

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**  
**Friday, 28 November 2014**

Minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held at Committee Room 1 - 2nd Floor West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 28 November 2014 at 1.45 pm

**Present**

**Members:**

Edward Lord (Chairman)  
Oliver Lodge (Deputy Chairman)  
Nigel Challis  
Deputy Alastair King  
Tom Sleigh  
Judith Barnes (Co-opted Member)  
Mark Greenburgh (Co-opted Member)  
Dan Large (Co-opted Member)

**Officers:**

Lorraine Brook	- Town Clerk's Department
Gregory Moore	- Town Clerk's Department
Michael Cogher	- Comptroller & City Solicitor
Edward Wood	- Comptroller & City Solicitor's Department
William Chapman	- Private Secretary & Chief of Staff

**Also Present:** Anju Sanehi (Independent Person) and Alderman Sir David Wootton (Chairman, General Purposes Committee of Aldermen) were also present at the meeting.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Neil Asten (Independent Person), Michael Hudson, Felicity Lusk (Co-opted Member), Alderman Julian Malins, Virginia Rounding and Chris Taylor (Independent Person).

The Chairman then formally welcomed Mr Greenburgh and Mr Large to their first meeting of the Standards Committee in their capacity as Co-opted Members.

**2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were none.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 16th May and 11th September 2014 were approved as accurate records.

**Resolved:-** That the minutes of the meetings held on 16th May and 11th September 2014 be approved as accurate records.

## **MATTERS ARISING**

A query was raised in respect of the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations and when the next annual review was anticipated. The Town Clerk advised Members that the review would take place at the May meeting of the Committee, following the start of the new municipal year. Whilst it was noted that Member/Officer related issues were generally dealt with informally via the Chief Commoner and the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen and they were both invited annually to speak to the Committee about such matters, tribunal related matters were dealt with via the Establishment Committee. It had previously been agreed that the Committee would receive updates in respect of tribunals, although no update had been provided over the past twelve months. The Comptroller & City Solicitor undertook therefore to bring the Establishment Committee's report on such matters to the next meeting of the Standards Committee for information.

**Resolved:-** That the report of the Establishment Committee, pertaining to Industrial Tribunals, be submitted to the next meeting of the Standards Committee for information.

### **4. GUIDANCE TO MEMBERS- REVISED MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Town Clerk and the Comptroller & City Solicitor relative to the issuing of guidance for Members in respect of the revised Members' Code of Conduct, which was approved by the Court of Common Council on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

Draft guidance was before the Committee for consideration and Members' views were sought ahead of circulation to all Members and Co-opted Members with a request, as per the previously agreed annual reminder process, that Members' Declarations be reviewed and updated ahead of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

It was noted that Members of the Court had been advised that the guidance for Members would include examples of relevant issues in respect of non-pecuniary interests (paragraph 7). Consequently, it was agreed that the guidance should feature additional examples of relevant clubs/societies requiring registration and examples of fraternal societies such as the Freemasons and the Buffaloes (paragraph 7 (c)). It was agreed that a new paragraph 19 should be introduced to include the various examples.

With regards to gifts and hospitality that do not need to be disclosed and the guidance to Members at paragraph 21, it was agreed that the reference to garden parties at Buckingham Palace should be amended to read as: "any invitation from Her Majesty The Queen." It was agreed that reference to the Chairman of the Planning Committee at paragraph 22 should be amended to read as: "any Member of the Planning & Transportation Committee." At paragraph 23, Members agreed that "livery company dinners" should be deleted and in paragraph 23, "exceptional" should be deleted at the second bullet point.

A query was raised regarding hospitality received at major events such as MIPIM (explain abbreviation) and it was agreed that whilst hospitality provided by the City of London Corporation would not need to be declared, any hospitality received by City Corporation representatives whilst in attendance at MIPIM would need to be declared.

