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Tuesday 1 December 2009

To: Chairman – Kathy English
Vice-Chairman – Alan Hampton

Members of the Standards Committee:

Bob Bryant	Parish Member
Georgina Butcher	Independent Member
Nigel Cathcart	District Council Member, non-group
Sandra Doggett	District Council Member, Independent Group
Michael Farrar	Parish Member
Roger Hall	District Council Member, Conservative Group
John House	Independent Member
Dave Kelleway	Parish Member
Janet Lockwood	District Council Member, Liberal Democrat Group
Cicely Murfitt	District Council Member, non-group
Tony Orgee	District Council Member, Conservative Group
Mary Pilfold-Allan	Independent Member
Eric Revell	Independent Member
Alex Riley	District Council Member, Independent Group
Chris Tomsett	Parish Member
Susan van de Ven	District Council Member, Liberal Democrat Group
James Williams	Independent Member

and to I Dewar (Interim County Executive Officer, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CPALC)), for information.

Dear Sir or Madam

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**, which will be held in the **SWANSLEY ROOM, GROUND FLOOR** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **WEDNESDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2009** at **10.00 a.m.**

Yours faithfully
GJ HARLOCK
Chief Executive

The Council is committed to improving, for all members of the community, access to its agendas and minutes. We try to take all circumstances into account but, if you have any specific needs, please let us know, and we will do what we can to help you.

AGENDA

PAGES

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1. Apologies

To receive apologies for absence from committee members. Apologies

have been received from Councillor Janet Lockwood.

2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** 1 - 6
To authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2009 as a correct record.

4. **Chairman's Address**

DECISION ITEMS

5. **Impact of Suspension on Members' Allowances** 7 - 16
For decision.
6. **HORSEHEATH Parish Council: Requests for Dispensations** 17 - 32
For decision.

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. **2009 Annual Assembly of Standards Committees - Bringing Standards into Focus, 12-13 October 2009** 33 - 46
Reports from attendees attached for information.

Copies of all the presentations and handouts from the Annual Assembly are available on Standards for England's Annual Assembly website, <http://www.annualassembly.co.uk/Eventpresentationsmaterials/>.

8. **Social Networking, Twitter and the Code of Conduct: Guidance Note** 47 - 48
For discussion.

STANDING ITEMS

9. **Update from Assessment and Review Panels** 49 - 50
10. **Advice to, and training of, District and Parish Council Members in relation to the Members' Code** 51 - 54
Standards Committee attendees at the Parish Forum training events in September / October autumn 2009 will be asked to provide their feedback to the full committee.

Document	Weekly Bulletin
Standards for England Bulletin 45	9 September 2009
Guidance note on Social Networking, Twitter and the Code of Conduct	23 September 2009
Chairman's Delegation Meetings: Review of Protocol and Operating Principles (invitation to public meetings) – this matter arose from the recommendations of a Standards Committee Hearing Panel in May 2009	14 Oct 2009 (Parish Councils were invited directly to the 7 October 2009 Planning Committee meeting at which this issue was discussed) and 9 December 2009 (details of 2

	December 2009 Planning Committee decision)
Personal and Prejudicial Interests – Standards for England Guidance 27 October 2009 (attached)	18 November 2009
Lobbying – Standards for England Guidance 28 October 2009 (attached)	18 November 2009

To note.

11. Feedback from Parish Liaison Working Group

Oral feedback from Mr CF Tomsett, Chairman of the Parish Liaison Working Group, which had its inaugural meeting on 30 November 2009.

12. Local Investigations, Hearings and References made to Standards for England

The Assessment Panel has referred three cases originating from the same parish council for a local investigation. There has been one consideration meeting of the hearing panel which upheld the Investigating Officer's findings that there had not been any breach of the Code of Conduct ("a finding of acceptance"). There have not been any cases referred to Standards for England.

To note.

13. Operation of Code of Conduct and other statutory functions of the Monitoring Officer

55 - 94

The revised Code of Conduct had not yet been published at the time this agenda was finalised, but Standards for England says that it is expected in "late autumn" and that Councils will be asked to adopt it in time for the May 2010 elections.

