a guidance DVD in circulation which had been sent to all Monitoring Officers following amendments to the Code of Conduct in 2007. It seemed likely that this would still be relevant to large sections of the Code of Conduct.

The Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer also suggested that it may be possible to undertake joint training with Stafford B.C. Standards Committee members. Stafford B.C.'s Standards Committee was due to meet on 1 March, 2010, and he would raise the matter with them at the meeting.

The Chairman enquired if there had been any further feedback from the Parishes in respect of training for their Councillors. The Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer noted that such a low level of interest was not unusual: Stafford B.C. has 34 Parishes and only 8 individuals had attended training. Again, he advised that he could undertake this training, if required, but recommended awaiting the revised Code of Conduct implementation dates etc.

The Chairman asked the Parish Council Members present if it was usual practice for them to receive any form of induction / training for their roles as Parish / Town Councillors. Members advised that they were largely reliant on their Clerks disseminating information to them.

Members suggested that all Standards Committee Members should be required to undertake a minimum level of training before being able to consider any "live" matters. The Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer advised that this could be more far reaching than they realised but that he would ensure they received adequate and appropriate training in the event of any "live" issues arising.

21. Independent Members' Forum

The Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer advised of the setting up of an Independent Members' Forum for Staffordshire, the inaugural meeting of which was being held in Stafford on Monday, 29 March, 2010. Invitations were extended to the Council's five independent members, and they were recommended to attend if they could make it. Speakers from Standards for England and the Derbyshire Independent Members Forum would be present to explain the benefits of setting up a County-wide forum.

CHAIRMAN