

MEETING:	STANDARDS COMMITTEE
DATE:	02 JULY 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	DISPENSATIONS TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Purpose

1. To consider an application for a dispensation received from Bridstow Parish Council.

Recommendations

THAT

- (a) **the seven members of Bridstow Parish Council named in the report be granted a dispensation in respect of Bridstow Village Hall**

Background

2. Under the Code of Conduct, town and parish councillors are prohibited from participating in matters in which they have a prejudicial interest. In the normal course of events this would not prejudice the proper working of their councils. There are instances, however, when the number of councillors who would be prohibited from participating will impede the transaction of business.
3. The Relevant Authorities (Standards Committee) (Dispensations) Regulations 2002, amended by the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) (England) Order 2009, give Standards Committees the power to grant dispensations in circumstances where: the number of councillors that are prohibited from participating in the business of the council exceeds 50% of those who are entitled or required to participate, or where the number of members that are prohibited from voting at a meeting would upset the political balance of the meeting to the extent that the outcome of voting would be prejudiced.
4. In each case, the councillor must request the dispensation in writing, setting out why the dispensation is desirable. The Standards Committee must then decide whether, in all the circumstances, it is appropriate to grant the dispensation.

5. The regulations also specify two circumstances where a dispensation may not be granted; first, in respect of participation in business conducted more than 4 years after the date on which the dispensation was granted; and, secondly in relation to prejudicial interests concerning attendance at a scrutiny committee meeting which is scrutinising the activity of any other committee to which the member belongs, or for executive members in relation to their own portfolios.
6. All seven members of Bridstow Parish Council have requested a dispensation in relation to Bridstow Village Hall. They are:

Mr Richard Gething
Mrs Shirley Preece
Mr Simon Brewer
Mrs Margaret Lewis
Mrs Valerie Davies
Mr Russell B Hamilton
Mrs Jenny Colin
7. The Clerk states that the Parish Council is Custodian Trustee of the village hall, and therefore all members are automatically trustees on acceptance of office. The dispensation will enable them to discuss village hall matters. The Standards Committee had previously granted a dispensation to the Parish Council for the same matter, on 21 April 2006, and this has now expired.

Financial Implications

8. None.

Appendix

Letter from the Clerk to Bridstow Parish Council dated 27 April 2010.