

South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne  
Cambridge  
CB23 6EA  
  
t: 01954 713000  
f: 01954 713149  
[www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk)



**South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council**

29 November 2021

To: Chair – Councillor Anna Bradnam  
Vice-Chair – Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton  
Members of the Civic Affairs Committee – Councillors Henry Batchelor,  
Dr. Martin Cahn, Nigel Cathcart, Mark Howell, Bridget Smith,  
Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer and Heather Williams

Quorum: 3

Substitutes: Councillors Bunty Waters, Nick Wright, Dr. Richard Williams,  
Sue Ellington, Graham Cone, Gavin Clayton, Bill Handley, Geoff Harvey,  
Steve Hunt and Eileen Wilson

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Civic Affairs Committee**, which will be held in **Council Chamber - South Cambs Hall** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **Tuesday, 7 December 2021 at 10.00 a.m.**

**Please note that a training session on the new Code of Conduct for Committee members will commence after the end of the meeting.**

Members are respectfully reminded that when substituting on committees, subcommittees, and outside or joint bodies, Democratic Services must be advised of the substitution **in advance of** the meeting. It is not possible to accept a substitute once the meeting has started. Council Standing Order 4.3 refers.

Yours faithfully

**Liz Watts**

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.**

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## Agenda

<b>Procedural Items</b>	<b>Pages</b>
<b>1. Apologies for Absence</b> To receive Apologies for Absence from Committee members.	
<b>2. Declarations of Interest</b>	

**3. Minutes of Previous Meeting** 1 - 4

To authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2021 and 9 September 2021 as a correct record.

**Information Items**

**4. Update on Code of Conduct Complaints** 5 - 8

**Standing Items**

**5. Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 2 March at 10 am.

## **Notes to help those attending meetings in person at South Cambridgeshire Hall**

Please also refer to any Covid-security measures relating to meetings in the Council Chamber

While we try to make sure that you stay safe when visiting South Cambridgeshire Hall, you also have a responsibility for your own safety, and that of others.

### **Security**

When attending meetings in non-public areas of the Council offices you must report to Reception, sign in, and at all times wear the Visitor badge issued. Before leaving the building, please sign out and return the Visitor badge to Reception.

Public seating in meeting rooms is limited. For further details contact Democratic Services on 03450 450 500 or e-mail [democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk)

### **Emergency and Evacuation**

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

- Do not use the lifts to leave the building. If you are unable to use stairs by yourself, the emergency staircase landings have fire refuge areas, which give protection for a minimum of 1.5 hours. Press the alarm button and wait for help from Council fire wardens or the Fire and Rescue Service.
- *Do not* re-enter the building until the officer in charge or the Fire and Rescue Service confirms that it is safe to do so.

### **First Aid**

If you feel unwell or need first aid, please alert a member of staff.

### **Access for People with Disabilities**

We are committed to improving, for all members of the community, access to our 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. The Council Chamber is accessible to wheelchair users. Infra-red hearing assistance systems are available in the Council Chamber and viewing gallery. To use these, you must sit in sight of the infra-red transmitter and wear a 'neck loop', which can be used with a hearing aid switched to the 'T' position. If your hearing aid does not have the 'T' position facility then earphones are also available and can be used independently. You can get both neck loops and earphones from Reception.

### **Toilets**

Public toilets are available on each floor of the building next to the lifts. These include facilities for disabled people.

### **Recording of Business and Use of Mobile Phones**

We are open and transparent about how we make decisions. Public meetings are webcast and are also recorded, but we allow recording, filming and photography at Council, Cabinet and other meetings, which members of the public can attend, so long as proceedings at the meeting are not disrupted. We also allow the use of social media during meetings to bring Council issues to the attention of a wider audience. To minimise disturbance to others attending the meeting, please switch your phone or other mobile device to silent / vibrate mode.

### **Banners, Placards and similar items**

You are not allowed to bring into, or display at, any public meeting any banner, placard, poster or other similar item. If you do so, the Chair will suspend the meeting until such items are removed.

### **Disturbance by Public**

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings at a meeting, the Chair will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chair 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 Chair may call for that part to be cleared. The meeting will be suspended until order has been restored.

