



Local Government for Langton Green, Speldhurst, Ashurst and Old Groombridge

**Minutes of a Governance Committee Meeting held on**  
**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 7.30pm in the**  
**Parish Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground**

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**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Cllrs Lyle (Chair), Cleaver (Vice-Chair), Curry and Rowe.

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

Mrs K Neve – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

**1. To enquire if anyone present intends to record the meeting**

The meeting was recorded for the purposes of writing the minutes. The recording would be deleted once the minutes of this meeting have been approved and signed by the Chair.

**2. To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Turner (away) and Ellery (unwell).

**3. Disclosure of Interests**

The Clerk declared an interest in item 10a relating to a review of staff salaries and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

**4. Declarations of Lobbying**

There were none.

**5. Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on **27<sup>th</sup> January 2025** be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**6. Public Open Session**

There were no members of the public present.

**7. Review of Action Points**

The updated Action Points Table had been shared with councillors. The newly updated list of action points, incorporating the additional actions from this meeting, are shown at the end of these minutes.

**8. Review of Internal Audit**

- a) **Governance Check** – The Clerk reported that monthly checks were up to date. Cllr Lyle had carried out the last check. The Clerk would contact councillors to arrange the following months' checks.

- b) **Internal Auditor (IA)** – The Internal Auditor was due to undertake the year end audit on 29<sup>th</sup> April. On the basis that there was nothing of significance to address it was **RESOLVED** to give delegated authority to the Governance Committee to review the internal auditor's report via email prior to it being presented to Full Council.  
**RESOLVED** to recommend the reappointment of April Skies Accounting as the Internal Auditor.
- c) **Annual Audit (Forvis Mazars LLP)** – Councillors reviewed the Annual Governance Statement and were satisfied that effective controls were in place. It was **RESOLVED** to give delegated authority to the Governance Committee to review the Annual Return via email, following receipt of the Internal Auditor's report, prior to it being presented to Full Council.  
The AGAR would be published on 3<sup>rd</sup> June on the Parish Council website ahead of the publication of the Exercise of Public Rights which would start on 4<sup>th</sup> June and finish on 15<sup>th</sup> July.
- d) **Statement of Internal Control** – Councillors checked the Statement and **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that the Statement be approved and published on the Parish Council website.
- e) **Risk Assessments** – Councillors reviewed and updated the risk assessment and **RESOLVED** to recommend it to Full Council for approval.
- f) **Data Protection Officer (DPO)** – **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to reappoint Mrs K Neve as the Data Protection Officer (DPO).

#### 9. Risk Management – insurable risk

- a) **Insurance Policy check** – The Clerk reported that renewal quotations were being sought and would be presented to councillors for consideration.
- b) **Review of Fixed Asset Register** – The Clerk reported that the Fixed Asset Register had been updated to include greater detail and was now complete. Councillors expressed their thanks to the Clerk and clerking team for the significant work involved in completing this major undertaking. Cllr Curry continued to assist with the inclusion of location and OS reference details for land assets.
- c) **Photographic record of assets** – The Clerk reported that the photographic record had been reviewed in line with the updated Fixed Asset Register.
- d) **Risk Assessments for Committees** – Councillors noted the following:  
CCTV Risk Policy from CCTV Provider; PAT testing certificates for the Pavilion and Office; and the Langton Green Community Sports Association (LGCSA) risk assessment. The Clerk was requested to obtain an updated copy of the risk policy from the CCTV provider, as the existing policy had expired earlier in the year

#### 10. Risk Management – working with others

- a) **Staff Members**
  - **Staff Appraisals** – The Clerk reported that Cllr Curry had conducted her appraisal and she had completed the appraisals for the remaining members of staff. Appraisal notes were submitted to the Governance Committee for information.
  - **Staff Salaries** – To review the April pay award. The Clerk withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item. Councillors **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council for approval the following pay awards:
    - Groundsman – increase in hourly rate from £15.93ph to £16.57ph.
    - Assistant Clerk (CB) – increase in hourly rate from £16.25ph to £16.90ph.
    - Assistant Clerk (KH) – increase in hourly rate from £17.80ph to £18.51ph.
    - Clerk – increase in hourly rate from £23.55ph to £24.49ph.Councillors made their recommendations following comparisons with Local Government Services pay scales, the Consumer Price Index (CPI), housing data, and benchmarking against the Scottish Government and the wider public sector.
  - **Pensions** – To review the pension contributions. Councillors **RESOLVED** to leave the percentage contribution unchanged (employee contribution of 5% and employer contribution of 7%).
- b) **Security IT** – It was noted that appropriate cyber security training was being investigated.

## 11. Risk Management – self-management

The Clerk reported that, following notification from Cllr Curry of his decision to step down as Chair for personal reasons, she had approached other councillors to identify a potential replacement. Cllr Rowe had indicated he would be willing to take on the role of Vice-Chair; however, no other councillor had yet come forward to take on the role of Chair. It was therefore suggested that a rota be introduced, with councillors taking turns to chair Full Council meetings until someone is willing to assume the position on a permanent basis.

