



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

**Minutes of a Governance Working Group Meeting held on
Monday 10th July 2023 at 7.30pm in the
Parish Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Mrs Lyle (Chair), Curry, Ellery, Rowe and Scarbrough.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs K Neve - Clerk

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 had been received from Cllr Turner (away – family illness).

3. Disclosure of Interests

Mrs Neve declared an interest in item 10a relating to a review of staff salaries.

4. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

5. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on **24th April 2023** 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 the monthly governance checks were up to date. Cllr Lyle had carried out the June check, the July check would be carried out by Cllr Ellery and the August check would be carried out by Cllr Scarbrough.
- b) **Internal Auditor (IA):** There was nothing new to report.

9. Risk Management – insurable risk

- a) **Insurance Policy check:** The Clerk reported that the 3 year insurance policy, taken out in 2022, was due for renewal on 1st August 2023. The Clerk would add this to the Full Council agenda for councillors' information.
- b) **Review of Fixed Asset Register:** The Clerk reported that the document footer on the Register had been updated to note that a review had taken place in April 2023.
- c) **Photographic record of assets:** These were up to date.

10. Risk Management – working with others

a) **Staff members:**

- **Staff Salaries – To review the April pay award:**

The Clerk withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item. Councillors recommended that Full Council approve their recommendation to award a 7% salary increase, to be backdated to 1st April 2023, for all staff with an additional day's leave (pro rata in line with their working hours) as follows:

Clerk – From £19.00ph to £20.33ph (30 hours per week)

Assistant Clerk (KH) – From £14.95ph to £16.00ph (15 hours per week)

Assistant Clerk (CB) – From £13.35ph to £14.29ph (15 hours per week)

Groundsman – From £14.18ph to £15.17ph (16 hours per week, 24 per week during June, July, August and September)

Responsible Financial Officer – From £20.97ph to £22.44ph (6 hours per week)

Councillors reserved the right to review the salaries upwards if further information came to light.

It was noted that councillors had previously agreed the working group's recommendation that an increase from 5% to 7% employer pension contribution be included in the budget for the financial year 2023/24. (Full Council minute 22/85 of 4th April 2022 refers.)

The Clerk reported that the Assistant Clerk (KH) had taken on additional work for the Pavilion booking system and was monitoring her hours. If it was felt that additional hours were required, this would be brought back to the committee for consideration.

b) **Security:**

- **IT** – Cllr Curry updated councillors that Cloudy IT had confirmed that they run their own back-up as part of the support contract and that two-factor authentication had been enabled on all staff, the Chair and Vice-Chair. The committee recommended that all councillors should have this enabled as soon as practical. The Clerk and Cllr Curry would schedule this with Cloudy IT after the August Full Council meeting.

Cllr Curry added that the two desk-top computers in the office were ageing and budget allocation would be needed to update the computers.

Cllr Curry confirmed that the new BT Hub that had been installed, following the new broadband contract, and the CCTV system had moved over without complication.

11. Risk Management – self-management

- a) **Committees:** The committee membership had been updated at the Full Council meeting on 3rd July 2023 and circulated to councillors.

- b) **Policies:**

Employee Code of Conduct - The Clerk presented the Employee Code of Conduct for review. A paragraph had been included about a Grievance procedure as requested by the Governance Committee. **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council the approval of the Employee Code of Conduct as amended

12. Items for information

There were none.

There being no further items, the meeting closed at 8.21pm.

Chair

Governance Committee

Action No.	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
1/23	Organise Governance Checks as follows: April – Internal Auditor May – Cllr Rowe June – Cllr Ellery July – Cllr Lyle	Clerk	27/2	Complete
2/23	Request Internal Auditor to send future reports to Chair, Chair of Governance as well as Clerk	Clerk	27/2	Complete
3/23	Confirm reduction in hours of RFO and increase in hours of Clerk to payroll	RFO/Clerk	27/2	Complete
4/23	Carry out Clerk's and RFO's appraisals	Cllr Curry	27/2	Complete
5/23	Investigate repurposing Rialtas account for the Asst Clerk (KH). If not possible request additional account and seek financial approval from Finance Cttee	RFO/Clerk	27/2	Complete
6/23	Ask Cllrs how they access SPC emails and documents and what their preference in IT equipment is. Obtain costings for upgraded technology	Clerk/Chair	27/2	Complete
7/23	Instruct Cloudy IT to turn on 2FA after elections	Clerk	27/2	Complete
8/23	Update Policy Review dates and put in councillors' folder	Clerk	27/2	Complete
9/23	Add following policies to April FC agenda for confirmation: Financial Control Investment Data Protection Plus Internal Audit Terms of Reference	Clerk	27/2	Complete
10/23	Establish new Grievance procedure – to be included in the Employee Code of Conduct	Clerk	27/2	Complete
11/23	Produce asset register of I.T. equipment	Clerk/Chair	24/4	In progress
12/23	Investigate the re-naming of accounts containing reserve funds in line with internal audit recommendations	RFO	24/4	In progress
13/23	Include the 2022/23 internal audit for approval as a standalone item on the May FC agenda	Clerk	24/4	Complete
14/23	Amend Statement on Internal Control as per Cllr recommendations and include for approval at May FC	RFO/Clerk	24/4	Complete
15/23	Include recommendation to appoint Rialtas for year-end sign-offs for approval at May FC	Clerk	24/4	Complete

16/23	Add IT Security risk assessment to master document and present for approval at May FC	Clerk	24/4	Complete
17/23	Present annual contract with Cloudy IT for approval at May FC	Clerk	24/4	Complete
18/23	Complete AGAR checklist (page 2) and publish AGAR on website on 02/06/23	RFO/Clerk	24/4	Complete
19/23	Ask Cloudy IT to confirm that they can retrieve files after ransomware attacks	Clerk	24/4	Complete
20/23	Add footnote to Fixed Asset register to say the register was reviewed in April 2023	Clerk	24/4	Complete
21/23	Investigate whether Parish Council website is backed up	Clerk	24/4	Complete
22/23	Organise Governance Checks as follows: July – Cllr Ellery August – Cllr Scarbrough	Clerk	10/7	
23/23	Ask Cllrs with SPC tablets if they wish to continue using their tablet and offer to help with log-in on their own device.	Clerk/Chair	10/7	
24/23	Ask Cloudy IT to turn on 2FA for all Cllrs after the August Full Council meeting.	Clerk/Chair	10/7	
25/23	Submit amended Employee Code of Conduct to August Full Council.	Clerk	10/7	
26/23	Include staff salary recommendation on August Full Council agenda.	Clerk	10/7	
27/23	If agreed, notify Payroll of the new salary award – backdated to 1 st April 2023.	Clerk	10/7	
28/23	Check that Payroll have adjusted the pension contribution.	Clerk	10/7	
29/23	Write to employees re new salary following Full Council decision.	Clerk/Chair	10/7	