



ASSOCIATION OF COUNCIL SECRETARIES AND SOLICITORS

South Western Branch

MINUTES OF A MEETING HOSTED BY
BATH + NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL
HELD AT
THE GUILDHALL, BATH
ON FRIDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2006

Present: Vernon Hitchman, Bath and North East Somerset Council – Chairman
Roger Gash, Devon County Council – Vice Chairman
Alan Webb, Gloucester City Council – Secretary
Carl Hearn, North Cornwall District Council
Jan Shadbolt, Mid Devon District Council
Jeremy Thornberry, Taunton Deane Borough Council
Kevin Williams, South Hams District Council
Sarah Freckleton, Tewkesbury Borough Council
Stephen McNamara, Bristol City Council

1676 **Apologies**

Dave Shepperd, Plymouth Council
David Corry, Somerset County Council
Gary Spencer, Gloucester City Council
Ian Kennaway, Cornwall County Council
Malcolm Nicholson, North Somerset Council
Neil Aggett, Teignbridge District Council
Rachel Pocock, East Devon District Council
Tom Clark, Bridgnorth District Council

1677 **Election of Chairman**

Elected.....Vernon Hitchman, Bath + North East Somerset Council

1678 **Election of Vice Chairman**

Elected.....Roger Gash, Devon County Council

1679 **Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2006**

These minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

1680 **Matters Arising**

a) Standards Committees / Board Issues

Kevin Williams referring to Minute 1670 asked if other Members had experienced where the Standards Board of England had issued a direction instead of a hearing. Jeremy Thornberry advised that he was aware of only one case at Mendip District Council where there had been a direction from the Standards Board for England.

Members were also aware that a number of complaint hearings were still outstanding and awaiting the outcome of the appeal in the Ken Livingston case.

b) Leisure Trusts

Kevin Williams in referring to Minute 1672 (b) advised that arrangements to establish a Leisure Trust had now been completed at the second attempt using Ashford's, although half the work had been carried out by the Council.

1681 **Other Appointments**

a) Appointment of Branch Representatives

Honorary Branch Secretary

Elected.....Alan Webb, Gloucester City Council

Branch Treasurer

Elected.....Roger Gash, Devon County Council

Council Representatives

Elected.....Alan Webb, Gloucester City Council
Roger Gash, Devon County Council
Jan Shadbolt, Mid Devon District Council as Deputy

b) Representations on Outside Bodies

Nomination of Local Government Representative on Devon and Exeter Law Society

Elected.....Roger Gash, Devon County Council

1682 ACSeS Council and Committees

The minutes and summary of the ACSeS Council Meeting held on 16 June 2006 was considered.

Members were advised that the Counsel's opinion on the issue of Practising Certificates and the interpretation of Section 88 had been published on the ACSeS website.

Members were also advised that Meic Sullivan-Gould of Hackney had been elected President at the Annual Meeting of the Association held on 9 November 2006 .

1683 LGG Training Unit – Arrangements for February 2007

Alan Webb reported that following discussions with Jeremy Thornberry that the original date set for this training session on 16 February 2006 at Taunton Deane Borough Council offices would have to be rearranged.

It was agreed that the meeting be brought forward a week to 9 February 2007 and that the Honorary Secretary contact both the South West Branch of SLG and Dudley Lewis from LGG to finalise arrangements for this event.

At present it was proposed that the South West Branch of SLG and the South Western Branch of ACSeS would hold their Branch meetings in the morning with a combined training event to be held in the afternoon with a representative from the Department of Communities and Local Government to discuss the implications of the Local Government White Paper.

Details of the event will be circulated to all Members when confirmed.

1684 “Strong and Prosperous Communities” – The Local Government White Paper

Members received a Summary of the White Paper produced by Veale Wasborough.

Jeremy Thornberry referred to the presentation by the Permanent Under Secretary for the Department of Communities and Local Government at the Annual Conference in November. It appeared from the presentation that there were still a number of matters which would require further development and Members were encouraged at the National Conference to submit their comments on the proposals.

Members discussed the possible impact of the proposals for their own local authorities. It was noted that, at the present time, Exeter City Council, Cornwall County Council and Somerset County Council were considering submitting unitary authority bids.

1685 Monitoring Officer Issues

Branch Members discussed the following issues:-

- Members rights to ACSeS exempt information
- Interpretation of the Code of Conduct regarding Race Relations Issues
- Pensions – A Council's ability to consider applying a blanket approach regarding added years

1686 Honorarium

That the honorarium paid to Parvati Diyar for secretarial support be agreed at £150.00 for 2006 / 2007.

1687 Branch Subscription for 2007 / 2008

Agreed that the subscription level be maintained as nil.

Branch Members were requested to check the details on the Membership list previously circulated and advise the Honorary Secretary of any changes.

1688 CPD Hours

It was agreed that 1 hour be credited for this meeting in accordance with the Law Society Guidelines.

1689 Any Other Business

a) Job Evaluation Results

The Honorary Branch Secretary circulated an emailed received from Rachel Pocock, East Devon District Council, in which she requested that any Member who can email details of current salaries / SCP / market factors paid to Lawyers and Member Services (Committee Officers) in their local authority which would assist her in examining the results of the Job Evaluation exercise being carried out by East Devon District Council.

Rachel also suggested that it might be suggested through ACSeS that a central database be established to monitor the effects of job evaluation results across the Country and salaries. In particular if this is going to be another factor in staff leaving to join Private Sector law firms.

Branch Members from Bristol City, South Hams and Mid Devon District Council advised of the results of their local authorities job evaluation results.

It was agreed that Members forward details of their job evaluation results to Rachel Pocock and the issue of a central database be raised with Ian Locke.

b) Minimum Salary for Trainee Solicitors

The Honorary Branch Secretary circulated an email from Tony Kilner, Policy and Development Officer of ACSeS which sought Members views on the Law Society Consultation on the minimum salary for Trainee Solicitors. The Law Society wished to know whether the minimum salary should be retained or not. Branch Members noted that with the exception of Bristol City Council, most local authorities in the South West did not have a Trainee Solicitor Scheme.

1690 **Date and Venues for Meetings in 2007**

It was agreed that dates and venues for meetings in 2007 (as amended) be as follows:-

Friday, 9 February 2007	-	Taunton Deane Borough Council, Taunton
Friday, 15 June 2007	-	The National Lobster Hatchery, Padstow
Friday, 30 November 2007	-	Roman Baths, Bath (to be confirmed)

The meeting commenced at 11:00 hours

The meeting closed at 12:32 hours