

**GWYNEDD COUNCIL
STANDARDS COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11**

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Foreword by the Chairman

John P Pollard
Chairman of Gwynedd Council's Standards Committee

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Foreword by the Monitoring Officer

Ensuring high standards of conduct amongst those who hold public office is essential to earning and maintaining the public's trust in the activities of public life. To this end, a strong and active Standards Committee has a key role to play.

This annual report presents the valuable work that Gwynedd's Standards Committee carries out to support the ethical framework and to promote high standards of conduct amongst county councillors and town and community councillors.

During the past year the Committee has built on the work programme it established in 2010, looking at its own procedures, procedures that were put to the test when the committee held its first hearing of a case against a councillor. The Committee also developed training on the code of conduct, which will be essential in the coming year as local authorities look forward to elections and possible changes in their membership.

It's also probable that we will see changes to the membership of the Standards Committee in the next few months as a result of the election and the fact that some members are nearing the end of their term on the Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the commendable contribution of the Chairman and the members of the committee, some of whom have served for nearly 10 years. The Committee has a strong foundation and can look forward to carrying out its statutory duties over the years to come.

Dilys A Philips
Monitoring Officer
Gwynedd Council

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Although the Standards Committee is one of Gwynedd Council's committees, it contains a majority of members who have no connection with the Council or local government ('Independent Members'). It also includes a member who represents the interests of town/community councils ('the Community Committee Member'), as well as three elected members of Gwynedd Council.

Independent Members

Gwilym Ellis Evans



Gwilym lives in Dolgellau, where he ran a garage business for almost 40 years. He has served on several tribunals including Industrial and Social Services Appeals Tribunals and is currently a member of North Wales Valuation Appeals Tribunal. He is currently Chair of the Gwynedd & De Ynys Môn Citizens Advice Bureau and serves on the Meirionnydd CA Consultative Committee. He is also a member of the Gwynedd Economic Partnership Steering Group and a Trustee Board Member of Age Concern Gwynedd & Môn

Malcolm Jones



Born and bred in Caeathro near Caernarfon. Malcolm served an apprenticeship as a toolmaker in Saunders Row, Beaumaris before joining the Fire Service in 1970, where he worked until 1997. After retiring he joined the Bench as a Justice of the Peace. He has been married to Jane for 41 years, is a father of two and also a grandfather of two. He follows football, gardens, reads and has been a member and secretary of the local darts league for 30 years. He is also a People's Warden in the Parish of Llanbeblig.

John P Pollard



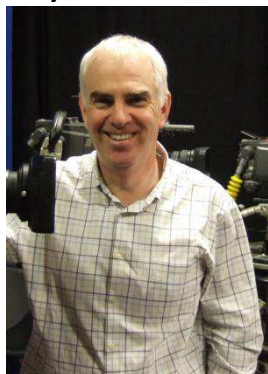
Living in Llanllyfni, John has worked as a Chartered Building Engineer for CADW, the Welsh Assembly Government's Heritage Department. He has been serving as a Justice of the Peace on the Gwynedd Bench for ten years and has extensive experience of serving in the public and voluntary sector. This includes being a member of the Managing Board and former chair of Tai Eryri Housing Association, a member of the Governing Board of Ysgol Dyffryn Nantlle, a registered lay school inspector for ESTYN, a member of school appeals panels, a trustee of Cartref Bontnewydd, trustee and director and first Chair of Cywaith, Cyf., a local regeneration company.

Samindre (Sam) W. Soysa



Sam lives in Harlech and works as a Health & Safety Consultant in North Wales. He has worked in several senior management and business roles over the past 20 years, including 7 years with the Ministry of Energy in New Zealand. He is currently Vice-Chair & Trustee / Director of Gwynedd & De Ynys Mon Citizens Advice Bureau, and serves on the Consultative Committee of the Meirionnydd CAB. He also serves as an Independent Member on the Standards Committees for Snowdonia National Park Authority and the North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority.

Gwyn Williams



Gwyn lives in Bethel near Caernarfon and is an experienced television producer/director, having worked in the television industry for 25 years. He has been a director and manager of three companies in the media sector. He is a regular broadcaster on Radio Cymru and has presented several programmes and is a regular newspaper reviewer. Born in Gwynedd, Gwyn has lived in England and Cardiff before returning to Gwynedd to raise a family.

Community Committee Member

Councillor David Clay



David has been an elected member of Barmouth Town Council for 25 years and has held the position of Chair on 4 separate occasions. He is currently Chair of the Meirionnydd Area Committee of One Voice Wales. Now retired, he was an hotelier in Barmouth for 30 years and was an active member of Mid Wales Tourism Council and in latter years a Director of Mid Wales Tourism Partnership.

Gwynedd Council Members

Councillor Steven Churchman (member until May 2011)



Steven is a member of the Liberal Democrat Group and represents Dolbenmaen. Formerly employed in the railway industry as a civil engineer and latterly an auditor, he now runs a small shop in Garndolbenmaen, where he also serves as Sub Postmaster. He served as a London Borough councillor for nine years before being elected as a Gwynedd councillor in 2004. He has also served as a school governor almost continuously since 1987.

