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Minutes of the meeting of the **STANDARDS COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Wednesday, 13 January 2016 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor B W Butcher

Councillors: S S Chandler
P J Hawkins

Also Present: Mr B P S Dowley (Independent Person)

Officers: Director of Governance
Corporate Complaints and Resilience Officer
Democratic Support Officer

20 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S M Le Chevalier and K Mills.

21 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that there were no substitute members appointed.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 July 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24 COMPLAINTS REPORT

The Committee received the report of the Director of Governance on formal complaints received by the Council for the period 1 July to 31 December 2015. The Director of Governance advised that the reference to him in the heading of the report was incorrect and should read 'Report of the Corporate Complaints and Resilience Officer'. The Corporate Complaints and Resilience Officer (CCRO) advised that 14 complaints had been investigated and three upheld during the reporting period.

In respect of Complaint No PSH020, Members were advised that, as the complete information had not been provided in response to the initial request, an apology had been issued and the amount of interest due had been reduced. In respect of Complaint No COM009, it was clarified that the temporary closure for the cycleway in Pencester Gardens had been issued under the wrong legislation. Officers had been made aware of the correct procedures to be followed in order to avoid this happening in the future. Complaint CTX166 had been referred to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) by the complainant. However, the LGO had taken the decision not to investigate the complaint as a fair and proportionate remedy had been offered by the Council. Complaint DEV168 had also been referred to the LGO, but had not been considered due to the fact that it was received out of time.

Referring to Appendix A of the report, the CCRO advised that the number of complaints was slightly down on the same period of the preceding year. It was clarified that the seven complaints about the Governance department had all related to the Director of Governance's decision to remove the Red Lion public house at Wingham from the Council's list of Assets of Community Value (ACV).

Councillor P J Hawkins advised that one of her neighbours had been very pleased with the speed at which a problem had been resolved by Officers. She added that complaints often stemmed from people not getting the result they wanted. Councillor S S Chandler clarified, in respect of Complaint No PSH020, that the Disabled Facilities Grant attracted interest and was payable on the death of the person who had received the grant. The Housing Improvement Grant was a charge on the property itself.

The meeting ended at 10.17 am.