



AGENDA

For a meeting of the
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
to be held on
FRIDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2006
at
2.30 PM
in the
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, COUNCIL OFFICES, ST. PETER'S HILL, GRANTHAM
Duncan Kerr, Chief Executive

Committee Members:	Mr. C. Holtom (Chairman), Mr. F. Mann (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Gibbins, Councillor Lovelock M.B.E., and Councillor Wilks
	A parish representative from: Councillor P Dolby (Braceborough and Wilsthorpe Parish Council), Councillor J Judge (Stamford Town Council), Councillor T Holmes (Bourne Town Council), Councillor R Rose (Thurlby Parish Council).
Committee Support Officer:	Rebecca Chadwick 01476 406297 r.chadwick@southkesteven.gov.uk

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed below.

- 1. MEMBERSHIP**
A parish representative to be appointed.
- 2. APOLOGIES**
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
Members are asked to declare interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.
- 4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH JULY 2006**
(Enclosure)
- 5. APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**
No applications had been received at the time of agenda preparation.

6. SITUATION REPORT - ALLEGATIONS OF BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Monitoring Officer to report. *At the time of agenda preparation, with the exception of the investigation of case 14768.06 now progressing, there had been no change to the situation as presented in report DLS80 on 7th July 2006.*

7. EAST MIDLANDS IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP - PARISH PROJECT WORKER BID

The committee to be updated at the meeting on a bid submitted to the East Midlands Improvement Partnership for funding towards a town/parish council project worker.

8. PARISH TRAINING PLAN

The committee to be updated at the meeting.

9. ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES

The committee to discuss issues they wish the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to raise at the conference.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS, WHICH THE CHAIRMAN, BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, DECIDES IS URGENT



MEETING OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 7 JULY 2006

2.30 PM

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. F. Mann (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)
Councillor Gibbins
Councillor Lovelock M.B.E.
Councillor Wilks

Councillor Dolby
Councillor Holmes
Councillor Judge
Councillor Rose

OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer
Committee Support Officer

45. MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Holmes was appointed the parish representative with voting rights for this meeting.

46. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the Chairman, Chris Holtom.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

48. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5TH MAY 2006

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th May 2006 were confirmed as a true record of the decisions taken.

49. APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

No applications had been received at the time of agenda preparation but one member informed the committee that one was to be expected from Bourne Town Council.

50. SITUATION REPORT - ALLEGATIONS OF BREACHES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND UPDATE ON INVESTIGATION

The Monitoring Officer reported on the current situation with allegations of breaches of the code of conduct as set out in report DLS80 circulated with the agenda. The final report for case 13339.05 was imminent and case 14768.06 had been referred for district investigation and this was underway.

51. PARISH TRAINING PLAN FOR 2006

Decision:

The Chairman of the committee be asked to revise his letter to parish councils regarding training, in consideration of the following points, and that a proposed programme be submitted to the committee in October:

- ***The letter be sent to all parish councils within South Kesteven explaining the committee's approach to its training plan.***
- ***The letter should refer to "town and parish councils".***
- ***Three events across the district be held at larger parish/town council venues to which surrounding parish councils be invited to attend. If a particular request is received from a parish council to host the event, that this be considered.***
- ***If the training programme is repeated the following year, different venues are used where appropriate.***

The Chairman had drafted a letter to send to large parish and town councils offering training to which smaller parish council's could be invited. This was circulated and discussed by the committee. The intention was to seek opportunities to increase understanding of the local code of conduct, explain the work of the standards committee and create an ongoing dialogue. Feedback on previous events organised by the committee had been very positive.

The committee discussed whether or not it was best to write to only the larger parishes. It was considered that to ensure communication throughout the district on the proposed training and to not overlook smaller parishes, all parishes should be contacted. There was a suggestion that the training events follow the arrangements established for the council's six Local Forums but this was considered to be too many meetings initially and that three would be better. Alternative venues could be used in future years to provide a greater geographical coverage.

52. COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION DEBATE

Decision:

That the committee defers this item and reviews its membership after receiving guidance on the new code of conduct.

The vice-chairman introduced this item by explaining that this issue had been raised on previous occasions. Initially, in 2001, the committee had a pool of eight parish representatives but this had reduced to four for a number of reasons. In February 2005, the committee had decided to encourage attendance from all the parish representatives and allow them all to participate in debate, with the voting right passing from one member to another for each meeting. Concern had been expressed about the number of parish members having voting rights.

The Monitoring Officer clarified that the law stated that the committee must have at least one parish voting member for items relating to parishes. Guidance indicated that when district matters were discussed, parish members should not outnumber district members. Research into arrangements at other authorities showed a mixture of one to three parish members having voting rights at other authorities but with no correlation to overall membership of either the committee or the council. One member commented that this committee appeared to have minimal membership for parish representatives, independent members and district councillors.

The committee debated the merits of increasing the general size of the committee. The current effective chairmanship and good dialogue between all members of the committee was appreciated but it was considered that on some occasions, it would have been very valuable to have had more members. This would become even more necessary should the committee receive an increased number of allegations to determine. One member suggested that parish and town councils were often undermined and not given enough weight in decision-making, by a number of organisations. This was noted. It was also suggested that, should the membership of the committee increase, women should be encouraged to join as they were currently under-represented on the committee.

The committee noted that as there may be implications from the forthcoming publication of the new code of conduct, it would be appropriate to wait for guidance on this before making any recommendation to the constitution and accounts committee on its membership. The committee considered that it had been a worthwhile exercise debating this issue.

53. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 3.10p.m.