

A meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** will be held in the **AQUARIUS ROOM, ST IVO LEISURE CENTRE, WESTWOOD ROAD, ST. IVES** on **THURSDAY, 9 JULY 2009** at **4:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

## **APOLOGIES**

**Contact**

### **1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

To elect a Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

### **2. MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th March 2009.

**C Deller  
388007**

### **3. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

To receive from Members declarations as to personal and/or prejudicial interests and the nature of those interests in relation to any Agenda Items - please see Notes 1 and 2 below.

### **4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

### **5. SUB-COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

#### **(a) Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee**

To appoint Members to the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee comprising one Independent Member who shall be Chairman and lead Member, one Parish Council representative and one District Councillor. (In 2008/09, the Committee appointed Mr P Boothman as lead Independent Member and Chairman of the Sub-Committee).

#### **(b) Review Sub-Committee**

To appoint Members to the Review Sub-Committee comprising one Independent Member (who shall be Chairman and lead Member), one Parish Council representative and one District Councillor.

(In 2008/2009, the Committee appointed Mr M Lynch as lead Independent Member and Chairman of the Sub-Committee).

(c) **Standards (Consideration and Hearing) Sub-Committee**

To appoint five Members to comprise the Standards (Consideration and Hearing) Sub-Committee to consider investigation reports and to hold determination hearings. This Sub-Committee must be chaired by an independent person.

(In 2008/09, the Committee appointed Mr D Hall as lead Independent Member, Councillors J D Ablewhite and Mrs B E Boddington and Messrs P L Boothman and M Reece).

From experience thus far, it has been evident that the Monitoring Officer needs to retain some flexibility in appointing Members for the various Sub-Committees which are required to meet under the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 to allow for potential conflicts of interest and to be able to fix dates for meetings within the prescribed timescales in the event of the absence/non-availability of Members on selected dates. To overcome these issues, the Committee is requested to authorise the Head of Legal, Property and Governance and Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the relevant Chairman, to convene meetings of the Referrals (Assessment), Review and Standards (Consideration and Hearing) Sub-Committees as necessary and to appoint Members to the various Sub-Committees as appropriate in accordance with the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008.

**6. ETHICAL STANDARDS AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

To invite Councillor I C Bates, Leader of the District Council to address the Committee.

**7. THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (FURTHER PROVISIONS) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2009**

**C Deller  
388007**

To consider a report by the Head of Legal, Property and Governance and Monitoring Officer regarding the content of Regulations which came into force on 15th June 2009 - to follow.

**8. STANDARDS STATISTICS (Pages 5 - 10)**

**C Deller  
388007**

To note latest statistics published by the Standards Board for England – report by the Head of Legal, Property & Governance and Monitoring Officer enclosed

**9. OTHER ISSUES - ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE AND DISTRICT WIDE (Pages 11 - 14)**

**C Deller  
388007**

To consider a report by the Head of Legal, Property and Governance and Monitoring Officer.

**10. LOG OF CODE OF CONDUCT ENQUIRIES** (Pages 15 - 16)

**C Deller  
388007**

To note the Code of Conduct enquiries recorded by the Head of Law, Property and Governance and Monitoring Officer since the meeting held in March.

**11. REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES**

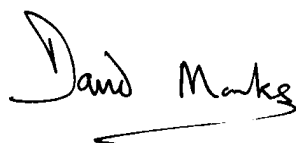
- (a) **Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee**
- (b) **Review Sub-Committee**
- (c) **Standards (Consideration and Hearing) Sub-Committee**

To receive reports from the Chairmen of the three Sub-Committees.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Thursday 3rd September 2009 at 4pm at the Council's Operations Centre, Eastfield House, Latham Road, Huntingdon.

Dated this 2 day of July 2009

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Mankie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chief Executive

## Notes

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*
  - (a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, their family or any person with whom they had a close association;*
  - (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*
  - (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or*
  - (d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*
2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.*

**Please contact Ms C Deller, Democratic Services Manager, Tel No 01480 388007/e-mail: [Christine.Deller@huntsdc.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.Deller@huntsdc.gov.uk) if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee.**

**Specific enquires with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.**

**Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.**

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website – [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk) (*under Councils and Democracy*).

