

DISPENSATIONS TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

Report By: Legal Practice Manager

Purpose

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

Financial Implications

2. None

Background

3. 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.
4. The Relevant Authorities (Standards Committee) (Dispensations) Regulations 2002 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.
5. 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.
6. The 2002 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.

7. All seven members of Bridstow Parish Council have requested a dispensation in relation to Bridstow Village Hall. The seven members are:

Mr Richard Gething
Mr Paul Stevens
Mrs Shirley Preece
Mr Simon Brewer
Mrs Joan Robertshaw
Mrs Margaret Lewis
Mrs Valerie Davies

8. The Clerk states that the Parish Council is custodian trustee of the village hall, and the dispensation request is on this basis.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the seven members of Bridstow Parish Council named in the report be granted a dispensation in respect of Bridstow Village Hall.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Letter from the Clerk to Bridstow Parish Council dated 23 February 2006.