

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE
FEEDBACK ON OBSERVATIONS OF COUNTY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

Meeting:	County Council
Date:	11.7.24
Format of meeting	Delete as appropriate: Hybrid [online and in County Hall]
Independent member observing:	Claire Moore Independent Member Standards Committee

Please provide feedback on the following issues relating to standards and conduct.

Declarations of interest made at the start of the meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers made and type – personal or prejudicial • If prejudicial interests made did the councillor leave the room/virtual meeting
A large number of members declared declarations of interest for item 12: Agriculture in Powys

Declarations made during the meeting when they come to light: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers made and type – personal or prejudicial • If prejudicial interests made did the councillor leave the room/virtual meeting
N/A

Dispensations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were any dispensations relied on? • State which dispensation
Members were reminded of the dispensation relating to agriculture – that they could speak, debate but not vote.

Code of Conduct, Standards and Ethic issues: Selflessness / Honesty / Integrity and Propriety / Duty to Uphold the Law / Stewardship / Objectivity and Decision-making / Equality and Respect / Openness / Accountability / Leadership
Comment on any issues observed during the meeting:

I didn't note any particular concerns.

However, I did note that some members were looking at their mobile phones at times during the meeting (an issue that Nigel raised when observing the last council meeting). I do feel that this may be an issue regarding public perception and that they may not have been fully engaged in the meeting.

Other general observations:

Members were reminded of their declaration of interest responsibility at the start of the meeting.

A large number of members raised frustrations due to the dispensation around agriculture – and some asked the standards committee to review their decision. Some voiced that they still intended to vote even if they had declared an interest.

When a Cllr choose to speak in Welsh a translation service is provided, and members and officers are able to put on headsets. Is this also available to members of the public observing in the chamber? Also, what happens if you are observing online?

I thought the Chair did a good job and moved the discussions on well, giving everyone the opportunity to contribute - but obviously new in post and therefore sought advice from officers on several occasions. I presume a detailed training programme is available for such a complex role.

The electronic voting system failed for some members – so had to take a verbal vote.

Members of the public present and those presenting reports were warmly welcomed.

Conclusion:

An interesting meeting to observe.

Recommendations or Suggestions (if appropriate):

- Can the translation service be available for people observing?
- Can members be reminded about the use of mobile phones in the chamber?
- Remind all members to put their microphones and cameras on when speaking

- I would recommend that when independent members are observing full council meetings, that they should aim to do this in person rather than on-line. I feel that by being in the chamber you get a much better feel of the issues being discussed and would observe any particular issues. There is of course the opportunity to speak with Cllrs and officers face to face which I found very valuable.

This feedback will be considered at the next Standards Committee. However, any major concerns should be discussed with the Standards Committee Chair, Vice Chair and Monitoring Officer. Any action taken by the Monitoring Officer will be reported to the Standards Committee, as appropriate.

Email the completed form to: Carol Johnson, Democratic Services Officer
carol.johnson@powys.gov.uk