If you would like a translation of Agenda/Minutes/Reports or would like a large text version or an audio version please contact the Democratic Services Manager and we will try to accommodate your needs.

### **Emergency Procedure**

*In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.*

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE held in the Gemini Suite, Huntingdon Leisure Centre, St. Peter's Road, Huntingdon on Thursday, 5 March 2009.

PRESENT: Mr D L Hall - Chairman

Councillors J D Ablewhite,  
Mrs B E Boddington, P J Downes,  
A Hansard, T D Sanderson and  
G S E Thorpe.

Messrs J Alexander, P L Boothman,  
M Lynch, M Reece and G Watkins.

Mrs S Stafford.

### **43. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th December 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed Councillors J Alexander and M Reece, representing Town and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire, to their first meeting of the Committee.

### **44. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No interests were declared.

### **45. REPORT OF THE REFERRALS (ASSESSMENT) SUB COMMITTEE**

Mr P L Boothman, Chairman of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee reported briefly on the five cases which had been considered by the Sub-Committee since the last meeting. Of these, it was noted that no further action was required to be taken by the Monitoring Officer in each case.

Mr Boothman also took the opportunity to advise the Committee of the main points arising during an informal discussion held on the performance of the Sub-Committee thus far. Mention was made of the balance which was required to be adopted by the Monitoring Officer in gathering information on a complaint to present to the Sub-Committee without initiating an investigation and in giving advice and guidance sufficient for the Sub-Committee to reach their conclusions on the case. Mr Boothman added that feedback received on the action taken by the Sub-Committee to-date had been positive, that membership of the Sub-Committee should rotate to enable all Members to develop an expertise in the assessment of complaints under the Code and that Members also should be encouraged to observe the Sub-Committee's proceedings for the same training/development reasons.

**46. APPOINTMENT OF STANDARDS (CONSIDERATION & HEARING) SUB COMMITTEE**

Having been advised by the Monitoring Officer that an investigation of an allegation referred to him by the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee had recently been completed and that it was now appropriate for the case to be referred to the next stage, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillors J D Ablewhite, Mrs B E Boddington and Messrs D L Hall, P L Boothman and M Reece be appointed to comprise the Standards (Consideration and Hearing) Sub-Committee to consider investigation reports and to hold determination hearings.

**47. THE ETHICAL STANDARDS REGIME IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

In accordance with Standards Board Guidance, the Chairman invited Councillor P J Downes, Leader of the Opposition Group on the District Council to address the Committee on his perceptions of the ethical standards regime both locally and nationally.

Despite having reservations about the role of the Standards Board, Councillor Downes indicated his support for the work of the Committee locally and welcomed the introduction of the model code of conduct and particularly the obligation for Councillors to declare, when necessary, any personal and prejudicial interests in business under consideration.

Whilst commending the concept of standards in local government and acknowledging that there had been a marked improvement in the performance of some local councils, he indicated that he remained unconvinced that all Parish Councils clearly understood the aspect of the Code relating to the declaration of interests. In this respect, Councillor Downes endorsed the continuation of the Committee's approach to training. He also expressed some concern at the limited sanctions available to local Committees which had resulted in the more serious cases of misconduct being referred to the Standards Board.

For the future, Councillor Downes was hopeful that the Government might extend the Committee's remit to consider cases involving infringements of electoral law and the behaviour of Councillors during election campaigns.

The Committee thanked Councillor Downes for his contribution to the meeting which had prompted an interesting debate.

**48. THE CASE TRIBUNALS (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2008**

A report by the Head of Legal, Property and Governance was received and noted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the issue, by the Government, on 18th November, of the Case Tribunals (England) Regulations 2008.

Members were advised that the Regulations had prescribed the sanctions available to a Case Tribunal of the Adjudication Panel for England where it had determined that a Councillor had failed to comply with his or her authority's code of conduct. Sanctions ranged from censoring a Member to disqualification from service for five years, training or requesting the submission of an apology.

