



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

**Minutes of a Governance Committee Meeting held in the Council Office, Langton Green  
Recreation Ground on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 2pm**

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**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 film, photograph and/or 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 declared 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 **18th November 2019** 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:** none
8. **Review of Internal Audit**
  - a) Check on financial records: It was noted and agreed that the checks in 2019 had been inconsistent (note IA comment) and this was to be rectified in 2020 with monthly checks recorded.
  - b) Internal auditor (IA): Mr David Buckett had carried out a half-yearly audit on November 21<sup>st</sup> 2019. His detailed report had been circulated. There were 4 items that he suggested could be improved:
    - i. Councillors should be signing and dating documents that have been checked to provide an audit trail
    - ii. Councillors randomly check sort code and bank account payment details. (Note Clerk to print the payments in Unity on a monthly basis for checking purposes)
    - iii. Evidence of dates the AGAR is posted on the website is being sought by the external Auditor and SPC needs to provide this.
    - iv. The IA reminded Councillors to regularly check their tablets for emailsThe next visit of the IA is Wednesday at 9am 29<sup>th</sup> April to audit the AGAR.
  - c) Annual Audit (Littlejohn LLP): Nothing to note except the item above regarding evidence of posting. The next meeting of the Governance Committee is scheduled for 2.30pm 29<sup>th</sup> April.

**9. Risk Management – insurable risk**

- a) Policy check: There was nothing new to note.
- b) Fixed Asset Register: The new names for the pieces of land in Roopers to be added are to be known as: Orchid Park and Oak Tree Park
- c) Photographic record of assets: gateways and SIDs have been added

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

- a) Staff members
  - To note NALC 2020-21 national salary award offer of 2%
  - There was much discussion regarding the staff arrangements in the office, the hours and progression. Mrs Harman, Assistant Clerk has indicated that she does not wish to be considered for the Clerk's position should it become vacant in the future. It was therefore decided to offer more hours to Mrs Barrett so that she can attend meetings and the position will be reviewed in a year's time.
  - To consider the Admin Assistant's appraisal and contract: **RESOLVED** to increase the hours from 10 hours per week to 15 hours per week and to increase pay from £9.77ph to £10.45ph (7%).
  - To consider the Assistant Clerk's appraisal and contract: **RESOLVED** to increase Mrs Harman's pay from £12.15ph to £12.60ph (3.75%). Her salary will be reviewed upon a successful pass in CiLCA.
  - To consider the Groundsman's appraisal and contract: **RESOLVED** to increase Mr Cooper's pay from £12.50ph to £13ph (4%)
  - To consider the Clerk's appraisal and contract: The Clerk left the meeting; **RESOLVED** to increase Mr May's pay from £18.08 to £18.80ph (4%). The Clerk re-joined the meeting.
  - All pay increases are to be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April and subject to Full Council approval. It was agreed to initiate a business case for a company vehicle for the Groundsman which could possibly be electric.
  - Budget discussions for 2020/21 will include a possible South East weighting allowance for staff
- b) Pensions: Re-enrolment 3 years completed
- c) Security: It was agreed to concentrate on the pavilion security and defer other areas.

**11. Risk Management – self-management**

- a) Use of tablets: It is nearly one year since the use of tablets by Councillors was introduced. It was agreed that it is the way forward although some find the Samsung tablet difficult to use. Other systems could be considered when the tablets need renewal such as iPads (more expensive but more user friendly) or small laptops (notepads or ideapads). It was agreed that Budget discussions should put aside an annual amount to replace the present tablets.
- b) **Review of Standing Orders**  
**Financial Regulations – RESOLVED** to recommend a change regarding custody of title deeds (14.1) "storage by the clerk only where not held electronically by the Land Registry".
- c) **Review of Terms of Reference**  
It was agreed to establish TOR for the Pavilion Working Group.  
**Governance:** minor changes to colour of type  
**Internal Audit:** no change
- b) **Review of Policies – changes to be recommended to Full Council:**
  - I. Complaints Policy: no change
  - II. Grants Policy: no change but application form to be an appendix to policy
  - III. Grants Template: see above
  - IV. Financial Control: page 4; changes to current accounts and changes to how it diversifies its money. Page 5; changes to Admin Assistant's hours. Page 6: additional wording under Lease and field rentals

- V. Co-option Policy: change to interview and voting process; Councillors will now take notes and not the Clerk
- VI. Internal Audit Review Checklist Parts 1&2: no change; forms to be signed to be updated
- VII. Code of Conduct for Employees: no change but copies to be issued to all staff again
- VIII. Freedom of Information: no change
- IX. Signs on Council Land: no change
- X. Lone worker: no change
- XI. Budget Virement policy: no change
- XII. Investment Policy: changes to page 2 (amounts in investment updated) and to the appendix (Investment Plan)

**12. Items for information:** There was nothing further to report

The meeting closed at 4.45pm

Chairman