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**PARISH COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING – 2010 ANALYSIS REPORT**

Committee: Standards Committee

Date: 14 July 2010

Author: Head of Legal & Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer

[K75]

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1.0 **ISSUE**

1.1 To receive an update on the organising of Parish Council Code of Conduct training and consider forward plans for any future training of District and Parish Members.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1 To note the content of the analysis of the Code of Conduct training sessions for the 9 clusters of Parishes undertaken in the District in 2010.

2.2 To review District and Parish Councillor training requirements at the end of 2010.

3.0 **BACKGROUND/OPTIONS**

3.1 In accordance with the recommendation from the Standards Committee (approved at the Council meeting on 24 February 2009), training was arranged for the Parish Councils for 'clusters' parishes - based on Neighbourhood Panel areas.

3.2 These took place between February 2010 – May 2010, with each session lasting around 1 to 1 ½ hours. They were facilitated by an Officer and a Member(s) from the Council's Standards Committee.

3.3 The training took place in the locations indicated on page 1 of the Appendix 2 attached.

4.0 **ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS**

4.1 During the 9 sessions, training was provided to 142 Parish Councillors and Clerks. 53% of those attending returned a training evaluation questionnaire (see attachment A blank form with questions). No forms were returned for the last session.

4.2 Out of those surveyed, the ratings could be between 1-5, with 5 being the highest (“very useful”). The analysis indicates an average score of between 4 to 5 (very useful).

4.3 As indicated in previous reports, ideally any training should be delivered regularly (every 1 to 2 years) to promote and improve District and Parish Council Members knowledge and understanding of the Code of Conduct introduced in May 2007; it should be in an accessible location and format to ensure maximum attendance/usefulness. However, in the light of recent developments (and the announcement that Standards for England will be abolished), following the change in Central Government administration, it is unclear what form Standards or governance arrangements will take. It is therefore recommended that organisation of training be reviewed towards the end of 2010, with recommendations made at that stage on how (if appropriate) further training will be taken forward.

#### 5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Officer and Member time and expenses in relation to the preparation/presentation and attendance at training.

#### 6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix A – blank training evaluation form.

6.2 Appendix B – Analysis of Parish Council Code of Conduct Training 2010.

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#### **Background Documents**

#### **Location**

#### **Contact Officer**

None

Room 113 The  
Grange

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## TRAINING EVALUATION FORM

Name (or leave blank if preferred)	
Course Title (if applicable)	Code of Conduct – Parish training
Date	

We would appreciate your honest and constructive comments. This will enable us to evaluate the effectiveness of training and help improve the quality of courses.

Please tick the appropriate face for each of the following statements 5 = very useful < - > 1 not useful	5	4	3	2	1
Course met your training needs					
Course content was appropriate					
Time on each subject was suitable					
Course was well presented by Trainer(s)					
Venue/arrangements were suitable					

Which subjects did you find most useful?

Do you think anything else should have been included - if so, what?

Any other comments?

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Thank-you for taking the time to complete this evaluation form.  
Please return your completed to the facilitator at the training session/ or to Jeanette Thompson,  
Monitoring Officer East Cambridgeshire District Council, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely CB6 3EE

## ANALYSIS OF PARISH COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING

### Training Sessions Held

#### Overall

9 training sessions held.

142 attendees      76 returned questionnaires (53.5%)

#### Individual Sessions

4<sup>th</sup> February 2010 - Arkenstall Centre, Haddenham

11 attendees      7 returned questionnaires (63.6%)

11<sup>th</sup> February 2010 - Victoria Hall, Fordham

23 attendees      4 returned questionnaires (17.4%)

24<sup>th</sup> February 2010 – Ellesmere Centre, Stetchworth

12 attendees      3 returned questionnaires (25%)

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 – Soham Town Hall

22 attendees      18 returned questionnaires (81.8%)

4<sup>th</sup> March 2010 – Kirtling Village Hall

21 attendees      7 returned questionnaires (33.3%)

11<sup>th</sup> March 2010 – City Council Chamber, Ely

13 attendees      13 returned questionnaires (100%)

17<sup>th</sup> March 2010 – Fassage Hall, Lode

10 attendees      8 returned questionnaires (80%)

24<sup>th</sup> March 2010 – The Barn, Littleport

17 attendees      16 returned questionnaires (94.1%)

