

PAPUR / ENCLOSURE
DD

**FFORWM PWYLLGORAU SAFONAU GOGLEDD CYMRU
NORTH WALES STANDARDS COMMITTEES FORUM**

**Dydd Llun, 20 Mai 2013 am 2.00 pm
Monday, 20 May 2013 at 2.00 pm**

Bodlondeb, Conwy

Ynys Môn/Isle of Anglesey	Michael Wilson – Cadeirydd/Chair Islwyn Jones – Is-Gadeirydd/Vice-Chair Lynn Ball – Swyddog Monitro/Monitoring Officer Robyn Jones – Dirprwy Swyddog Monitro/Deputy Monitoring Officer
<input type="checkbox"/> Conwy	Howie Roberts - Cadeirydd/Chair (Cadeirydd/Chair) Samuel Adams - Is-Gadeirydd/Vice-Chair Delyth Jones - Swyddog Monitro/Monitoring Officer Ceri Williams – Dirprwy Swyddog Monitro/Deputy Monitoring Officer
Sir Ddinbych/Denbighshire	Ian Trigger - Cadeirydd/Chair Rev. Wayne Roberts - Is-Gadeirydd/Vice-Chair Gary Williams - Swyddog Monitro/Monitoring Officer Lisa Jones - Dirprwy Swyddog Monitro/Deputy Monitoring Officer
Sir y Fflint/Flintshire	Patricia Jones – Cadeirydd/Chair Edward Hughes – Is-Gadeirydd/Vice-Chair Gareth Owens – Swyddog Monitro/Monitoring Officer
Gwynedd	Gwilym Ellis Evans – Cadeirydd / Chair Sam Soysa – Is-Gadeirydd/Vice-Chair Dilys Ann Phillips – Swyddog Monitro/Monitoring Officer Siôn Huws – Swyddog Priodoldeb/Propriety Officer
Wrecsam/Wrexham	Rob Dawson – Cadeirydd/Chair Ceri Nash – Is-Gadeirydd/Vice-Chair Trevor Coxon – Swyddog Monitro/Monitoring Officer Sioned Wyn Davies – Dirprwy Swyddog Monitro/Deputy Monitoring Officer
Awdurdod Tân ac Achub/ Fire and Rescue Authority	Jane Eyton-Jones– Cadeirydd Dros Dro/Acting Chair
Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri/ Snowdonia National Park	Peter Rowland – Cadeirydd/Chair

A G E N D A

1. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

2. **Apologies**

3. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record minutes of the previous meeting.
(Pages 3 - 6)

4. **Standards Conference 2013 – Feedback** (Pages 7 - 9)

5. **Any Other Item**

In the event of the fire alarm being activated, would all Members please vacate the premises through the nearest fire exit.

FOR ASSEMBLY POINTS, please refer to “Actions in the Event of a Fire” notice displayed in the Council Chamber / Medium Committee Room / Meeting Room 3

NORTH WALES STANDARDS COMMITTEES FORUM ITEM 3

Monday, 7 January 2013 at 2.00 pm
Bodlondeb, Conwy

PRESENT:	Howie Roberts (Chair)	Chair - Conwy Standards Committee
	Lynn Ball	Monitoring Officer - Isle of Anglesey
	David Clay (In place of Sam W. Soysa)	Independent Member - Gwynedd Standards Committee
	Trevor Coxon	Monitoring Officer - Wrexham
	Gwilym Ellis Evans	Chair - Gwynedd Standards Committee
	Jane Eyton-Jones	Vice-Chair - North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Standards Committee
	Sion Huws	Propriety Officer - Gwynedd
	Iwan Jones	Monitoring Officer - Snowdonia National Park
	Delyth E. Jones	Monitoring Officer - Conwy
	Islwyn Jones	Vice-Chair - Isle of Anglesey Standards Committee
	Lisa Jones	Deputy Monitoring Officer - Denbighshire
	Pat Jones	Vice-Chair - Flintshire Standards Committee
	Robyn Jones	Deputy Monitoring Officer - Isle of Anglesey
	Gareth Owens	Monitoring Officer - Flintshire
	Dilys Ann Phillips	Monitoring Officer - Gwynedd
	Rev. Wayne Roberts	Vice-Chair - Denbighshire Standards Committee
	Peter Rowland	Chair - Snowdonia National Park Standards Committee
	Ian Trigger	Chair - Denbighshire Standards Committee
	Gary Williams	Monitoring Officer - Denbighshire
	Michael B. Wilson	Chair - Isle of Anglesey Standards Committee
In attendance:	Sian Harland	Committee Services Officer

57. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Gary Williams (Denbighshire), Ceri Nash (Wrexham), Sam Soysa (Gwynedd), Ceri Williams (Conwy), Rob Dawson (Wrexham) and Sioned Wyn Davies (Wrexham).

58. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the North Wales Standards Committees Forum held on 4 October 2012 were submitted for approval.

Gwilym Ellis Evans (Gwynedd) advised that he was in attendance and that Sam Soysa was a representative of Gwynedd and not Wrexham.

RESOLVED-

That, subject to the above amendments, the minutes of the meeting of the North Wales Standards Committees Forum held on 4 October 2012 be approved as a correct record.

59. GOVERNANCE AND ETHICAL ADVICE TO TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS

Members were advised that the item had been included on the agenda in order to discuss what provision each Local Authority provided in terms of governance and ethical advice to Town and Community Councils, and how this was communicated and promoted.

The Forum was further advised that the topic would be covered at the Standards Conference 2013.

Wrexham

- Training sessions held centrally and in other areas of the County Borough
- Framework for training was the same guidance as used for County Borough Councillors
- Examples based on Ombudsman's cases were used within the training
- Queries were still received from Town and Community Councils, but this was better than having to deal with an investigation
- Attendance was at 40-50%
- Quarterly meetings had been held with Clerks to Town and Community Councils, but were not well attended
- The knowledge of Clerks in relation to the Code of Conduct was variable

Denbighshire

- Quarterly meetings were held with Town and Community Clerks
- Training had been held for Clerks
- A training roadshow was held with training sessions throughout the County
- There was a 30% attendance rate at meetings
- All training had been positively received
- It was important that lines of communication were kept open between the County and Town and Community Councils

Anglesey

- Very few complaints emanated from Town and Community Councils in relation to the Code of Conduct
- Training sessions were held centrally with the Clerk and Chair of Town and Community Councils, with the understanding that Clerks would cascade the training down to their Councillors

60. **OMBUDSMAN'S REVISED GUIDANCE ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Following the request at the last meeting the Monitoring Officer (Gwynedd), who is also the Chair of ACSeS Wales, provided the following update:-

- The Ombudsman's revised guidance was as a result of the Calver v The Adjudication Panel for Wales High Court case, which had ruled that the Councillor involved had been exercising his Freedom of Expression under the Human Rights Act and had therefore not breached the Code of Conduct as the comments were of a political nature
- Members of the Forum and Monitoring Officers were concerned that the threshold of the revised guidance was set too high, and could give Councillors too much leeway
- Following the above reservations being made to the Ombudsman, he had agreed to review the revised guidance to advise Councillors what was not acceptable behaviour, rather than what was acceptable behaviour
- Monitoring Officers had received a draft copy of the revised guidance, but were concerned it did not go far enough in terms of unacceptable behaviour
- As a way forward a sub-group of ACSeS members were currently producing a form of words for the guidance, which they would discuss with the Ombudsman in March 2013
- It was hoped that the revised guidance would be in place by April 2013

Discussion ensued as follows:-

- Members were advised that it would not change the threshold at which the Ombudsman would investigate a complaint
- It would be a decision of individual Councils to adopt protocol for Local Resolution in relation to complaints, which the Ombudsman would not investigate
- It was noted that the Ombudsman would not pursue an appeal in relation to the Calver case

AGREED-

That the information in relation the Ombudsman's revised guidance be noted.