With regards to paragraph 21, it was agreed that as Members did need to declare relevant gifts and hospitality, the sentence should read as follows: "Gifts and hospitality provided by the Corporation do not need to be disclosed – this will include ..." With regards to the arrangements for ceremonial office holders the Chairman advised the Committee that this aspect would be addressed in separate guidance following the Committee's discussion at Item 5 of the agenda: Members' Declarations – Special Provisions for Ceremonial Office Holders.

**Resolved:-** That –

- (i) the amendments agreed by the Committee, as set out above, be incorporated in the Guidance for Members in respect of the Members' Code of Conduct; and
- (ii) delegated authority be granted to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Standards Committee to approve the final wording of the Guidance for Members in respect of the Members' Code of Conduct to ensure that the annual reminder to Members to review and update their Declarations, accompanied by the guidance, be circulated at the earliest opportunity so that all Declarations are updated by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

## **5. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS - SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR CEREMONIAL OFFICE HOLDERS**

The Chairman welcomed Alderman Sir David Wootton (Chairman of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen) and William Chapman (Private Secretary & Chief of Staff) to the meeting and, with reference to the joint report of the Town Clerk and the Comptroller & City Solicitor, provided an overview of the Committee's previous discussions about the arrangements for ceremonial office holders in respect of the receipt of gifts and hospitality. The Comptroller & City Solicitor then explained the legal position in respect of the declaration of gifts and hospitality by ceremonial office holders such as the Lord Mayor and highlighted the importance of protecting the reputation of the organisation and also relevant individuals.

With regards to the current arrangements in operation at Mansion House, Alderman Sir David Wootton explained that any gifts received by The Lord Mayor were gifts of political courtesy and the protocol for giving and receiving such gifts was quite clear about what was appropriate and could not therefore be avoided. Members were advised that all gifts were logged on a register which was managed by Mansion House and The Lord Mayor was then invited to consider whether to retain the gift or donate it to the City of London Corporation. It was noted that donated gifts were put on public display at meetings of the Court of Common Council ahead of submission to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department for safe-keeping. With regards to those gifts

that were retained by The Lord Mayor, such gifts were not valued as it would be difficult to realistically value the majority of gifts and, most importantly, there could be diplomatic implications of disclosing estimated values. With regards to hospitality, it was noted that hospitality was not registered, although The Lord Mayor's diary was widely accessible.

William Chapman (Private Secretary & Chief of Staff) confirmed that the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department similarly retained a list of gifts received by the Lord Mayor and passed to the Department. In respect of those gifts received by The Lord Mayor Locum Tenens, it was up to The Lord Mayor and The Lord Mayor Locum Tenens to determine whether a gift would be retained or donated. Members were advised that the majority of gifts did not exceed the agreed threshold but that on an occasion where they did The Lord Mayor and the Private Secretary would discuss the matter. The Private Secretary went on to comment that there had been a cultural shift over recent years so when exceptional gifts were received the retention of such gifts was discussed with The Lord Mayor to ensure that there was no reputational risk, organisationally or individually.

The Chairman queried whether it was appropriate to have a separate register of interests for The Lord Mayor during their time in office, or whether all gifts and hospitality should in fact be registered on the Members' declaration and published to the webpages for public inspection. Alderman Sir David Wootton responded that there should be some distinction between the individual's declaration and also the gifts/hospitality received whilst in office as The Lord Mayor. He referred to potential diplomatic implications of publishing a register for The Lord Mayor and the ramifications of under/over valuing items. This point was noted by a number of Members who agreed that there could be significant reputational risk to individuals on the basis of registering what had and had not been retained. With regards to Freedom of Information requests about gifts and hospitality, were such a request likely to be received the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department would most likely disclose the list of those items retained in the archive.