#### **49. QUALITY STATUS FOR PARISH COUNCILS**

Further to Minute No. 38 of the meeting held on 4th December 2008, the Monitoring Officer reported that he had made enquiries to establish whether there was a requirement for Parish Councils with quality status to receive refresher training on the Code of Conduct at regular intervals.

The Committee was advised that the Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme required town and parish councils to demonstrate that they had reached the standard required by passing several tests, one of which related to the Code of Conduct. However, the Committee expressed disappointment that the Scheme appeared not to require a commitment to regular refresher training on the Code.

In debating how to encourage the introduction of such a requirement to the Scheme, the Committee was further disappointed to hear that the administrative burden and cost of acquiring quality status could be onerous and prohibitive to local councils and thus had affected the take-up and coverage of the Scheme locally.

#### **50. LOG OF CODE OF CONDUCT ENQUIRIES**

Further to Minute No. 42, the Committee received and noted the nature of Code of Conduct enquiries which had been recorded by the Head of Legal, Property and Governance since their last meeting in December 2008 (an extract of the log is appended in the Minute Book). Members were reminded that the areas of the Code which appeared to cause the most concern formed the basis for the Monitoring Officer's approach towards the training of parish councils.

As part of the intention to develop the Standards and Conduct section of the District Council's website, the Chairman suggested that case examples drawn from the log could be placed on the pages as guidance for Town and Parish Councils. It was suggested that a photograph of the Committee also could be placed on these web pages.

#### **51. CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING**

The Committee discussed, for training purposes, the content of a fact sheet issued by the Standards Board for England on "Personal and Prejudicial Interests".

The Monitoring Officer undertook to report on the percentage return of registration forms by Members to a future meeting.

**52. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday 9th July 2009 at 4pm.

Chairman



**“STANDARDS STATISTICS”  
Report by the Head of Legal, Property and Governance**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The local standards framework arising from the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 has been operating now since May 2009. During that time the Standards Board has continued to monitor the performance of local authorities and the District Council has contributed to this process by completing quarterly and annual monitoring returns. With this information in hand, the Board has been able to release data collated on complaints under the Members Code of Conduct and this is presented in paragraphs 2.1 – 2.5.
- 1.2 The Board also has commissioned two independent surveys to measure “support for the Code of Conduct” and the “impact and effectiveness of the ethical framework in local government”. A summary of the findings are set out below in paragraphs 3.1 - 3.7 and 4.1 - 4.5.

**2. STATISTICS**

- 2.1 The following information has been drawn from the quarterly returns in the first year –

**2.2 Standards Committees**

A typical standards committee has **10** members. In an authority without parishes it has **9** members, including **4** independent members. In an authority with parishes it is slightly larger with **11** members, including **4** independent members and **3** parish representatives.

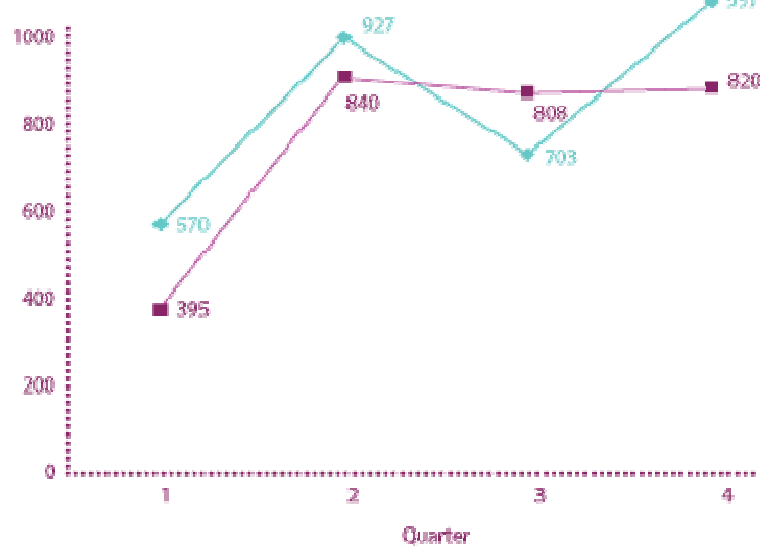
On average, district and metropolitan councils have the largest standards committees and police authorities have the smallest. Standards committee composition has remained constant through all quarters.