Councillor Margaret Griffith



Margaret is a member of the Plaid Cymru Group and has represented Llanystumdwy on Gwynedd Council since 1995. During that period she has been a member of various committees and working groups. She has also represented the Council on a number of outside bodies, such as the Fire Service.

Councillor Keith Greenly Jones



Keith is a member of the Labour Group and has represented the Bangor Marchog ward since 1995. Born and bred in Bangor, he worked for over 30 years in the Ambulance Service. He is also a School Governor and a member of the World Ship Society



Eryl is a semi-retired freelance journalist who has represented Dyffryn Ardudwy and Talybont on Gwynedd Council since 2008. He is also a long-standing town and community councillor and has served as both Mayor and Chairman. He takes an active part in disability rights and is vice-chairman of the Meirionnydd Access Group as well as a member of the South Snowdonia Access Forum and the Betsi Cadwalader University NHS Community Health Council. He is currently chairman of the Gwynedd Central Licensing Committee, where is able to draw on his experience as a former licensee. A former Welsh Football referee his hobbies includes golf at Royal St David's Harlech and Dolgellau.

THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

The Committee's main role is to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by councillors and to assist them to observe the Members' Code of Conduct. It is responsible for doing so for members of Gwynedd Council and the county's town and community Council.

The Committee is also responsible for considering and deciding upon complaints, referred to it by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, that members have breached the Code of Conduct.

It also considers applications made by members for dispensations to allow them to take part in discussions even though they have a prejudicial interest under the code.

Gwynedd Council's Gifts and Hospitality Policy for Members was added to the Committee's terms of reference during the year.

Membership

Mr Gwilym Ellis-Evans was re-elected as Vice-Chair for the period up to May 2012.

Councillor Stephen Churchman resigned from the Committee during the year because he was appointed to Gwynedd Council's Board and was therefore ineligible to serve on the Standards Committee. Councillor Eryl-Jones-Williams was appointed to replace him in May 2011.

Dispensations

The Members' Code of Conduct provides that a councillor cannot take part in a discussion if he/she has a 'prejudicial interest' under the Code of Conduct. However, the member does have the right to make an application to the committee for permission to take part in the discussion despite the existence of the interest, i.e. a dispensation.

The Committee considered two applications during this period. Both were by Gwynedd Council members in connection with school re-organisation. One application was refused and in respect of the other, the member was allowed to speak on the matter but not to vote.

Allegations against Members

The Committee was informed of the following allegations made to the Ombudsman of breaking the code of conduct:

Allegation	Ombudsman's Decision
No reason under the Code	No investigation
Bullying and bringing office/authority into disrepute	No Investigation
No reason under the code	No investigation
Using their position as a Councillor inappropriately	No investigation
Failure to disclose personal interest	No investigation
Lack of respect and bullying; bringing office/authority into disrepute	No investigation
Making vexatious, malicious or frivolous complaints	No investigation
Bringing Office/authority into disrepute	No investigation
Using their position as a Councillor inappropriately to put others at a disadvantage; bringing the authority into disrepute	Matter referred to the Standards Committee for a decision. The Committee decided that the member had broken the code of conduct and should be suspended for a month.

In his Annual Report for 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011, the Ombudsman reported that the number of complaints received about member's conduct in local authorities across Wales had decreased by 21%. He believed that publishing the Code of Conduct Guidelines had contributed positively to the decrease in the number of complaints received.

The Wales Standards Committee Conference 2010

Members attended the Wales Standards Committee 2010 – 'Theory into Practice', on the 14th of October 2010 in Cardiff. Presentations were given by, amongst others, Paul Hoey – Head of Strategic Connections 'Standards for England', Kate Berry – Cardiff City Monitoring Officer, Jeff Cotterell – Chairman of Anglesey Council's Standards Committee, and Peter Tyndall – Wales Public Services Ombudsman. As well as presentations everyone had a chance to attend workshops on subjects such as Code of Conduct Guidelines, New Social Media, Standard and Ethics Committee hearings and Town and Community Council matters.

The North Wales Standards Committee Forum

During the year, the North Wales Standards Committee Forum was established to provide a way for representatives from all the Standards Committees in North Wales to meet. The Forum's purpose is to allow the area's Standards Committees to discuss and share ideas, good practice and resources, and also to make representations and provide responses collectively on issues being discussed at a national level.

Observations on a meeting of the Full Council

Three members of the Committee attended a meeting of the full Council on the 1st of March 2011 to observe proceedings. The members were pleased with the way matters were discussed by Councillors at the meeting, but it also suggested ways of facilitating attendance of meetings by members of the public.

Code of Conduct Training

The Committee decided to ask Gwynedd Council to develop code of conduct training for both Gwynedd councillors and the county's town and community councillors.

As a result, a training session for Gwynedd Council members was held in May concentrating on personal interests under the code. The material developed for the session will also be used for the training that is currently being developed on a national level for town and community councils.

Useful Contacts

- **Dilys Phillips, Monitoring Officer / Siôn Huws, Propriety Officer**
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- **Public Services Ombudsman for Wales-** www.ombwdsmon-wales.org.uk
- **Adjudication Panel for Wales-** www.adjudicationpanelwales.org.uk