

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

10.00 A.M.

24TH JANUARY 2014

PRESENT: Councillors Roger Mace (Chairman), Roger Sherlock (Vice-Chairman), Shirley Burns (substitute for Joyce Taylor), Chris Coates, Paul Gardner and Billy Hill

Independent Person

Tony James

Apologies for Absence

Councillors Joyce Taylor and David Whitaker

Officers in attendance:

Sarah Taylor

Chief Officer (Governance) / Monitoring Officer

Peter Baines

Senior Democratic Support Officer

19 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

20 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no items of urgent business.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Gardner declared an interest in item 5 on the agenda, the nature of the interest being that he was a member of the same parish council as the subject member.

22 ALLEGED BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

It was agreed to consider the hearing in public, removing the exemption from publication in respect of pages 14-36 of the agenda, but with the proviso that the press and public would be excluded should members wish to refer specifically to the appendices to the Investigating Officer's report, which would remain exempt from publication.

At 10:25am, the committee adjourned to consider a request from Councillor Dent of Carnforth Town Council, to postpone the meeting, on medical grounds, and an objection from Councillor Dent to Councillor Mace chairing the hearing. Following discussion, it was agreed that the meeting would not be postponed, and would continue as scheduled with Councillor Mace as chairman. The meeting resumed at 10:35am.

The committee considered the Investigating Officer's report into an alleged breach of the code of conduct by Councillor Dent (complaint 3/13).

The complaint had been lodged by Mr Lawrence Branyan about Councillor Ian Dent, of Carnforth Town Council. The Investigating Officer had prepared a report setting out her findings concerning whether Councillor Dent had breached the following paragraphs of the Carnforth Town Council Code of Conduct:

3(1) - you must treat others with respect;

3 (2) (b) - you must not bully any person;

3 (2) (c) – you must not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is or is likely to be:

- i. a complainant;
- ii. a witness; or
- iii. involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings

in relation to an allegation that a member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct.

5 - you must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing the council or the office of councillor into disrepute.

The Investigating Officer presented her report and called Mr Lawrence Branyan as a witness. Mr Branyan answered questions from Councillor Dent and members of the committee. Mr Branyan remained at the meeting as a member of the public after giving evidence.

The committee adjourned for lunch at 12:25pm, resuming at 12:55pm.

Councillor Dent then addressed the Committee, and answered questions from the Investigating Officer and members of the committee.

The committee then adjourned to consider its decision, and the chairman announced that a copy of the decision would be circulated to all parties by post.

The Senior Democratic Support Officer attended the committee's deliberations to record their decision at each stage, and the Monitoring Officer was present to advise and assist on matters of law and procedure and assist in the preparation of the written decision.

The Independent Person was present in an advisory, non-voting capacity.

Resolved:

Preliminary issues

- (1) That the hearing be held in public, with the exemption from publication lifted in respect of pages 14 – 36 of the agenda;
- (2) That the hearing not be postponed, and that it proceed with Councillor Mace as the chairman.

Findings

- (3) That in his conduct towards Mr Branyan, Councillor Dent failed to comply with paragraphs 3(1), 3(2)(b), 3(2)(c) and 5 of the Code of Conduct of Carnforth Town Council;
- (4) That Carnforth Town Council be recommended to censure Councillor Dent, in

respect of his conduct;

- (5) That the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the chairman, be authorised to finalise the written decision to be sent to the parties.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 4:20pm)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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