**2.3 Case handling**

A total of **2,863** cases have been recorded on quarterly returns so far. This covers the time period 8 May 2008 to 31 March 2008. **345** authorities have dealt with at least one case during the first year. Of all the authorities with cases, the average recorded is **2** per quarter, a total of **8**.

It is still perhaps too early to identify trends and make generalisations, but it is interesting to note that in quarter 4, the number of cases received under the new framework is very similar to the previous two quarters (see chart below). This may indicate that the case load is levelling out, now that potential complainants are aware of the new system.

### Number of cases received

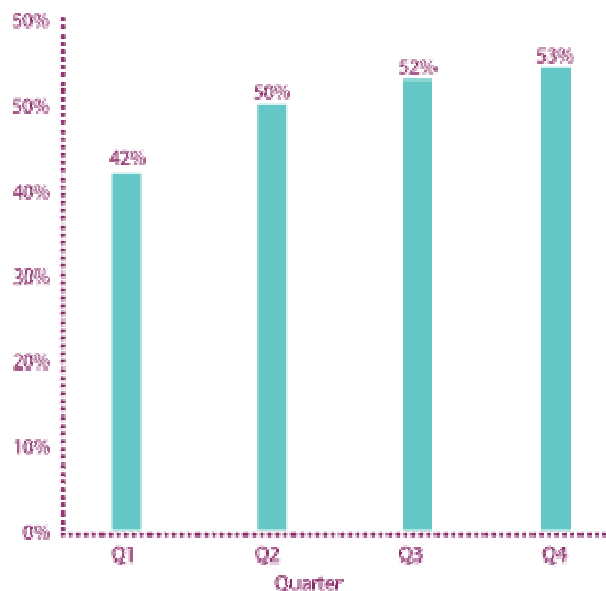


The majority of complaints, **54%**, are made by the public and **36%** are from council members. The remaining **10%** are from a combination of officers, parish or town clerks, MPs, monitoring officers, and those that fall into the category of 'other'. Again, these percentages have seen little change during the year.

#### 2.4 Initial assessment

The percentage of cases where no further action is taken is increasing each quarter.

### Percentage of no further action decisions



There have been 526 review requests through the year and 384 of these have been assessed. **94%** have remained 'no further action' and the other 25 (**6%**) were either referred for investigation or referred to the Board.

There are 224 cases with investigation outcomes recorded on quarterly returns. In **71%** of cases, no breach of the Code was found. In **25%** of cases, a breach was found and a penalty was imposed, and in **4%** of cases a breach was found but no further action was taken.

## **2.5 Good response for annual returns**

There has been a good response to the annual return questionnaire, which was launched on 20 April 2009.

As of 29 May, 95% of authorities had completed a return. This figure includes the new unitary authorities, which completed a shortened version.

The Board is now entering the analysis phase and first impressions are that there is a good range of notable practice to share with standards committees. More information about the findings will be reported to a future meeting.

## **3. SUPPORT FOR CODE OF CONDUCT 'REMAINS HIGH'**

3.1 Newly-published research suggests that member behaviour is improving and that support for the Code of Conduct remains high.

3.2 The Standards Board has surveyed the level of satisfaction in local government with performance, and attitudes to the ethical environment, every two years. This year they commissioned BMG Research to carry out this survey on their behalf. The survey was first undertaken in 2004 and was repeated in 2007.

3.3 The report's key findings are:

62% consider the Board successful in keeping local government, in general, informed about what they are doing (52% in 2007 and 46% in 2004).

Support for the Code of Conduct remains high - 94% support the requirement for members to sign a Code of Conduct (93% in 2007 and 84% in 2004)

47% of respondents stated that they think members standards of behaviour have improved (44% in 2007, 27% in 2003).

75% of stakeholders have confidence in the way their local standards committee deals with complaints about members.