It was suggested that the arrangements for ministers in respect of the receipt of gifts and hospitality be considered by way of a helpful comparison, although the Chairman stressed that the different roles and different funding arrangements had to be taken into account. He suggested that the best option could be to disclose all received gifts, the name of the donor and the date of receipt but not to indicate on the register whether they had been retained, thus ensuring transparency but also affording some protection diplomatically. A link from the incumbent's webpage – where their individual register was published – could take the user to The Lord Mayor's register to ensure that all Members were treated in the same manner. Likewise, a similar arrangement could be introduced for other ceremonial office holders such as the Sheriffs and the Chief Commoner.

With regards to hospitality it was agreed that there needed to be greater transparency about the hospitality received by The Lord Mayor, taking into account the need also for some sensitivity. The Private Secretary suggested

that the list of hospitality could be produced quarterly on a retrospective basis, identifying the total number of events attended and reporting, by exception, where hospitality had been provided by an organisation/individual on multiple occasions. Whilst it was agreed that the list should set out who had provide the hospitality, there was some concern about the inclusion of events where there might be some commercial or diplomatic sensitivity. Consequently, it was agreed that the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen be asked, at their next meeting in February 2015, to consider the Committee's views and produce some guidance for The Lord Mayor in respect of the registration of gifts and hospitality and consider the introduction of the publication of a quarterly register of hospitality and the rolling-registration of gifts via a Lord Mayor's webpage, both of which would be managed by Mansion House. Following the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen's deliberation of this matter in February, the Standards Committee would be updated at its next scheduled meeting.

**Resolved:- That –**

- (i) the Standards Committee's views regarding the special provisions for ceremonial office holders such as The Lord Mayor, in respect of gifts and hospitality, be submitted to the February meeting of the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen for consideration;
- (ii) the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen be asked to comment on the introduction of a register, which would be published on a quarterly basis, of retrospective hospitality received by The Lord Mayor (excluding diplomatic or commercially sensitive aspects) and reporting, by exception, where multiple instances of hospitality were received from the same provider;
- (iii) the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen be asked to introduce the rolling-registration of gifts received by The Lord Mayor on a separate webpage linked to an individual's Declaration, managed by Mansion House;
- (iv) the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen be asked to consider whether the published register should detail whether gifts have been retained or donated to the City of London Corporation;
- (v) the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen draft appropriate guidance for ceremonial office holders in respect of the special provisions and submit this to the next meeting of the Standards Committee for consideration; and
- (vi) the Old Bailey be advised about the special provisions in respect of the Sheriffs and asked to consider the introduction of similar arrangements for recording gifts and hospitality following the General Purposes Committee of Aldermen's deliberations.

**6. REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

The Committee received a report of the Town Clerk relative to the details of three decisions that were taken by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Standards Committee, since the Committee's meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

Members' noted that, in accordance with Standing Order 41(b), decisions had been taken in respect of revisions to the Members' Code of Conduct (9<sup>th</sup> July

2014 and 6<sup>th</sup> October 2014) and the recommended appointment of two Co-opted Members (1<sup>st</sup> September 2014).

The Chairman advised the Committee that, as a result of his acquaintance with Mr Greenburgh and Mr Large, the approval in respect of the appointment of two Co-opted Members was made by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Deputy Chairman and Alderman Malins.

**Resolved:-** That the report be noted.

**7. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE**

A query was raised in respect of the last meeting of the Dispensations Sub-Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014 and it was noted that the minutes of that meeting should have been submitted for consideration. The minutes would be considered at the next meeting of the Standards Committee. A further query was raised regarding consistency in how dispensations were granted and it was suggested that some guidance should be developed for Members of the Committee.

**Resolved:-** That-

(i) the minutes of the last meeting of the Dispensations Sub-Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014 be submitted to the next meeting of the Standards Committee for information; and

(ii) a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Standards Committee setting out guidance in respect of the issuing of dispensations in a consistent manner.

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was none.

The meeting adjourned at 2.56pm and reconvened at 3.11pm.

**The meeting ended at 3.14 pm**

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Chairman

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