26<sup>th</sup> May 2010 – The Glebe, Sutton

13 attendees      0 returned questionnaires (0.0%)

**Results of Returned Questionnaires**

Sessions Ratings - Overall

Ratings: 5 = Very useful ... 1 = Not useful

**Q1 Course met your training needs**

Overall average rating – 4.47

Rating	Replies
5	46
4	24
3	4
2	0
1	2

**Q2 Course content was appropriate**

Overall average rating – 4.54

Rating	Replies
5	50
4	21
3	3
2	0
1	2

**Q3 Time on each subject was suitable**

Overall average rating – 4.47

Rating	Replies
5	47
4	19
3	5
2	2
1	1

N.B. 2 non-responses

**Q4 Course was well presented by Trainer(s)**

Overall average rating – 4.63

Rating	Replies
5	54
4	19
3	1
2	1
1	1

**Q5 Venue/arrangements were suitable**

Overall average rating – 4.63

Rating	Replies
5	55
4	16
3	4
2	0
1	1

Ratings per Session (Averages)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>VENUE</u>	<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q5</u>
04/02/2010	Arkenstall Centre, Haddenham	4.57	4.57	4.57	4.86	4.71
11/02/2010	Victoria Hall, Fordham	4.50	4.50	4.25	4.50	4.75
24/02/2010	Ellesmere Centre, Stetchworth	4.62	4.62	4.37	4.72	4.65
03/03/2010	Soham Town Hall	3.94	4.00	4.00	4.17	4.39
04/03/2010	Kirtling Village Hall	4.57	5.00	4.57	4.71	4.71
11/03/2010	City Chamber, Ely	4.62	4.77	4.69	4.77	4.85
17/03/2010	Fassage Hall, Lode	4.50	4.25	4.63	4.75	4.88
24/03/2010	The Barn, Littleport	4.81	4.88	4.75	4.88	4.63

Subjects found most useful

All	20
Scenarios	19
Interests	17
Group Discussions	5
Planning Issues	5
Other Issues	7

Other subjects that should have been included

Nothing else	20
Councillors Conduct	2
More on Interests	1
Others	2

Comments about the training

Positive Comments	22
Negative Comments	2
Other Comments	7

Comments about the training

*Positive Comments*

- Useful for all parish councillors.
- As this is such an important area for all elected councillors, I think there is a case for making attendance mandatory for all - at least every 4 years.
- Course was presented in an easy to understand format and the scenario items were very useful.
- The course content and presentation were to a significant extent driven by the questions and interest of the members present, which I thought was well handled by the trainer - as a result it was a dynamic and interesting session, as the trainer noted! It got a very high level of attention - probably not a typical training session, but a very clear and useful couple of hours.
- The course information pack is a most useful reference. Tracy Couper supervised the meeting well in sometimes difficult situations.
- Good on training - not too long. Look forward to training on other topics.
- Clear and concise info.
- The trainers made a reasonable job of an impossible - making sense of meaningless legislation.
- This was a very useful session - I only wish more of my councillors had attended!
- I would go to more training sessions if they were at this venue [Kirtling Village Hall]
- A enlightening evening.
- The instructors were helpful friendly & explained clearly & constructive.
- Clear concise information.
- Good to know advice is available if needed.
- Trainers were extremely conversant with subject matter and not phased by difficult questions.
- V useful.
- A good basic course.
- As a very new councillor I found it interesting & useful information for future meetings.
- Well presented & useful.
- Was very good at stressing declaring of interest can be to protect the councillor.
- Very useful evening, it is a shame this could not be compulsory.
- Very useful.

*Negative Comments*

- It would be good to include more information in the meeting as it was quite short for the time taken to travel to & from the venue. [Ely]
- Be beneficial if more councillors attended.

Other Comments

- The Code of Conduct doesn't always fit grass root voluntary involvement in local activities.
- I'm not sure its worth being a Parish Councillor or the value of a Parish Council these days.
- The parish council were urged by the county & district councillors to attend this training - implying PC meeting conduct needed attention. I now feel that there has been no wrong conduct!
- It would be useful if this training was available at frequent intervals to enable new councillors to attend.
- The existing framework is unsuitable for small villages. A 'one size fits all' cannot possibly suit large conurbations with a village of some 892 souls. More work is required.
- It seems a shame that all councillors are not obliged to attend these training sessions.
- Would be useful to refer to the Code while discussing scenarios. This would help to consolidate the Code requirements in the mind.