



**MINUTES of
JOINT STANDARDS COMMITTEE
9 DECEMBER 2016**

PRESENT

Chairman	Councillor Mrs M E Thompson
Vice-Chairman	Councillor Rev. A E J Shrimpton
Councillors	Mrs B F Acevedo and M R Pearlman
Parish Councillors	Councillor S Nunn
Substitute Members	Councillor H M Bass

802. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES

The Chairman drew attention to the list of notices published on the back of the agenda.

803. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R G Boyce MBE, CC and B Ledger. In accordance with notice duly given Councillor H M Bass was substituting for Councillor Boyce.

804. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 February 2016 be received.

Councillor S Nunn firstly questioned the arrangements for electing the Chairman of this Committee. Upon advice from the Committee Services Manager Councillor Nunn said he would be interested to see the Council's constitutional arrangements in relation to this and expressed the view that the Committee should be operating along independent lines and that it ought to be possible for any member of the Committee to be elected Chairman.

Minute 947 – Minutes of Meeting 18 December 2015

Councillor S Nunn then referred to the above Minute and the information provided to the Committee in private session as to the outcome of conduct complaint ref. 5/2015. He expressed the view that in instances such as this that same information should be

supplied to any member of the Committee not present. The Committee Services Manager undertook to update Councillor Nunn on the complaint in question.

RESOLVED

- (ii) that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 February 2015 be confirmed.

805. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were none.

806. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON(S)

The Committee considered the report of the Monitoring Officer on the outcome of the recent advertisement/recruitment process for the appointment of Independent Person(s) under the Localism Act 2011.

On 7 February 2013 the Council resolved to confirm the appointment of Mr Norman Victor Hodson as Independent Person to the Joint Standards Committee, and also the appointment of Mr Steven Ronald Anthony and Mr Jonathan Swan as reserve Independent Persons to the Joint Standards Committee (Minute No. 818 refers).

Subsequent decisions of the Council resulted in the terms of office of the Independent Person(s) being clarified and then extended eventually to 8 February 2017.

The Joint Standards Committee, under delegation from the Council, authorised the Monitoring Officer to proceed with the necessary arrangements for the recruitment of a new Independent Person and two reserve Independent Persons. The positions were advertised in the local press and via the Council's website during October 2016. Other than confirmation from the existing Independent Person (Mr N Hodson) and one of the reserve Independent Persons (Mr S R Anthony) as to their willingness to be appointed for a further term (on the basis of the previous applications submitted) no new expressions of interest were received. It is therefore open to the Council to consider re-appointing the two Independent Persons for a further term (maximum of four years).

The report summarised the role of the Independent Person in relation to the work of the Committee and the operation of the Councillor Conduct Complaints process.

RECOMMENDED that the Council reappoints the current Independent Person (Mr N Hodson) and reserve Independent Person (Mr S R Anthony) for a further period of four years.

807. AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHAIRMAN TO CONSIDER RELEVANT TRAINING / BRIEFING REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Chairman sought the views of members of the Committee on possible areas for briefing and training. It was generally agreed that the role and format of the Committee and the procedural and legal aspects of the operation of the conduct complaints process would be useful topics,

808. OTHER BUSINESS

A reference was made to the point made earlier in the meeting by Councillor S Nunn and it was agreed that there should be an arrangement that enabled any Member not present at a meeting to be updated with information provided at that meeting.

Members then continued the discussion on training/briefing requirements and Mr N Hodson, Independent Person, who was present at the meeting, was invited to offer comment. He gave an outline of his role and the number of complaints with which he had been involved. He expressed the view that it might be helpful if the Committee had greater awareness of the number and nature of complaints. He also referred to the fact that on occasions complaints were raised by Officers against Members and that in the absence of an informal meeting very often the opportunity for early resolution was lost.

Members asked that these points be borne in mind as part of any further briefing/training.

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 2.20 pm

MRS M E THOMPSON
CHAIRMAN

(a)
(b)