

THESE MINUTES NOT YET CONFIRMED

**EPPING FOREST LOCAL COUNCILS**

**JOINT STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the inaugural meeting held on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012 in the Council Chamber, Loughton Town Council**

**Present:**

Cllr Mrs J Share-Bernia, Buckhurst Hill Parish Council  
Cllr W Breare-Hall, Epping Town Council  
Cllr C C Pond, Loughton Town Council  
Cllr Mrs R Padfield, Moreton, Bobbingworth & The Lavers Parish Council  
Cllr Mrs D Borton, Nazeing Parish Council  
Cllr B Surtees, Ongar Town Council  
Cllr R Russell, Stapleford Abbots Parish Council  
Cllr A Purkiss, Theydon Bois Parish Council  
Cllr Mrs L Mitchell, Waltham Abbey Town Council

**Also present:**

Colleen O'Boyle (Monitoring Officer – Epping Forest District Council)  
Mrs E K Walsh, Town Clerk, Loughton Town Council

**Apologies:**

North Weald Bassett Parish Council

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**1 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2012-13**

Cllr Borton, as the member with the longest continuous service, took the chair for Agenda item 1 and invited nominations for Chairman.

Cllr C C Pond was proposed and seconded and, there being no other nominations, Cllr Pond was elected Chairman for 2012-13.

Cllr Pond took the chair and invite nominations for Vice-Chairman.

Cllr Surtees was proposed and seconded and, there being no other nominations, Cllr Surtees was elected Vice-Chairman for 2012-13.

**2 Constitution of the Epping Forest Local Councils Joint Standards Committee**

The Committee confirmed the Constitution of the Epping Forest Local Councils Joint Standards Committee (JSC) as drafted by Epping Forest Branch of the Association of Local Councils at its meeting on 13 June 2012.

**3 Membership of the Joint Standards Committee**

The membership of the JSC was confirmed as follows:

<b>Council</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Buckhurst Hill Parish Council	Cllr Mrs J Share-Bernia
Epping Town Council	Cllr W Breare-Hall
Lambourne Parish Council	TBC

Loughton Town Council	Cllr C C Pond
Moreton, Bobbingworth & The Lavers Parish Council	Cllr Mrs R Padfield
Nazeing Parish Council	Cllr Mrs D Borton
North Weald Bassett Parish Council	TBC
Ongar Town Council	Cllr B Surtees
Stanford Rivers Parish Council	TBC
Stapleford Abbots Parish Council	Cllr R Russell
Theydon Bois Parish Council	Cllr A Purkiss
Waltham Abbey Town Council	Cllr Mrs L Mitchell

#### **4 Clerk to the Joint Standards Committee**

It was NOTED that Mrs Walsh had agreed to act as Clerk for the Annual and Ordinary Meetings of the JSC but that clerking arrangements for the additional meetings called to consider complaints would need to be confirmed. The Committee agreed that the Chairman should discuss this position with Mrs Adriana Jones, Clerk to Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers and Assistant Clerk to North Weald Bassett Parish Councils.

#### **5 Information from the Monitoring Officer**

Mrs O'Boyle confirmed that by signing up to the Constitution of the JSC, member councils had committed to paying their share of the costs for any investigation under the Code of Conduct involving one their own members.

These costs would include the investigation fee (at £85 per hour – the PPL rate), clerking costs and hall hire where appropriate. Recent investigations under the Code had led to fees accrued in the region of £3,000 - £5,500, but depended on the complexity of a complaint. Members were reminded that there was no fee for the initial enquiries into any complaint by the Monitoring Officer and her staff. Under delegated powers, the Monitoring Office could dismiss vexatious complaints without reference to the JSC.

Mrs O'Boyle requested that all member councils of the JSC provide her with a written undertaking that they will pay these costs promptly.

#### **6 Working Arrangements**

Members noted the following items:

- i. All initial approaches and matters regarding complaints under the Code of Conduct should be channelled through the Monitoring Officer and her staff.
- ii. The Clerk to the JSC would be briefed by Mr Simon Hill, the Local Assessments Officer at Epping Forest District Council.
- iii. Copies of agendas and minutes for the JSC should be provided to the Monitoring Officer.
- iv. Enquiries from parish and town councillors for dispensations should be sent initially to the Monitoring Officer. Under delegated powers, she would rule on those of a factual nature; the remainder would be referred to the JSC or a panel of the JSC for further consideration as allowed for under its Terms of Reference.
- v. Mrs O'Boyle confirmed she was prepared to attend meetings of the JSC to provide information and advice for any hearings. She may also bring Mr Simon Hill, who would normally carry out the initial enquiry into a complaint.

- vi. Epping Forest District Council would appoint independent persons but there should be no direct contact by the JSC.
- vii. Conciliation – local councils should strive to ensure that complaints did not reach the Monitoring Officer unless conciliation had been attempted locally or unless criminal in nature.
- viii. Independent persons were to receive an induction from the clerks on local council procedures.

Members thanked Mrs O'Boyle for attending the meeting.  
The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Date of next meeting to be confirmed.