

# Editors' Code of Practice Committee

*Minutes of the Editors' Code of Practice Committee meeting held at the offices of the Newspaper Society/NPA, 18-20 St Andrew Street, London, on 24 March 2011.*

## **Present:**

*Chairman:* Paul Dacre (NPA)

Geordie Greig	(NPA)	Colin Grant	(NS)	Lisa Burrow	(PPA)
Jonathan Grun	(NPA)	Mike Sassi	NS)	Harriet Wilson	(PPA)
Richard Wallace	(NPA)	Hannah Walker	(NS)	Damian Bates	(SNS)
John Witherow	(NPA)				

**Attending:** Stephen Abell (Director, PCC); Ian Beales (*Secretary*).

**Apologies** were received from Neil Benson, Ian Murray and Baroness Buscombe.

**Membership:** The Chairman welcomed Lisa Burrow, Editor of *Closer* magazine (PPA), replacing June Smith-Sheppard, who had resigned.

**Minutes** of the meeting on 21 October 2010 were approved and signed.

## **Matters arising:**

- The secretary reported on the online launch of the revised *Editors' Codebook*.
- It was decided that the agreed revision on positioning of adverse adjudications should go to consultation via PressBof, along with changes emerging from the Code Review.
- The Chairman gave a brief update on the Bribery Act.

**Code Committee website:** The secretary reported a surge of hits after the *Codebook* relaunch.

**Phone hacking:** It was agreed in principle to set up an advisory panel that would review in depth the Code committee's options for action, without pre-empting current police inquiries. Membership and remit would be progressed by the Chairman in the light of developments.

**Defamation of the deceased:** The committee agreed to respond to a Scottish government consultation on the introduction of a law allowing relatives to sue for libel of recently-deceased people. It was felt this was unworkable, would have a chilling effect on journalism both inside and outside Scotland, and was unnecessary given the Code's existing redress for inaccuracies.

**Online journalism:** A PCC working party's report on prominence of online corrections and on applying the Code to branded journalistic Twitter messages was noted with general approval.

**ATVoD:** The Committee expressed serious concern that the Association for TV on Demand, a statutory co-regulator, was suggesting TV-like audio-visual channels run by newspapers and magazines fell within ATVoD's remit, rather than the Editors' Code.

**ANNUAL CODE REVIEW:** A number of suggested amendments to the Code were considered:

**Clarification:** Following a request from the UK Drugs Policy Commission, it was agreed clinically recognised drug abuse could, in some circumstances, fall under current Discrimination rules.

**Deferred for consultation:** A call for Clause13's financial rules to embrace property journalism.

**Suggestions not adopted:** *From B-eat:* Ban on use of skeletal images of people suffering from eating disorders. *From Engage:* Allow third party complaints in Discrimination cases to combat Islamophobia. *From Trinity Mirror:* Change of suicide reporting rules. *From various:* higher accuracy thresholds for "expert" commentators; requirement for journalists to declare hospitality received; display of sexually-explicit front covers; restrictions on publication portraying or exploiting sexual violence.