

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	7	
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Conduct Committee</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Recommendation as to the Co-Option of Town and Parish Council Representatives</b>	

## 1 Purpose / Summary

1.1 Fenland District Council is entitled to co-opt up to two representatives from Town and Parish Councils within the District to support its programme of work. The Committee currently has two vacancies therefore applications for this position have been sought from Town and Parish Councils.

## 2 Key Issues

- The Conduct Committee can make recommendations as to the co-option of up to two Town or Parish Councillors for approval by Full Council. There are currently 2 vacancies.
- The role is advisory and whilst the members may speak, raise questions and seek to influence the debate they do not have formal voting rights.
- Applications were sought via an email to all Town and Parish Councils.
- Two applications were received.
- The Conduct Committee are requested to consider the applications and, as appropriate, make a recommendation to Full Council for approval.

## 3 Recommendations

3.1 That Full Council agree the co-option of the 2 applicants to the 2 vacant Town and Parish Council Representative vacancies on the Conduct Committee for a term of 4 years.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Steve Count, Chairman of the Conduct Committee
Report Originator(s)	Carol Pilson, Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer Amy Brown, Assistant Director and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer(s)	Carol Pilson; <a href="mailto:cpilson@fenland.gov.uk">cpilson@fenland.gov.uk</a> Amy Brown; <a href="mailto:amybrown@fenland.gov.uk">amybrown@fenland.gov.uk</a>
Background Papers	Fenland District Council Constitution

## Report:

### **1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES**

- 1.1 Article 9, paragraph 1.2.3 of Fenland District Council's Constitution specifies that:

"The Conduct Committee shall be entitled to co-opt up to two representatives from Town or Parish Councils from within the District who may sit with the Committee and consider matters before it. They shall have the right to speak and engage with the debate of the committee however they do not have a right to vote".

- 1.2 Fenland District Council has previously appointed 2 co-opted members of the Conduct Committee with their terms recently having ended.

- 1.2 On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023, an email was sent to all Town and Parish Clerks seeking their assistance in notifying their membership of the opportunity to apply for the vacant roles and for expressions of interest to be sent to Member Services via the standard form provided. Applications were requested to be returned by 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023. At the date of closure, 2 applications have been received as follows:

- 1.2.1 Martin Field of March Town Council whose application was endorsed by Councillors N Spencer NBE and Gary Christy of March Town Council and appears at Appendix A of this Report; and

- 1.2.2 Jason Ablewhite of Benwick Parish Council whose application was endorsed by Councillors Steve Tierney of Wisbech Town Council and Chris Boden of Whittlesey Town Council and appears at Appendix B.

### **2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Fenland District Council is constitutionally required to appoint up to 2 co-opted town and/or parish representatives to its Conduct Committee. The recommendations comprised in this report are designed to give effect to that requirement.

### **3 CONSULTATION**

There are no specific consultation requirements connected with these appointments however all town and parish councillors have had an opportunity to apply with information being sent to all Town and Parish Clerks to disseminate amongst their membership.

## **4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The Conduct Committee could choose not to recommend appointments to the current vacancies however this would not be in accordance with constitutional requirements or best practice. The Conduct Committee could choose to recommend only one appointment however, the co-option of 2 Town/Parish Council representatives ensures that there is sufficient resilience and capacity.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Legal Implications**

- 5.1.1 The legal implications are as set out in the main body of this Report.

### **5.2 Financial Implications**

- 5.2.1 The Member Allowance Scheme makes an ongoing commitment to pay the co-opted representatives a small co-optees allowance which is currently set at £140 p.a.

### **5.3 Equality Implications**

- 5.3.1 There are no specific equality implications connected with the recommendations presented in this Report.

## **6 APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Martin Field's Application

Appendix B: Jason Ablewhite's Application

## Application for Parish or Town Council Representatives Conduct Committee Fenland District Council

Councillor: Martin Field

Of March Parish/Town Council

Reason for applying for role:

I think it is essential that we can account for the good conduct of our elected representatives. It is necessary that this committee representatives a broad spectrum of the community and not be wholly made up of representatives of one political party where the public may question the independence of the decisions made.

Why do you believe you are suitable for the role?.

Please include any relevant experience or expertise you may have:

I believe in the importance of honesty, integrity and ethics in politics and believe that if it is going to be respected by the public that it needs to be subject to open and independent scrutiny.

I have been a District and Town councillor before. I have wide experience of being on a number of committees and governing bodies. I was active on the benefits review board when on the District council, which had a quasi-judicial role.

As a chair of governors at a local school I have had to lead on disciplinary matters.

I am a teacher and have held management roles and have had to negotiate resolutions amongst staff and amongst students.

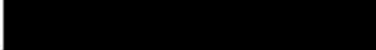
I have been a Union representative in most of my workplaces and involved in the resolution of many employment disputes.

Signed:  Dated: 19/6/23

I wish to endorse the application of Councillor Martin Field

Signed:  Dated: 19 Jun 23 Print Name: N SPENCER MRE

Of: March Town Council

Signed:  Dated: 19-JUN-23 Print Name: GARY CHRISTY

Of: MARCH TOWN COUNCIL

## Application for Parish or Town Council Representatives Conduct Committee Fenland District Council

Councillor: Jason David Ablewhite

Of Benwick Parish/Town Council

Reason for applying for role:

Having extensive experience within the local government arena over 22 years, I believe I can bring experience, impartiality and duty to the role.  
I have always had a philosophy of giving back to the communities to which I have served and having been involved in the original set up and consultation of the Standards Board for England and Wales, albeit in a different guise now, I can appreciate the need for an effective and fair process.

Why do you believe you are suitable for the role?.

Please include any relevant experience or expertise you may have:

I have a reputation for being robust when necessary but I am very fair and work well within a committee structure. I have a full understanding of politics and its nuances and within this role, how the complaints system is sometimes used for political purposes.

My local government experience:

Town Councillor and former Mayor of St Ives.

Various Chairmanships within the councils and outside bodies.

Huntingdonshire District Councillor.

Executive Leader of the Council.

Local Government Association National Executive Board Member

Chairman of the East of England local Government Association

Board Member of LGA, national Fire Commission

Board Member of LGA, Housing, infrastructure and Planning committee

Chairman of the National Procurement Organisation for Policing

Chairman of the Criminal Justice Board for Cambridgeshire

Board Member of the Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire

Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

28/06/2023

I wish to endorse the application of Councillor Jason Ablewhite

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: 29/6/23 Print Name: Steve Tierney

Of: Wisbech Town Council

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: 30/06/23 \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: Chris Boden\_

Of: Whittlesey Town Council \_\_\_\_\_