



LOGGERHEADS PARISH COUNCIL

Loggerheads Community Fire Station
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Wednesday 17th October 2018 at 1900

At Ashley Methodist Church

STANDARDS COMMITTEE MINUTES

All present will be requested to mute mobile phones and similar appliances

PRESENT: J Vallings (Chair)

J Knight
E Martin
G Sedgley
G Hughes

17/10/1 APOLOGIES

None

No members of the public attended.

17/10/2 COMPLAINT AGAINST THE COUNCIL

The meeting considered a complaint received against the Council and a Councillor regarding a breach of the code of conduct. On the proposal of the Chair and agreed by all the meeting was closed to the public as the complaint related to a Council member.

The Chair proposed the complaint would be dealt with in 4 parts:

1. Implication of wrongdoing by the Clerk in an addendum sent to the original complaint
2. Handling of grant application by Council
3. Breach of code of conduct by Councillor
4. Desired remedy to resolve the complaint.

(i) Implication of wrongdoing by the clerk

The Committee considered the complaint and addendum that referred to the Clerk being reported to have said something to a third person in relation to the handling of the grant application. The Clerk had submitted a response to this part of the complaint and left the meeting while this matter was considered. A vote was held and the meeting rejected this part of the complaint as being without foundation. The Clerk re-joined the meeting.

(ii) Handling of grant application by Council

The complaint is that 'We feel our grant application was not given the impartial and fair consideration that it deserved'. The complaint, comments and observations from Cllrs & Clerk present at the meeting of the Finance Committee and a response from the Councillor subject to the complaint were considered. The meeting discussed whether the grant application had been considered properly by the Finance Committee and the full Loggerheads Parish Council. On the proposal of Cllr Vallings and resolved that the grant had been considered fully, fairly and without bias and that this complaint was not found to be valid.

(iii) Breach of code of conduct by Councillor

The complaint is that a Councillor breached the code of conduct under several headings. The complaint, comments and observations from Councillors and the Clerk present at the meeting of the Finance Committee and a response from the Councillor subject to the complaint were considered. The following was resolved:

Code of conduct 12 - You must not disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you of which you are aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature

Not found, insufficient and conflicting evidence.

Code of conduct 17 -You must disclose the interest at any meeting of the council at which you are present where you have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered.

Not found as the code at 16 refers to "disclosable pecuniary interests", the Councillor did not breach the code under the definition of "disclosable pecuniary interests" but with the benefit of hindsight it would have been better if the Councillor had not been in the Chair for this item considering personal relationships on this occasion.

Code of conduct 11 -You must not do anything that compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of the council.

Not found, no evidence.

Code of conduct 10 - You must not bully any person

Not found, the Councillor was robust in his approach to the complainant who was also robust.

Code of conduct 3 – Selflessness - You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Not found – the Councillor did serve the public interest by looking to protect council expenditure and secure value for money and did not disadvantage the hall application.

Code of conduct 7 - Honesty and integrity -You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned, must not behave improperly and must on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

Not found – there is no evidence that your honesty and integrity can be questioned.

Code of conduct 8 - Leadership - You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the above requirements, by leadership and example in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.

Found in part - The Committee agreed that the very high standard of conduct expected of parish councillors when serving in a public post was not fully met on this occasion. The Clerk pointed this out to the Councillor immediately following this agenda item at the Finance Committee.

(iv) Desired remedy to resolve the complaint

The complainant put forward two desired remedies to resolve the complaint. The first would be for the complainant to present a new application for consideration by councillors not mentioned in the complaint or alternatively re-consideration of the original application with LPC to be invoiced and pay vat.

The Committee agreed the grant application had been properly considered at all the meetings and voted upon and would not be reconsidered.

The second regarding the reduced standards and breaches of code of conduct by a Councillor would be a personal written apology to the hall committee. The Clerk had clarified with the complainant that “personal” was the parish council.

The Committee resolved to write a letter of apology to the Ashley Memorial Hall Committee as the very high standard of conduct expected of parish councillors when serving in a public post was not fully met on this occasion.

The meeting resolved to write to the Councillor advising: although there was no disclosable pecuniary interest involved on this occasion, it would have been better if he had stood aside for this agenda item, considering personal relationships, and should a similar position arise in the future he should withdraw from the Chair and that he be mindful of the high standard of conduct that is required in a public post to ensure that public confidence is secured and preserved.

17/10/3 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

Meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed:.....CHAIR