61. **STANDARDS CONFERENCE 2013**

The draft itinerary for the Standards Conference 2013 was presented to the Forum.

Members were advised of the following changes:-

- The Monitoring Officer (Gwynedd), as the Chair of ACSeS, would open the Conference
- There would be space for 130 attendees

- In order to enable attendees to attend sessions it was agreed that the 2 morning sessions on Town and Community Council Relationships and Promoting Standards Proactively would be repeated in the afternoon
- Conducting Hearings and Sanctions would be facilitated by Denbighshire and Conwy
- Register of Interests would be facilitated by Flintshire and Anglesey
- Issues for Single Purpose Authorities would be facilitated by the Snowdonia National Park

Discussion ensued as follows:-

- Although only certain sessions would be facilitated bilingually, all attendees could contribute in either English or Welsh
- Anglesey had requested that, following the Wales Audit Office's (WAO) criticisms of their Standards Committee, a representative from the WAO and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) be invited to take part for the session; Promoting Standards Proactively
- In relation to the attendance of the Welsh Assembly Members to the Conference, it was suggested that, as there was limited space, the Minister for Local Government and Communities be invited to attend as an observer
- It was suggested that as Conwy were hosting the event, the Chair of the Conwy Standards Committee be invited to give the closing remarks

AGREED-

- (a) That the itinerary for the Standards Conference 2013 be approved, subject to such further amendments as were reasonably required by the North Wales Monitoring Officers.**
- (b) That the Chair for the Conwy Standards Committee give the closing remarks.**
- (c) That the Minister for Local Government and Communities, Carl Sergeant AM, be invited to attend the conference as an observer.**
- (d) That the Wales Audit Office and Welsh Local Government Association be invited to send a representative to participate in the Promoting Standards Proactively Workshop.**

62. **ANY OTHER ITEM**

None.

(The meeting ended at 3.00 pm)

Ffurflen adborth / Feedback form

Os gwelwch yn dda rhowch eich barn am y canlynol: <i>Please give your view on the following:</i>	Ardderchog <i>Excellent</i>	Da <i>Good</i>	Boddhaol <i>Satisfactory</i>	Gwael <i>Poor</i>
Trefniadau cyn y gynhadledd <i>Pre-conference arrangements</i>	50	21	6	2
Pa mor ddefnyddiol oedd y gynhadledd <i>The usefulness of the Conference</i>	49	28	2	0
Y cyfle i rwydweithio <i>Opportunity for networking</i>	42	30	5	1
Lleoliad/Lluniaeth <i>Location/Refreshments</i>	54	18	3	1
Trefniadau'r gynhadledd <i>The Conference arrangements</i>	55	19	0	1
Deunyddiau'r gynhadledd <i>Conference materials</i>	47	23	8	2
Sesiwn lawn 1 – Peter Tyndall <i>Plenary session 1 – Peter Tyndall</i>	38	34	3	0
Sesiwn lawn 2 – trefn datrys leol <i>Plenary session 2 – local resolution procedure</i>	38	30	0	0
Gweithdy 1A/2A: hyrwyddo safonau <i>Workshop 1A/2A: promoting standards</i>	31	17	1	0
Gweithdy 1B/2B: gwrandawiadau a chosbau <i>Workshop 1B/2B: hearings and sanctions</i>	19	18	6	1
Gweithdy 1C: buddiannau a gollyngiadau <i>Workshop 1C: interests and dispensations</i>	12	9	3	0
Gweithdy 2C: cyngorau cymuned ac un bwrpas <i>Workshop 2C: communities and single purpose</i>	15	8	2	1

Sylwadau pellach / Further comments.