### **Smoking**

Since 1 July 2008, South Cambridgeshire District Council has operated a Smoke Free Policy. No one can smoke at any time within the Council offices, or in the car park or other grounds forming part of those offices.

### **Food and Drink**

Until the lifting of Covid restrictions, no vending machines are available. Bottled water is available for attendees at meetings.



# Agenda Item 3

## South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee held on  
Thursday, 10 June 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Anna Bradnam – Chair  
Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton – Vice-Chair

**Councillors:** Dr. Martin Cahn Nigel Cathcart  
Mark Howell Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer  
Heather Williams

**Officers:** Patrick Adams Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Andrew Francis Electoral Services Manager  
Louise Lord Development Officer  
Rory McKenna Monitoring Officer

Councillors Cllr Geoff Harvey and Cllr Brian Milnes were in attendance remotely, by invitation.

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor Henry Batchelor. Councillor Geoff Harvey was in attendance remotely as a substitute.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Heather Williams declared a non-pecuniary interest as she knew members of Bassingbourn Parish Council who may be affected by a complaint detailed in agenda item 5.

Councillor Nigel Cathcart declared a non-pecuniary interest as he knew members of Bassingbourn Parish Council who may be affected by a complaint detailed in agenda item 5.

Councillor Mark Howell declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 4 as his son had an interest in Dale Manor Business Park, which was in the affected area.

### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2021 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the amending of the word “compliant” to “complaint” in the first sentence of the second paragraph of minute 6.

### **4. Babraham and Sawston Community Governance Review**

The Development Officer presented this report, which provided the details of the consultation on stage two of the Sawston and Babraham Parish Boundary Community Governance Review. She explained that of the 48 responses received, 85% had supported the proposed change and 15% had opposed it. In response to questioning, she explained that the number of responses received was typical for a consultation of this type and that the review was promoted by flyers to all residences in Babraham and Sawston,

online and via social media. She advised that whilst residents were encouraged to respond online, they could access hard copy documents on request.

Councillor Brian Milnes, Local Member for Sawston, stated that the proposed boundary change was straight forward and a large majority of local residents supported it. He thanked the officers for their work.

Members of the Committee made the following points:

- The cooperation between the two parish councils on the boundary change should be welcomed.
- The consultation had shown conclusive support for the boundary change.
- The proposed border followed an obvious boundary line.

Councillor Heather Williams proposed and Councillor Mark Howell seconded the recommendations that the Committee recommend to Council that the proposed boundary be adopted and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England be requested to realign the ward boundaries between Sawston and Duxford so that they remain aligned with the new parish boundary.

A vote was taken, and the Committee unanimously

**Recommended to Council that**

- A)** A new parish boundary between Sawston and Babraham (as proposed by Sawston Parish Council) be adopted (as presented in Appendix B)
- B)** A formal request be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to realign the District Council ward boundary between Duxford and Sawston wards so that they remain aligned with the new parish boundary.

**5. Update on Code of Conduct Complaints**

The Monitoring Officer explained that since the report had been published three additional Code of Conduct complaints had been received, (one of which had been validated) including a complaint about a District Councillor.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

**6. Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 9 September at 10am.

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**The Meeting ended at 10.25 a.m.**

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# **South Cambridgeshire District Council**

Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee held on  
Thursday, 9 September 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Anna Bradnam – Chair  
Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Henry Batchelor Nigel Cathcart  
Mark Howell Heather Williams

Officers: Patrick Adams Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Rory McKenna Monitoring Officer

Councillors Cllr Martin Cahn and Cllr Dr Richard Williams were in attendance remotely.

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Bridget Smith and Aidan Van de Weyer.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Heather Williams and Nigel Cathcart both declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5 Update on Code of Conduct Complaints, as it was probable that they knew the parish councillors of Bassingbourn Parish Council who were the subject of a complaint.

### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the 10 June 2021 had not been included in the agenda papers. It was noted that these would be agreed at the next meeting.

## **4. Code of Conduct**

Councillor Heather Williams introduced this report, as the Chair of the Anti-Bullying Task and Finish Group. She explained that the Group unanimously supported the new Local Government Association Code of Conduct and its attempt to tackle harassment. An implementation date of May 2022 would allow time to train councillors on the new Code of Conduct.

