



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

**Minutes of a Governance Committee Meeting held on Monday 22nd June 2020 at 2pm
Conducted online via Zoom Electronic Communication**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Milner (Chairman), Mrs Lyle, 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:** There were none
4. **Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none
5. It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on **12th February 2020** be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman
6. **Public Open Session:** There were no members of the public present
7. **Matters Arising from the minutes:** Cllr Mrs Lyle asked that it be noted that the Terms of Reference for the Pavilion Working Group would be written once the legal position of SPC Pavilion Ltd and its legal interest in the Pavilion have been established.
8. **Review of Internal Audit**
 - a) Check on financial records: It was agreed that the checks in 2020 had not been able to be carried out due to the coronavirus outbreak and that they would be re-established once it was possible to do so.
 - b) Internal auditor (IA): Mr David Buckett had carried out a remote audit on the morning of 22nd June 2020. No detailed report was available for the meeting, but he had checked the figures for the AGAR and had signed his approval. A new check, that was brought in last year, asked councils to verify the date that the unaudited annual return is published. SPC was unaware of the check and although the report was published on its website and notice boards, was unable to provide this proof because the website software had no specific record. The clerk has noted this to the Auditor. This year a screen shot or photographic evidence will be available to prove posting.
Councillors reviewed the figures and there was much discussion on the key risks facing the council which are managed overall by all committees but were not available in one place. The clerk will investigate.
RESOLVED that the AGAR accounts be put to Full Council at the July meeting for approval.

- c) Annual Audit (Littlejohn LLP): Once the accounts have been signed they will be sent to PKF Littlejohn for approval.

9. Risk Management – insurable risk

- a) Policy check: The new policy has been sent and circulated to all members for review. The premium is payable in July.
- b) Fixed Asset Register: The register had been updated and agrees with the Insurance documents.
- c) Photographic record of assets: This is up-to-date with the exception of pavilion contents.

10. Risk Management – working with others

- a) Staff members: It was noted that staff had been working from home since the coronavirus outbreak and all meetings were being managed via electronic video. It has been working well but broadband issues have been noted. Looking forward, the challenge was how to re-open the office and manage social distancing while keeping the environment safe. This was discussed and the need to purchase PPE would be necessary. A thorough clean of the office prior to use was recommended.
The clerk said that the office was too small for three people and rotation would be needed.
- b) Pensions: It was noted that Catherine Barrett was now a member of the scheme. The clerk also said that SPC could increase its pension contributions for members, should it feel it was warranted.
- c) Security: The clerk reported that there had been some incidents reported and that the present CCTV was not able to record some areas in detail. Councillors recognised its limitations but decided against further upgrades at this time. The clerk was asked to check if there was a “park at own risk” notice in the car park.

11. Risk Management – self-management

- a) Use of tablets: SPC’s use of tablets and councillors’ own SPC email addresses had enabled the council to be paperless and compliant with GDPR requirements. There is an issue for those councillors that regularly write lengthy documents or need to edit them, and some councillors are using their own computer and then forwarding the document to their tablet. It was agreed that although the tablet was adequate for most an investigation would be made into an affordable small laptop or Idea pad for those that needed it.
- b) SPC’s Data Protection Officer (DPO) was LCPAS and was appointed in 2018. The company no longer exists and therefore it was **RESOLVED** that the clerk would become the DPO on a temporary basis until a suitable replacement can be found.
- c) **RESOLVED** that all councillors be requested to review their Register of Interests.
- d) All websites were required to have full accessibility by September 2020. This included having the facility for users to be able to view the website in different formats. The clerk was asking the website contractor (Hugo Fox) to ensure our website is compatible.
- e) Standing Orders:
 - Financial Standing Orders – these have been amended to make clear that third party payments can only be made from Unity Trust Bank. A minor change was suggested to 6.9.
 - Standing Orders: Changes were suggested to incorporate video conferences and Data Protection Legislation. The clerk will amend and circulate ahead of the Full Council meeting in July.
- f) Policies: No change was suggested to the Documents, Records and Correspondence Policy. The clerk said that a new policy on video meetings was needed and he will try to write one for adoption in July which will clarify how members of the public are invited.

- 12. Items for information:** Cllr Barrington-Johnson said the consultation on the Code of Conduct document could not be opened. The clerk will send new copies.

The meeting closed at 3.41pm

Chairman