1.	I think we did a good job here in the North. Good balance of presentations and workshops.
2.	Very worthwhile exercise. Informative, lively, information sharing.
3.	Very well organised in all respects.
4.	Very well organised and useful. Well chosen topics. Good venue and good facilities.
5.	Very enjoyable and good Conference.
6.	Should have started at 9 or 9:30. Most stayed overnight or were within 1 hours drive Standards documents too large Perhaps One Voice Wales representative should be invited?
7.	I'd suggest that the Conference should have started earlier in the day. Those that travelled from South Wales probably all stayed the night before. Conference should have finished therefore at 15:30. Conference was excellent.
8.	Diddorol dros ben. Dim digon o drafod/gwaith grŵp yn Gweithdy 1C. Trefniadau da / dwyieithog.
9.	Would have liked longer to discuss Workshop 1A/2A – Promoting Standards.
10.	Would have preferred all the conference materials to be on the web or e-mail. The contents were very heavy to transport and a waste of paper. Could have condensed the day a little to perhaps start at 10:00 to enable us to get home earlier. Would be easier on a midweek day. Good use of bilingual communications.
11.	Found documentation awkward to negotiate.

12.	Generally good – but not as good over the whole range as the last 2/3 annual events have been. Venue (although at the opposite end of Wales for me) was very good.
13.	Nid oedd y brif neuadd yn lleoliad delfrydol ar gyfer y gweithdai (rhy fawr ac amheronol!) At y dyfodol, byddai'n ddefnyddiol pe bai'r dogfennau i aelodau'r gynhadledd gynnwys rhestr o'r holl aelodau, gan nodi pa Gyngor oeddent yn ei gynrychioli.
14.	Cynhadledd wedi ei threfnu'n dda gyda chynnwys ardderchog. Diolch!
15.	<i>Workshop 1C</i> – We didn't have the opportunity to work in small groups although tables were arranged to provide just the opportunity. I would have welcomed more workshop sessions, shorter lunch break if necessary. I would have been happy to forego the cost of having conference documents in English and Welsh.
16.	Page numbers needed on brochure. Morning group sessions not enough "Group Work".
17.	Balance of Workshops/Plenary – just right.
18.	Location – excellent – easy to find and very pleasant vicinity, good facilities. Refreshments – very good. Food – poor – satisfactory – very heavily bread orientated, good fruit sticks option.
19.	Members should have been asked prior to arriving if they wanted material in English or Welsh as of this document is waste! 1B – too rushed – needed 2 hour slot. 2C – Single Purpose Authorities was poor - Registration on interest was good.
20.	Venue could have been warmer and it would have been nice to have had some form of soft drink save for water. Otherwise – Excellent!
21.	As a new member of the Standards Committee I have found the conference to be extremely helpful.
22.	Da lawn.
23.	Excellent conference pack, well organised and relevant. 2C – This took the form of a presentation with questions rather than a workshop.
24.	It is encouraging to see the degree to which all participants engaged with the issues, are willing to share and learn from good practice.
25.	A useful and informative day. Thank you.
26.	The need for mandatory training per town and community councils on the code is foremost. We have to sign to state we have read this when elected but not all understand. Well Done.
27.	Prior commitment prevented attendance to morning session.
28.	Excellent venue and welcome from staff-organisers. I feel that once again Community Councils were disregarded in view of what they do and achieve re training in Standards.
29.	Excellent – particularly hearings and sanctions.
30.	Excellent conference. Acoustic conditions in workshops not good. Microphones needed. Food excellent.
31.	The workshop in interests wasn't really a workshop with participations.
32.	Conference materials overblown. Shiny paper not good. Papers very difficult to find ones way around. Liked idea of allocating people to tables for workshop sessions.
33.	Really good conference, well done to everyone involved in organising the day.
34.	At my first Standards Conference I found it very interesting and enjoyed hearing from others. The setting of the venue was much enjoyed! It was good to be able to chat to those with so much more experience.
35.	Really useful – lots to think about. Look forward to receiving conference notes.
36.	No further comments required. An informative and enjoyable conference.
37.	Wedi mwynhau'r profiad ac wedi dysgu llawer. Cynhadledd wedi ei threfnu yn dda. Diolch am gael bod yna.
38.	A very good day.
39.	Very enjoyable and good to meet other members. More time for Workshops would be good.
40.	I spent the first few minutes of each session trying to find the slides in the conference pack. Rather confusing – please could it be improved, at least with page numbering.
41.	Gormod o ddeunydd yn sleidiau Gweithdy B. Fformat Gweithdy A yn llawer gwell a mwy rhyngweithiol.
42.	Llongyfarchiadau am y trefniadau ac ar lwyddiant yr achlysur.
43.	The standard of arrangements was well above expectation!!

