

Standards Committee
8 JANUARY 2020

Present: Councillors: Brian Donnelly (Chairman), Diana van der Klugt (Vice-Chairman), Frances Haigh, Godfrey Newman, Kate Rowbottom, Jim Sanson, Philip Baxter, Paul Bickford and John Donaldson

Apologies: Councillors: Peter Burgess

Also Present: Monitoring Officer
A member of the public

SC/14 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11th September 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SC/15 **DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

SC/16 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman of the Committee reminded the group of the legal training by Cornerstone Barristers for all district and parish councillors which would take place on 30th January 2020.

SC/17 **STANDARDS UPDATE**

The Monitoring Officer gave an update regarding the progress of the 15 recommendations that came from the Committee on Standards in Public Life. Any changes in law necessary to facilitate the recommendations had been delayed because of the general election and there had been no updates as to when it was expected. The main change from previous codes of conduct was that the Monitoring Officer should now seek the views of the Independent Person at the assessment stage of a conduct complaint.

The Monitoring officer spoke about a New Model Code of Conduct that would be adopted by the Local Authorities and Parish Councils. The New Model Code would provide uniformity across districts and parishes.

The Monitoring Officer gave an update as to the conduct complaints received and gave examples of some of the cases which did require further investigation. They all involved the same parish and mainly involved bullying and the

inappropriate use of social media. The majority were complaints made by a parish councillor made against another parish councillor.

It was noted that no complaints last year or so far this year had been against district councillors. They had all concerned parish councillors. It was also noted that no complaints against the Monitoring Officer had been upheld.

The Monitoring Officer reminded the committee that currently the Council provided details of the behaviour complained about but the names of the complainant or subject members were redacted. Many councils did name and shame subject members and there was a discussion around whether Horsham should do this so that it might act as a deterrent and in view of the fact that there were within the sanctions, few teeth that could be applied.

RESOLVED

That the committee consider publishing the names of those who were the subject of a complaint, along with the parish council involved, on a case by case basis.

That the Committee Officer would find some dates for the Standards Sub Committees to meet. There would be two sub committees formed.

SC/18 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at 3.10 pm having commenced at 1.30 pm

CHAIRMAN