



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

Minutes of a Governance Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 24th February 2021 at
10am
Conducted online via Zoom Electronic Communication

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mrs Lyle (Chairman), Barrington-Johnson, Rowe and Pate

OFFICER PRESENT

Chris May – Clerk

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

There were none

2. To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

There were none

3. Disclosure of Interests

The clerk disclosed an interest in 10a)

4. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none

5. It was **RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on **20th January 2021** be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

6. Public Open Session

There were no members of the public present

7. Review of Internal Audit

- a) Check on financial records: a check had been made on the payments authorised at the Full Council meeting in February by Cllr Pate. The clerk was asked to set up a shared folder in the one-drive for documents such as the checklist. Further discussion took place under section 9. Quality Assurance Check
- b) Internal auditor (IA): The date for the next Internal Audit has been set for Monday 26th April when Mr Bucket will check the year-end figures and the AGAR. The clerk said that he would produce a draft Statement of Internal Control (SIC) prior to his visit.
- c) Annual Audit (PKF Littlejohn LLP): There was nothing to report.

8. Risk Management – insurable risk

- a) Policy check: The van is insured and has been added to the Fixed Asset Register
- b) Fixed Asset Register: The register had been updated to include the van. Cllr Pate suggested that the new laptop be added. Clerk to action.
- c) Photographic record of assets: the van has been added.

9. Quality Assurance Check

The clerk was asked to circulate the list previously used but updated for this year. Cllr Mrs Lyle will devise a rota and ask each councillor to sign off on 2-3 items.

10. Risk Management – working with others

- a) Staff members: There was a discussion regarding the workload on current staff. This had been highlighted during IT discussions. The clerk said that the covid pandemic had added to the workload; he estimated that email volumes had, at times, doubled as the information was circulated and duplicated. He said the current hours should be sufficient to manage the work, and although staff have managed well working from home, efficiency should increase when office working is resumed.
 - Staff salary reviews:

There was much discussion on how salaries should be calculated. It had been previously agreed to deviate from the SLCC recommended system of SCP but use it as a basis for calculation. Cllr Barrington-Johnson said that staff should be reviewed, and any pay award determined by inflation, progression, and performance. There was further discussion whether the budget had enough allocated for rises. The clerk said this was always going to be a difficult year to judge the budget when there was a handover involved, and if necessary, funds may have to come from the contingency account. Cllr Pate said he was not entirely comfortable with the way salaries were calculated and would prefer a more structured approach.

RESOLVED to promote Catherine Barrett from Admin Assistant to Assistant Clerk and to increase her salary from £10.45ph to £11.50ph. This was in recognition of her work and ability in taking on a much wider role.

RESOLVED to increase Kate Harman's salary from £12.60ph to £13.00ph. Her salary will be reviewed upon a successful pass in CiLCA.

RESOLVED to increase Len Cooper's salary from £13ph to £13.25ph

RESOLVED to increase Chris May's salary from £18.80ph to £19.60ph
 - The clerk advised that the job advert was going in the three local village broadsheets; social media and website. Cllr Barrington-Johnson will send the advert for further distribution in Langton via the Village Society.
- b) Pensions: There was nothing to add.
- c) Security: There was nothing to add.

11. Risk Management – self-management

- a) It was acknowledged that many councillors were now accessing files through their own computer using the cloud-based Microsoft 365 system. The Samsung tablets continue to disappoint with battery life now adding to the problems that some are incurring.
- b) Committees – it was agreed to review the committees in May.
- c) To review policies:
 - Freedom of Information: minor change
 - Complaints: change to formal complaint section
 - Signs: minor change
 - Virement: re-wording with explanation of the use of contingency monies in a foot note.
 - Lone worker: no change

2021

- Co-option: no change

12. Items for information

There were none.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm

Chairman