3.4 This year the Board asked respondents if they support the requirements for an officer's code - 88% of members expressed support for a requirement for an officer's code compared with 70% of monitoring officers and 78% of town/parish clerks. This information will be conveyed to the department for Communities and Local Government.

- 3.5 Questions asked in the survey covered a number of areas including:
- attitudes to the Standards Board and ethical environment;
  - perceptions of the Standards Board;
  - views on the Board's publication and website; and
  - suggestions for ways in which the Board can improve our communication.
- 3.6 In total, BMG received 1,973 completed questionnaires; this represents a response rate of 44% among town and parish councils, and 32% among principal and other authorities.
- 3.7 The research findings allow the Board to identify strengths and weaknesses, as well as demand for services. In this way the Board can tailor their communications and advice and guidance to the needs of stakeholders. Since the research also collects data on attitudes to the ethical environment, the Board can also use it to help assess the impact of the standards framework

#### **4. "STUDYING THE IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ETHICAL FRAMEWORK IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT"**

- 4.1 In 2006, the Board commissioned Cardiff University to carry out a five-year project to identify the impact of the standards framework within nine local authorities. Year one of this study is now complete.
- 4.2 This project also involved a survey of the public within the nine areas to identify any link between the activities of a local authority and public perceptions. This research is being led by Dr Richard Cowell from the Centre for Local and Regional Government Research.
- 4.3 The research aims to address three main questions:
- Has the ethical framework caused any changes in local government processes and systems, and culture and values?
  - Has the ethical framework had any effect on the conduct of councillors?
  - Has the ethical framework had any effect on public attitudes to local government either directly, or through any changes in council processes and/or councillor conduct?

#### **4.4 What has the research found so far?**

**Changes in processes, systems, culture, and values:** The research identifies that, in most councils, the ethical framework and standards have become established and accepted as part of corporate life. The majority of respondents are positive about the move towards local regulation (apart from a concern about costs). The formal components of the ethical framework are being implemented successfully and there is some desire among those interviewed for committees to take a more pro-active role in promoting good conduct.

**The conduct of councillors:** The research reveals many feel that the conduct of councillors has improved in recent years, and that ethical issues are being treated seriously. There also seems to be widespread support for the view that the ethical framework has been beneficial. Councils with better conduct tend to make more effort to continually train and remind councillors of their responsibilities, and to make involvement in training mandatory. The ethical framework has helped improve conduct by acting as a regulatory mechanism, being used to support the sanctioning, demotion or resignation of councillors who have caused serious ethical problems.

**Effect on public attitudes:** The research found that more positive public survey responses for trust are achieved in councils displaying good standards of conduct. In addition, councils with high levels of trust tend to be well managed. Nearly half of the public survey respondents were confident that their local authority would uncover breaches in standards of behaviour by a councillor. Furthermore, a similar proportion believe that those breaching the Code would be dealt with effectively.

4.5 The research has also highlighted two very useful typologies, “Virtuous circles”, and ‘Spirals of despair’.

“**Virtuous circles**” - refer to those organisational and cultural factors that lead to effective use of the ethical framework and good conduct

“**Spirals of despair**” - are factors that result in poor conduct



## **5. CONCLUSION**

5.1 The Committee is request to note the information presented.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Bulletin No. 44 – Standards Board for England

**Contact Officer:** Christine Deller, Democratic Services Manager  
☎ 01480 388007

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**9TH JULY 2009**

**OTHER STANDARDS ISSUES**  
**(Report by the Head of Law, Property and Governance**  
**and Monitoring Officer)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Committee is requested to nominate Members to attend the 2009 Annual Assembly of Standards Committees which is to be held at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham on 12th and 13th October 2009.
- 1.2 In addition to the Monitoring Officer, the Committee has in previous years authorised the attendance of up to three Members and these places have been reserved in advance.
- 1.3 For the information of new Members, conference fees, travelling and accommodation expenses are met by the District Council.
- 1.4 Members may recall the discussion at the last meeting (Minute No. 50 refers) and the Chairman's objective to raise the profile and work of the Standards Committee and the Code of Conduct. To this end, the Monitoring Officer drafted an article in consultation with the Chairman, and this was published in the May 2009 edition of District Wide which is circulated to all homes in Huntingdonshire. A copy of the piece is appended hereto.