44.	Very well organised and relevant conference.
45.	Really useful, especially the opportunity to discuss with members of other Standards Committees. Raised a lot of new and interesting issues concerning the role of Standards Committees.
46.	Facilities - Main conference room was dark, black walls (!). Poor lighting. The room was very cold. Doors were left open and I asked several times if door could be closed. The women present sat in their coats. Thoroughly enjoyed and learned a great deal from Workshop Session 1A. Content was thin and I felt a wasted opportunity. Pack not numbered, difficult to follow. I do not eat dairy products not asked dietary requirements before attending.
47.	Diwrnod buddiol - yn bennaf i glywed beth sydd yn mynd ymlaen mewn Awdurdodau eraill.
48	Buddiol iawn.

North Wales Standards Committees Forum
20th May 2013 - 2:00pm – 3:10pm
Conwy County Borough Council

1. Appointment of Vice Chairman – Mr Gwilym Ellis Evans of Gwynedd was appointed Vice Chair and subsequently chaired the meeting in the absence of Mr Howie Roberts (Chair).
2. Apologies were tendered
3. Minutes of the previous meeting approved
4. Matters Arising - none
5. Conference feedback

The Vice Chair thought it was an excellent conference, very well organised and attended, with something for everyone during the day with the Local Resolutions item being particularly useful. It was felt that the conference had compared well with the previous conference arranged by Cardiff, but the room itself was cold initially, and quite morbid with the black curtains. Delyth explained that the room booked, had become unavailable at the last minute. Literature was considered excellent although could have been consecutively numbered for ease of reference. It was suggested that those members who did not attend could be supplied with copies of the notes and that the minutes of the Forum meeting could include an electronic link reference. The conference had been well attended by members from South Wales. Workshops were excellent, but even though there was an abundance of useful information in the slides, they took too long and as a result there was insufficient time to have a proper discussion at the end. It was felt that workshops were more useful than lectures/talks. The Ombudsman's address was very good as always.

The meeting felt that Conferences should be held every 18 months and not annually and that 2015 would be about right for the next one, in order to avoid repetition and ensure that there were sufficient relevant topics to discuss.

6. Any other Item.
 - (i) Delyth referred to a discussion between Dilys Phillips, Trevor Coxon and herself about the usefulness of the present arrangements for the Standards Committees Forum. There was concern about low attendance at the meetings and a need to keep the momentum. Felt that in order to achieve this, combining training with the usual business matters, would be useful. This would allow experiences to be shared. The Monitoring Officers could, in turn, be responsible for the training on a topic of their choice, with meetings being held at the offices of the trainer. It was felt that these meetings should occur three, rather than four times a year, but this is a matter to be discussed at the next meeting, when it will be clearer as to how future

meetings are to be conducted. It was however agreed, that the next meeting will be in Wrexham, towards the end of September, with Trevor Coxon being responsible for the training. Sian Harland will continue to be responsible for the agenda, but local officers to take minutes to save Sian having to travel.

- (ii) A brief discussion took place on Local Resolution. It was suggested that the protocol in this respect should be as simple as possible. Anglesey members reported that their protocol had only been used on one occasion in the past because it was too complicated. In view of this, a reviewed protocol will be presented to the full Council on the 22nd of May 2013. An informal approach will be adopted in the future with Group Leaders, although invited, not being obliged to attend. Initially, the emphasis will be on mediation with a short timetable to avoid relationships festering. If the matter remains unresolved, a referral to the Ombudsman will be made.

The Standards Committee is available for dispute resolutions in Gwynedd, but very rarely used.

- (iii) It was agreed that it would be useful for Monitoring Officers to feedback to the Forum after their meetings and that a Monitoring Officers Report should be included on the agenda from now on.