

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES**  
**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**  
**2 SEPTEMBER 2009**

**BREDHURST PARISH COUNCIL – APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATIONS**

**1. BREDHURST PARISH COUNCIL**

- 1.1 I have received applications for dispensations from (6) members of Bredhurst Parish Council to enable them to speak and vote at meetings of the Parish Council when matters relating to the Bredhurst Woodland Action Group are being considered notwithstanding the fact that they have prejudicial interests in the matter, by virtue of being members of the Action Group (Cllr Jones is also the Chairman of the Group). I understand that all seven Parish Councillors have prejudicial interests in this matter.
- 1.2 I attach copies of the letters from the Parish Councillors requesting dispensations.
- 1.3 The Standards Committee (Further Provisions) (England) Regulations 2009 provide (amongst other things) that a Standards Committee may grant a dispensation to a member or co-opted member:
- where more than 50% of the members who would be entitled to vote at a meeting are prohibited from voting, or
  - where the number of members that are prohibited from voting at a meeting would upset the political balance of the meeting to the extent that the outcome of voting would be prejudiced.

The regulations also provide that the Councillor must submit to the Standards Committee a written request for dispensation explaining why it is desirable. If a Standards Committee concludes that, having regard to these matters, and to all the other circumstances of the case, it is appropriate to grant the dispensation, then they may grant it. Guidance on considering applications for dispensations can be found as a separate agenda item.

- 1.4 Applications have been received from Councillors Bill Anderson, Stephen Bowring, Charles Hewitt, Bob Hinder, Vanessa Jones and Brian Mohabir.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members consider granting dispensations to Councillors Bill Anderson, Stephen Bowring, Charles Hewitt, Bob Hinder, Vanessa Jones and Brian Mohabir to enable them to speak and vote at meetings on the Bredhurst Parish Council or when matters relating to the Bredhurst Woodland Action Group are being discussed. Notwithstanding the fact that they have prejudicial interests by virtue of being a member of the Action Group. Members may wish to consider whether dispensation should be granted to the Chairman of the Group. It is recommended that if dispensations are granted they expire on 30 June 2012.