The Monitoring Officer stated that the new Code of Conduct and its guidance would make it easier for the public and councillors when processing complaints. He recommended the extensive guidance from the Local Government Association, which was included in the agenda.

## Parish councils

The Monitoring Officer explained that each parish council in the District could decide whether or not to adopt the new Code of Conduct.

### **Register of Interest forms**

The Monitoring Officer explained that councillors would be required to complete a new Register of Interest form if the new Code of Conduct is adopted.

### **Processing complaints**

In response to questioning the Monitoring Officer explained that cost of an investigation could not be recovered from unsuccessful complainants and in his view members of the public should feel able to make a complaint without the threat of costs being awarded against them should a complaint not be upheld. It was noted that the Council had a Policy for handling unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants and could declare a complainant vexatious if necessary.

### **Acting in the capacity of a councillor**

The Monitoring Officer advised that if councillors declared that they were not acting in their capacity as a councillor then they could not be in breach of the Code of Conduct. There was guidance in the agenda on this issue.

Councillor Dr Claire Daunton welcomed the new Code of Conduct and its reference to respect, politeness and courtesy in speech. Councillor Nigel Cathcart supported the new Code of Conduct and welcomed the definition of bullying and disrespectful behaviour.

By affirmation the Committee

**Recommended to Council** the adoption of the Model Code and Guidance to take effect from May 2022.

## **5. Update on Code of Conduct Complaints**

The Monitoring Officer presented this report, which updated the Civic Affairs Committee on complaints cases regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

## **6. Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee noted that its next meeting would take place on Tuesday 7 December at 10 am.

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**The Meeting ended at 10.30 a.m.**

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# Agenda Item 4



South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

**REPORT TO:**

Civic Affairs Committee

7 December 2021

**LEAD OFFICER:**

Monitoring Officer

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## Update on Code of Conduct Complaints

### Executive Summary

1. To update the Civic Affairs Committee on complaints cases regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.

### Recommendations

2. That the Civic Affairs Committee **note** the progress of any outstanding complaints and the conclusion of cases resolved since the last meeting.

### Details

3. Progress since the last meeting in relation to Code of Conduct complaints is set out in the below table:

Matter Number	District/Parish Council	Allegation/complaint	Outcome
020114	SCDC	<p>This complaint relates to an earlier complaint considered under reference number 019778 and are allegations from the complainant that the member breached the following parts of the code;</p> <p>3.2 respect others and not bully or threaten or attempt to bully or threaten any person</p> <p>3.3 respect the confidentiality of information which you receive as a member by:</p>	<p>After consulting with the Independent Person, we remain of the view that there are no new material issues or evidence raised to support the second complaint that has changed our opinion such that it now merits a formal investigation.</p>

		<p>(a) not disclosing confidential information to third parties unless required by law to do so or where there is a clear and overriding public interest in doing so;</p> <p>3.4 not conduct yourself in a manner which is likely to bring the Authority into disrepute</p> <p>3.7 exercise your own independent judgement, taking decisions for good and substantial reasons by –</p> <p>3.7.2 paying due regard to the advice of Officers, and in particular to the advice of the statutory officers, namely the Head of Paid Service, the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer</p>	
020115	Fowlmere Parish Council	Allegations from the complainant against 6 Parish Councillors that their actions breached the Nolan principles bringing the Parish Council into disrepute.	After consultation with the Independent Person, it was determined that the complaint does not merit a formal investigation as the Parish Councillors have not breached the Code.
020443	Stapleford Parish Council	Allegations from the complainant against a Parish Councillor that their actions breached the Code of Conduct.	The matter was addressed by informal resolution. The Monitoring Officer conveyed an apology to the complainant in a form of words that was given by the Parish Councillor.

## Implications

4. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, there are no significant implications.

## **Background Papers**

Constitution – Code of Conduct

Ethical Handbook - Code of Conduct Complaints Procedure

## **Report Author:**

Rory McKenna – Monitoring Officer  
Telephone: (01223) 457194

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