

REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Meetings held on 11th May and 6th July, 2007

Membership:

Robert Rogers (Independent Member) (Chairman); Councillor John Stone; Councillor Beris Williams; Richard Gething (Town and Parish Council Representative); John Hardwick (Town and Parish Council Representative); David Stevens (Independent Member).

APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS RECEIVED FROM TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILLORS

1. We have granted the following dispensations to:
 - Eleven members of Bartestree and Lugwardine Parish Council in relation to their roles as members of Bartestree Village Hall Committee;
 - Five members of Holme Lacy Parish Council in relation to their roles as trustees of Holme Lacy Village Hall; and
 - Twelve members of Kington Town Council in relation to an employment matter.
2. Following the May 2007 elections, it would be sensible for Parish and Town Councils to review their dispensations if they have new members. We have asked the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to write to them, giving them guidance on the correct procedure.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT) ORDER 2007

3. We have considered the Model Code of Conduct and its implications for Herefordshire in considerable detail, and have made our recommendations to Council. The report from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services with our recommendations is a separate item on this agenda.
4. At our October meeting, we will also review the Codes and Protocols for which we are responsible, to ensure that they are compliant with the new Code.
5. We have already contributed to induction for new Herefordshire Councillors and, in co-operation with the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils, will be taking a full part in training for Town and Parish Councillors.

STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND SUMMER ROADSHOW

6. Two of our members, Mr David Stevens and Mr Richard Gething, represented the Standards Committee at the SBE roadshow in Birmingham on 14 June 2007, which focused primarily on the new Code. They reported that it had been a valuable forum for sharing advice, and they were able to give feedback first-hand on the Committee's views on this subject.

DETERMINATIONS BY THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND – 2007

7. We have considered progress reports on current investigations by the Standards Board for England.

REFERRALS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE FROM THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND

8. The Committee met on Friday 11 May 2007 to consider the final reports of investigations relating to complaints by Mr Mike Wilson against Councillors Polly. Andrews, Mary Bew, Chris Chappell, Marcelle Lloyd-Hayes, Robert Preece, William Walling and Alan Williams (Complaints Nos. 17223.07 to 17229.07 respectively). In each case, we found that there was no failure to follow the Code of Conduct. The full texts of the Decision Notices can be located on the Council's website by clicking on "Council Committees" in the Quick Links box on the homepage, and then locating "Standards Committee", and the agenda for 11 May 2007.

THE LOCAL FILTER PILOT PROJECT

9. The Committee has contributed to the project run by the Standards Board for England to assist planning for the operation of "the Local Filter". In this major change to the local government standards framework, all cases will first be dealt with at the local level, with referral to the Standards Board very much the exception. This is a change for which we have argued strongly, and we are sure that this local ownership of the process will be welcomed in the County.

**ROBERT ROGERS
CHAIRMAN
STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- Agenda papers of the meetings held on 11 May and 06 July 2007.