Attached for information are details of six recent decisions by the Adjudication Panel for England, demonstrating a range of outcomes at different levels of local government.

Forest Heath District Council (2 members)	One member found in breach of trying to secure an advantage for his son and of bullying Council officers; the other member found in breach of trying to secure an advantage for his colleague's son.
Suffolk County Council	A member was found to have brought her office into disrepute by using another member's electronic voting card in the Council Chamber after that member had left the meeting and forgotten his voting card.
Crossways Parish Council, West Dorset	A member was found in breach of failing to withdraw after declaring a prejudicial interest. The Tribunal overturned the Standards Committee's decision to suspend the member for three months on the grounds that the member had not

Bardney Group Parish
Council, West Lindsey

had time to consider the Monitoring Officer's advice, given to him immediately before the meeting began; that he did not seek to influence the proceedings; and that he has subsequently undergone training.

A member failed to declare a personal interest, but the Adjudication Panel found that this was an unintentional and technical breach arising from interpretation of the term "well-being". The Adjudication Panel overturned the Standards Committee's decision to censure the member on the grounds that a requirement for training was sufficient. A member was found in breach of failing to treat others with respect after inferring that another member was a witch.

Forest Heath District Council

14. Operation of the Council's "whistle-blowing" policy

The Chairman has reminded Council officers of the whistle-blowing policy at her 11 November 2009 lunchtime seminar.

15. Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday 10 March 2010.

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR VISITORS TO SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HALL

While the District Council endeavours to ensure that visitors come to no harm when visiting South Cambridgeshire Hall, those visitors also have a responsibility to make sure that they do not risk their own or others' safety.

Increased hygiene at South Cambridgeshire Hall

In light of the swine flu pandemic, we have intensified our usual cleaning routines in council buildings. We have also introduced hand gel dispensers throughout the offices, including public areas. When visiting South Cambridgeshire Hall you are encouraged to use these facilities if and when required to help limit the spread of flu.

Security

Members of the public attending meetings in non-public areas of the Council offices must report to Reception, sign in, and at all times wear the Visitor badges issued. Before leaving the building, such visitors must sign out and return their Visitor badges to Reception.

Emergency and Evacuation

In the event of a fire, a continuous alarm will sound. Evacuate the building using the nearest escape route; from the Council Chamber or Mezzanine viewing gallery this would be via the staircase just outside the door. Go to the assembly point at the far side of the staff car park.

- **Do not** use the lifts to exit the building. If you are unable to negotiate stairs by yourself, the emergency staircase landings are provided with fire refuge areas, which afford protection for a minimum of 1.5 hours. Press the alarm button and wait for assistance from the Council fire wardens or the fire brigade.
- **Do not** re-enter the building until the officer in charge or the fire brigade confirms that it is safe to do so.

First Aid

If someone feels unwell or needs first aid, please alert a member of staff.

Access for People with Disabilities

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Toilets

Public toilets are available on each floor of the building next to the lifts.

Recording of Business

Unless specifically authorised by resolution, no audio and / or visual or photographic recording in any format is allowed at any meeting of the Council, the executive (Cabinet), or any committee, sub-committee or other sub-group of the Council or the executive.

Banners, Placards and similar items

No member of the public shall be allowed to bring into or display at any Council meeting any banner, placard, poster or other similar item. The Chairman may require any such item to be removed.

Disturbance by Public

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chairman will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chairman will order their removal from the meeting room. If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairman may call for that part to be cleared.

Smoking

Since 1 July 2008, the Council has operated a new Smoke Free Policy. Visitors are not allowed to smoke at any time within the Council offices, or in the car park or other grounds forming part of those offices.

Food and Drink

Vending machines and a water dispenser are available on the ground floor near the lifts at the front of the building. Visitors are not allowed to bring food or drink into the meeting room.

Mobile Phones

Visitors are asked to make sure that their phones and other mobile devices are set on silent / vibrate mode during meetings or are switched off altogether.