**2. CONFERENCE DETAILS**

- 2.1 This year's conference "Bringing Standards into Focus" will present an opportunity for delegates to share their own experiences, expertise, challenges and successes, and discuss how their authorities are delivering local standards to enable the Assembly to share good and innovative practice.
- 2.2 The 2009 Assembly will host a range of sessions delivered by local government experts on -
  - making sense of political party governance and discipline;
  - exploring the effectiveness of the ethical environment;
  - working effectively with Members, Council leaders and Chief Executives to embed high standards in the culture and governance of the Authority; and
  - improving the skills of the Standards Committee.
- 2.3 A range of workshops, plenary sessions and advice clinics concentrating on good practice and key areas of the standards framework will also be available. Session themes include sharing the

lessons learned about local assessment; experiences of managing investigations and sanctions; understanding the latest revisions to the Code of Conduct; the practical outcomes of alternative action and a step by step guide to setting up joint Standards Committees.

- 2.4 The daily event programme is available to view using the following link -

[www.annualassembly.co.uk/eventprogramme/monday12thoctober](http://www.annualassembly.co.uk/eventprogramme/monday12thoctober)

### 3. **CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 The Committee is requested -
- to nominate three Members to attend the 2009 Annual Assembly of Standards Committees; and
  - to note the content of the article 'Cracking the Code' published in the May 2009 edition of District Wide.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Letter received from the Standards Board for England - May 2009.

**Contact Officer: Christine Deller, Democratic Services Manager -  
Tel: (01480) 388007.**



# Raising awareness about burglaries

Although Huntingdonshire is a low crime area, the Community Safety Partnership and Cambridgeshire Constabulary are asking homeowners to review security in the light of an increase in reports of domestic and business burglaries in parts of the country.

Advice includes:

- Keep doors and windows closed and locked or in a ventilated but locked position, even when you are inside the house.
- Check and lock doors with a key - never assume that just pushing up an internal handle will lock the door.
- Remove keys from window and door locks. Keep them in a safe place where all the family can find them in an emergency.
- Never leave keys, bags and money in view on a windowsill or on show through a window. They can be a temptation for an opportunist burglar.
- Ensure key racks or shelves next to a door cannot be reached through the letterbox.
- Use timer switches for lights and radios when you are going to be away from your house after dark.
- Use lights at the front and rear of your property that are activated when someone approaches.
- Put bolts and padlocks on side gates at the top, middle and bottom. A single top bolt is easy to reach and open.
- Consider chaining together all high value items stored in a shed or garage. Use a wireless alarm or link your shed or garage into your home intruder alarm system.
- Mark valuable and sentimental personal possessions with liquid DNA kits or with an engraving kit for items such as tools and cycles.
- A visible intruder alarm box can be a deterrent to an opportunist burglar. Consider installing a DIY or supplier-installed system.



# Cracking the code

The Council's Standards Committee is responsible for dealing with complaints concerning alleged misconduct of all district, town and parish councillors within our district.

Under our code of conduct councillors must:

- declare any personal and prejudicial interest they have in connection with matters under consideration
- register and declare any gifts and hospitality received in their position as a councillor over £25
- treat others with respect
- not bully or intimidate
- not bring their office or the council into disrepute
- not use their position improperly
- not breach any equality laws
- not disclose confidential information, except in limited situations.

The Standards Committee has an independent chairman, who is not a councillor. Three other independent people also sit on the committee, in addition to three parish councillors and seven district councillors.

Currently the Standards Committee can only deal with complaints about councillors when they are acting, or give the impression they are acting, in their official capacity e.g. at meetings, or as a representative of the council. It cannot deal with complaints about decisions and actions of the council as

a whole, or of officers of the council.

Whilst the Standards Committee deals with complaints, it prefers to try to avoid problems arising, which are more often due to a lack of understanding, rather than a deliberate intent to breach the code.

