

All Town and Community Clerks

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9th March 2023

Gareth Owens

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All Town and Community Clerks

Visits to Town and Community Councils

This is my fourth update regarding the visits by the Independent Members of the Standards Committee to Town/Community Council meetings to observe practice and gain an understanding of how local Council business is conducted.

The findings from five further visits undertaken in December, January and February were reported to the Committee on the 6th March and I am writing with feedback to all Town/Community Councils to give assurance on good practice and procedures.

As in the case of the last reported visits, the Independent Members agreed that these had been positive experiences and praised the level of commitment and contributions by those in attendance. The Independent Members were impressed that all meetings were well chaired and ably supported by clerks. They also noted that as a matter of good practice Declarations of Interest were standing items on all agendas.

This time, there are some observations on how good chairing can lead to better meetings and a reduced number of complaints. It has been noted that, when meetings proceed in an orderly manner (only one person speaking at any one time), behaviour is better. Likewise, where comments are addressed “through the Chair” meetings tend to remain calmer. Good chairing skills are therefore the first line of defence in respect of conduct complaints. Chairing a meeting isn’t easy; there is a lot to think about and do in a pressurised environment. Town and Community Councils should therefore consider including chairing skills in the training plans which they are required to produce under section 67 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales Act 2021).

County Hall, Mold. CH7 6NB

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh. We will respond to correspondence received in Welsh without delay.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth Gymraeg. Ymatebwn yn ddi-oed i ohebiaeth a dderbynnir drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.



The Committee hopes that this feedback is useful and wishes to acknowledge the dedication and good work undertaken by Town/Community Councillors in their voluntary roles.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gareth Owens', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gareth Owens
Chief Officer Governance