Cllr Lyle agreed to host the Annual Parish Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May which would be her last meeting before she formally stands down.

The bank signatories would need to be updated to reflect the recent changes.

- a) **Councillor Vacancies:** The Clerk reiterated that there were currently two vacancies on the parish council, with a third arising from the imminent departure of Cllr Lyle. This represented a significant loss of experience, knowledge, and capability. The need for new councillors was urgent, as meetings often struggled to reach quorum, and the clerking team was limited to acting on decisions formally agreed at such meetings. The committee agreed that a focused recruitment campaign was essential to attract suitable candidates.
- b) **Committees:** In light of the current vacancies on the parish council, the Clerk proposed a temporary reduction in the number of meetings to allow the council to focus on essential business. It was also suggested that, given the overlap in membership, the Finance and Governance Committees be merged for the time being to streamline operations. The proposed committees and membership would be submitted to Full Council for approval. Following a decision, the terms of reference would need to be amended.
- c) **Policies: RESOLVED** – That Full Council be recommended to approve the following policies: Health and Safety; Transparency Code; Complaints; Documents, Records and Correspondence; Equality and Diversity/Disability Discrimination; Freedom of Information; and Lone Worker.
- d) **Terms of Reference: RESOLVED** – That Full Council be recommended to approve the Internal Audit Terms of Reference.

**12. Draft Statement of Licensing Policy 2026-31** – Councillors reviewed the draft Statement of Licensing Policy 2026–2031 and agreed that no formal response was necessary.

**13. Devolution** – Articles from NALC (National Association of Local Councils) and KALC (Kent Association of Local Councils) relating to devolution were circulated to councillors for information and noted.

**14. Data on parish council activities** – The Clerk presented a breakdown of staff areas of work which had previously shared with Full Council. Members agreed that this had been a valuable and informative exercise. It was noted that the breakdown would be published on the parish council website and shared at the Annual Parish Meeting.

## 15. Items for information

- Martyn's Law Article
- PWLB Audit Statement
- Date of 2025 meetings - Mondays:
  - 21<sup>st</sup> July
  - 10<sup>th</sup> November
- Cllr Curry expressed his thanks to the Clerk and the clerking team for stepping up and providing practical solutions in response to his decision to step down as Chair.
- Councillors expressed their sincere thanks to Cllr Lyle for her valuable service on the parish council, both as Vice-Chair and as Chair of the Governance Committee, noting that this meeting marked her final attendance at a committee meeting.

There being no further items, the meeting closed at 9.15pm.

**Chair****Governance Committee Actions**

<b>Action No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Date created</b>	<b>Status</b>
14/24	Review the Asset Register and include more details and set up folder for copies of invoices of new items purchased.	Clerk	22/04/24	<b>Complete</b>
17/24	Book onto data protection refresher training course. <i>Possible TWBC session being organised.</i>	Clerk	22/04/24	In progress Chased TWBC
19/24	Organise Governance Checks: Sept: Cllr Curry - <i>Complete</i> Oct: Cllr Rowe – <i>Completed by Cllr Curry</i> Nov: Cllr Lyle - <i>Complete</i> Dec/Jan: Cllr Ellery - <i>Complete</i>	Clerk	22/08/24	<b>Complete</b>
1/25	Include recommendation to appoint new payroll provider on February FC agenda.	Clerk	27/01/25	<b>Complete</b>
2/25	Seek quotations for insurance renewal.	Clerk	27/01/25	In progress
3/25	Include the following policies for approval on February FC agenda - Cyber Security, Employee Code of Conduct and Kent Code of Conduct for Members. Health and Safety to be brought to a future meeting.	Clerk	27/01/25	<b>Complete</b>
4/25	Compile an estimate of Clerks' time spent on each area of work undertaken by SPC.	Clerk	27/01/25	<b>Complete</b>
5/25	Request a copy of their Risk Assessment for the sports pitches from LGCSA.	Clerk	27/01/25	<b>Complete</b>
6/25	Organise Governance Checks.	Clerk	28/04/25	
7/25	Send Internal Auditor Report to Governance Committee.	Clerk	28/04/25	
8/25	Send AGAR to Governance Committee for review prior to June FC.	Clerk	28/04/25	
9/25	Obtain an updated copy of the risk policy from the CCTV provider	Clerk	28/04/25	
10/25	Include salary review; committee structure and membership; policies and terms of reference on FC agenda for approval.	Clerk	28/04/25	
11/25	Update bank signatories.	Clerk	28/04/25	
12/25	Book onto cyber security training.	Clerk	28/04/25	
13/25	Include breakdown of work on website and at the APM.	Clerk	28/04/25	
14/25	Recruitment drive for more cllrs – positive focus, quotes from new cllrs, share info.	ALL	28/04/25	