Doug Hall, the independent chairman of the Standards Committee said: "We deal with all complaints impartially and without political or other bias, imposing appropriate sanctions on councillors who breach the code of conduct."

"However, we consider it to be equally important, to increase knowledge and understanding of the code and encourage good practice, which we achieve by regular briefings, training sessions and presentations for district and parish councillors."

A complaint form can be downloaded from the Standards and Conduct page of the council's website:

[www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk) and should be sent or e-mailed to Colin Meadowcroft, Monitoring Officer, at Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 3TN (e-mail [colin.meadowcroft@huntsdc.gov.uk](mailto:colin.meadowcroft@huntsdc.gov.uk)).

- Further advice and information can be obtained from the Standards Board website at [www.standardsboard.gov.uk](http://www.standardsboard.gov.uk)

## Internet payments now available

You can now pay your council tax, business rates, sundry debts and parking charges using the internet.

Go to [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk) and click on the quick link for online payments on the left hand side of the screen. This will then take you to a secure payment site where you can complete the transaction.

You will need to know your bill or invoice number and have your debit or credit card ready. Council tax and business rates customers who wish to use a credit card will have to agree to pay the 1.6 per cent surcharge we pass on from the internet payment provider. Debit card payments are free.

For more information visit the Home Office website [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk) or take part in a three-minute test that will score your level of protection and offer advice. Information is also available from Cambridgeshire Constabulary [www.cambs.pnn.police.uk](http://www.cambs.pnn.police.uk) or the Crime Reduction website [www.crimereduction.gov.uk](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk)

If you have information about, or witness suspicious activity regarding burglaries or other crimes, call Cambridgeshire Constabulary on 0845 456 4564 or 999 in an emergency.

For more information about Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership contact 01480 388388.

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## ENQUIRIES RECEIVED SINCE 5TH MARCH 2009

|     |                  |  |   |  |              |
|-----|------------------|--|---|--|--------------|
| 44. | 6.4.09           | Oldhurst Parish  | Enquiry as to whether Parish Councillor had a personal or prejudicial interest in a planning application for development on land contiguous to his property.  | Advice given on personal and prejudicial interests and entitlement to speak should Parish Council allow public speaking, and the questions the Parish Councillor needed to ask themselves to determine their interest.(CM) | 8, 10 and 12 |
| 45. | April, May, June | Stow Longa Parish, Yelling Parish C&PALC, Kimbolton Parish | Enquires as to appropriate response to give to developers wishing to make presentations to parish councils/councillors on proposed development in the parish. | Advice given based on District Council's Planning Code of Good Practice. (CM/CD)   |              |
| 46. | 11.5.09          | Waresley Parish  | Enquiry as to whether Parish Councillor had a personal or prejudicial interest in the matter of a footpath/bridleway issue                                    | Advice given on nature of personal and prejudicial interests and what questions the Parish Councillor needed to ask themselves to determine their interest. (CM)   | 8, 10        |
| 47. | 5.09             | Alconbury Parish   | Enquiry as to whether a change in the circumstances of a Parish Councillor required to be registered.   | Advice that the Parish Councillor required to amend his declaration and 'changes' form sent to Clerk for the purpose. (CD)   | 13           |
| 48. | 1.6.09           | Kimbolton Parish   | Enquiry as to whether a Parish Councillor had a personal or prejudicial interest in a matter  | Advice that Councillor had a personal and prejudicial interest. (CM)   | 8,10         |



|  |         |                  |  |  |         |
|--|---------|------------------|--|--|---------|
|  | 25.6.09 | Kimbolton Parish | involving planning development.<br>Enquiry as to whether a Parish Councillor with potential interests could attend a Parish Council meeting to provide information on a planning application if asked. | Advice that it would be safer for the Councillor to declare a personal and prejudicial interest and leave the meeting. The Clerk was advised to take a note of the questions unable to be answered for response at a future meeting.<br>(CM) | 8,10,12 |
|  |         |                  |  |  |         |
|  |         |                  |  |  |         |