



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 Monday 5th January 2015 at 7.30pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Parker (Chairman), Owen, Pendleton, Milner and Mrs Jeffreys

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:**
3. **Disclosure of Pecuniary or Other Significant Interests:** The Clerk disclosed a pecuniary interest in 10a) 1,2 and 5
4. **Declarations of Lobbying:** None received
5. It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on **1st October 2014** 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 Jeffreys said she had not investigated the Standing Orders mentioned under Items for Information but would do so in due course.
8. **Review of Internal Audit:**
 - a) Checks on Financial Records – No checks were made in December but they would resume in January with Cllr Mrs Jeffreys doing the check. **The Clerk will issue a new roster for the year.**
 - b) Internal Auditor –The Internal Auditor had completed her check in November and the report had been circulated to all Councillors at the December Full Council meeting. **The Clerk will contact Mrs Hillman to set up a meeting** before the May Full Council meeting when the Annual Audit will have to be signed off by Council.
 - c) Annual audit (Littlejohn LLP) – nothing to report at present.
9. **Risk Management – insurable risk:**
 - a) Policy check – The insurance policy was up to date
 - b) Photographic record of assets – pictures of the car park upgrade will be added in due course along with the new pieces of land when they are transferred.

10. Risk Management – working with others

a) Staff members –

1. Review of Clerk's job description – no changes were made and this would be **recommended for adoption at the Full Council meeting in January**
2. Clerk's annual appraisal - the Chairman had asked Councillors for feedback on the Clerk's performance over the past year. Overall they praised his efficiency and hard work. The Clerk reported that he felt that the office was presently working to capacity with twelve annual meetings of Full Council, at least twelve meetings of the Planning Committee, six meetings each of the main committees and the Parish Plan likely to be active this year. The Clerks' find it difficult to be proactive and complete all of the action points. He suggested that a new Chairman will increase the workload. Neither he nor the Assistant Clerk wished to increase their hours. He advised that his CiLCA course had three months before it lapsed and requested that if the Council would like him to complete the course that he be given time off (say one week) to finish it. **It was agreed to recommend this to Full Council.** The Clerk then left the room and the Committee considered his appraisal which they deemed satisfactory and he qualified for a spinal point increase.
3. Review of Assistant Clerk's job description - no changes were made and this would be **recommended for adoption at the Full Council meeting in January**
4. Assistant Clerk's appraisal – this was conducted by the Chairman and the Clerk on 22nd December 2014. Her performance was considered more than satisfactory and she qualified for a spinal point increase.
5. NALC had agreed a 2.2% pay award commencing in January and **the committee would recommend to Full Council that this increase be awarded.** The Clerk re-joined the meeting.

b) Contractors – review of the Groundsman's duties and contract – **this was reviewed and would be recommended to Full Council for approval**

c) Security

1. Fireproof cabinet – The Clerk had made preliminary enquiries with KCC about archiving the records and it was agreed that this was the preferable method, however he said that the last 30 years would have to be kept on site. Therefore there was still a need to protect documents and prices for a fireproof cabinet ranged from £350-£2,000 depending on the time resistance to fire required. The Clerk was asked to make further enquiries.
2. Data back-up – the clerk asked permission to make further enquiries with Goudhurst and Hawkhurst Parish Councils who employ an auto back system about the benefits and costs. It was also suggested he ask the local IT consultant for his recommendations. He will report back.

11. Risk Management – self-management

- a) Financial Standing Orders review – a full review had been made by the Chairman and the Clerk to bring them in line with NALC's suggestions but not all were considered appropriate for this Council. **The committee made further amendments and the final version would be recommended for adoption by Full Council at the January meeting.**
- b) Freedom of Information review – minor changes were made and this **would be recommended for adoption by Full Council at the January meeting.**
- c) Signs on Council Land review – a change was made to include delegation to the Clerk. **This would be recommended for adoption by Full Council at the January meeting.**
- d) Lone Worker review – no changes were suggested. **This would be recommended for adoption by Full Council at the January meeting.**
- e) Budget Virement Policy amendment – a change was made to include the automatic approval of a virement when authority was given to spend funds from the contingency account. **This would be recommended for adoption by Full Council at the January meeting.**
- f) Terms of Reference (TOR) for working groups – the Clerk proposed that all working groups should have TOR issued by the committee or Council they report to. He gave an example of TOR for the

Parish Plan Working Group **and it was agreed to recommend it for adoption at the January meeting.**

- g) Open and Accountable Local Government – this was deferred until the next meeting
- h) Health and safety local council risk system – this was deferred until the next meeting

12. Items for Information – Cllr Mrs Jeffreys asked Cllr Milner to advise the Council if he is willing, or not, to be Chairman after she steps down after May. He said he would consider it and advise Councillors accordingly.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Chairman