

Editors' Code of Practice Committee

Minutes of the Editors' Code of Practice Committee meeting at the offices of the News Media Association, 292 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, on 22 September 2015.

Present:

National newspapers

Chairman: Paul Dacre (Daily Mail); John Witherow (The Times); Chris Evans (Daily Telegraph); Hugh Whittow (Daily Express).

Regional newspapers

Neil Benson (Trinity Mirror Regionals); Ian Murray (Southern Daily Echo); Mike Sassi (Nottingham Post); Hannah Walker (South London Press).

Scottish press

Damian Bates (Press & Journal, Aberdeen).

Magazines

Harriet Wilson (Conde Nast Publications).

Lay members (ex officio)

Sir Alan Moses (*Chairman, IPSO*); Matt Tee (*CEO IPSO*).

Independent lay members

Christine Elliott; David Jessel.

Attending

Ian Beales (*Secretary*); Jonathan Grun (*Secretary elect*).

Apologies were received from Kate Stone (independent lay member).

Minutes of the meeting in May 2015 were approved and signed.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising.

Chairman's introduction: The Chairman thanked the Committee, and

especially the new lay members, for devoting the summer to reading the extensive Code Review submissions and responding with their views.

He paid tribute to the retiring Secretary Ian Beales, who had served the committee, either as a member, Deputy Chairman or Secretary, for 25 years, and welcomed the new Secretary, Jonathan Grun.

Code Review:

The Committee discussed a range of proposed amendments emerging from the review process.

Preamble: It was agreed that a 2012 proposal to introduce a compliance clause had been superseded by the strict compliance requirements of the Independent Press Standards Organisation contract, which were legally binding. Instead, the Preamble should be reworded to stress the new contractual obligations. It was also agreed to expand the reference to freedom of expression by giving more examples.

Headlines: The Committee agreed to revise the wording of Clause 1 (Accuracy) to include specific reference to headlines where they are not supported by the text of an article.

Opportunity to reply: Previously the subject of a stand-alone clause, the Committee agreed that opportunity to reply should become a sub-clause of Clause 1, with its wording revised to make it consistent with the rest of the clause.

Privacy: The Committee agreed to revise the clause in order to clarify where an individual has a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Reporting of suicide: Members approved a new stand-alone Clause 5, covering the reporting of suicide. The new clause emphasises the need to avoid excessive detail in reporting methods of suicide, whilst also taking account of the media's right to report legal proceedings.

Children: The clause was amended to standardise its wording and clarify that all its sub-clauses apply to all children under 16

Discrimination: The clause was amended to make specific reference to gender identity.

Public Interest: The Committee agreed to expand the examples given of public interest to reflect those now used by the Crown Prosecution Service. It also agreed to revise the test to be applied when editors invoke the

public interest, in order to bring it into line with the 2013 Defamation Act and the Data Protection Act.

The Committee agreed that a number of other suggestions made in submissions to the Code Review would be better addressed via improved guidance in *The Editors' Codebook*.

New Code Review: The Committee agreed that a new Code Review process should begin in the autumn of 2016. Sir Alan Moses said IPSO would be proactive in the review process.

Codebook revision: It was agreed that the Codebook should be updated online to reflect both issues raised in the Code Review and the adjudications made by IPSO as the new regulator. The new secretary had already begun collating appropriate cases.

The committee agreed that the Codebook should continue to be produced so that it could be accessed online, with the option of a print version.

Online version of Code of Practice: The committee approved an online version of the Code that was easily accessible on mobile devices.

Improved presentation of the Committee's work to the public: Concern was expressed that the Committee should get credit for the good work that it did on the Code and consideration should be given to how its work should be presented to the public. The Chairman said the point was well made, as there had been a failure by the industry to get across to the public how seriously Code matters were taken. The committee agreed that this should be considered at a future meeting.

Next meeting: It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in the spring of 2016 on a date to be decided.