



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

**Minutes of a Governance Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 22nd August 2024 at 7.30pm in the
Parish Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Mrs Lyle (Chair), Curry and Rowe.

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mrs K Neve – Clerk.

1. Election of Chair

RESOLVED that Cllr Ellery be Chair of the Governance Committee.

2. Election of Vice- Chair

RESOLVED that Cllr Lyle be Vice-Chair of the Governance Committee.

3. 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.

4. To accept and approve apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Ellery (unwell) and Turner (holiday).

5. Disclosure of Interests

The Clerk declared an interest in item 13e relating to the review of staff salaries and pensions for future budgeting.

6. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

7. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on **22nd April 2024** be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8. Public Open Session

There were no members of the public present.

9. 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.

10. Review of Internal Audit

- a) **Governance Check** – The Clerk reported that monthly checks were up to date. Cllr Turner had carried out the last two checks. The Clerk would contact councillors to arrange the following months' checks.
- b) **Internal Auditor (IA)** – The Clerk presented the Internal Auditor's engagement letter for consideration, together with a comparative quotation from Mulberry. The interim audit was due to be booked for October/November.

RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council the reappointment of April Skies Accounting as the Internal Auditor.

- c) **External Audit – Audited AGAR 2023/24 (Mazars)** – The Clerk reported that the signed off AGAR form had been received on 7th August from Mazars LLP. There had been one query regarding the variance of the fixed assets (new furniture for Pavilion) which had been rectified. Councillors asked the Clerk to seek clarification from Mazars regarding their comment about cashbook figures for the bank reconciliations. Mazars had commented on the high quality of the accounting carried out by the council and the committee expressed their thanks and appreciation to the RFO and her colleagues.
Councillors noted the completion letter and notice, which would also be reported to Full Council. The notice of conclusion would be posted on the website and noticeboard as required by the audit process.

11. Risk Management – insurable risk

- a) **Insurance Policy check** – The Clerk reported that the insurance policy (2022-2025) was renewed on 1st August (authorised by the Finance Committee on 26th June 2024). Quotations for a new policy would be sought prior to the expiry of the policy in 2025.
- b) **Review of Fixed Asset Register** – The Clerk reported that the Fixed Asset Register was being updated to include more detail.
- c) **Photographic record of assets** – The Clerk reported that the photographic record was being reviewed in line with the updated Fixed Asset Register.
- d) **Risk Assessments for Committees** – The Clerk reported that each committee had been asked to carry out risk assessments for their remit. These would be brought to the Governance Committee when completed. The Clerk had carried out a satisfactory Lone Worker Assessment with staff and would keep a record of the results.

12. Risk Management – working with others

- a) **Staff members:**
 - **Staff Hours** – The Clerk reported that the Assistant Clerk (CB) had been undertaking the additional 2 hours extra per week to undertake the Pavilion bookings, agreed at the last meeting. A record of the hours undertaken is being kept and will be reported back to the Governance Committee.
 - **Clerk's Contract** – The Clerk would bring an updated contract to the November Governance Committee for councillors' approval, to include the addition of role of Responsible Financial Officer.
- b) **Security** – Cllr Curry reported that he and the Clerk had established an asset register of IT equipment and he had written a Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) IT Hardware Strategy Report for councillors' consideration. All staff systems were now up to date, on their latest operating systems, and encrypted at rest. **RESOLVED** – To recommend to Full Council to approve the proposed strategy, which included the disposal of the items listed in the report and the sale/disposal of the computer hardware via CeX.
- c) **CCTV** – Councillors considered the proposed upgrade to the Pavilion CCTV system as recommended by Sunstone, the CCTV management company. Cllr Curry suggested an alternative would be to upgrade the wireless link, which could be achieved under delegated spend. He would contact Sunstone to discuss.

13. Risk Management – self-management

- a) **Councillor Vacancies:** The Clerk reported that there was currently one vacancy.
- b) **Committees:** The Clerk reported that attendance at meetings had been raised at the August Full Council meeting, but some councillors had not been in attendance due to holidays. Cllr Curry said he would reannounce the importance of attending meetings and giving timely apologies at the next Full Council meeting.
- c) **Policies:**
 - **CCTV Policy:** Councillors reviewed the CCTV Policy following the completion of the Surveillance Camera Commissioner self-assessment at the last meeting.
RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council the approval of the CCTV Policy as amended.
 - **Photography, Recording and Filming of Meetings Policy:** Councillors reviewed this policy and Cllr Curry said he would reword the statement which is read out at the beginning of meetings. The Clerk would ensure recordings of meetings were deleted once the minutes have been signed by the Chair at the following meeting, in line with our data protection policy.
RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council the approval of the Photography, Recording and Filming of Meetings Policy.
- d) **Terms of Reference**
 - The Clerk reported a small change to the Governance Committee Terms of Reference to amend reference to the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (instead of separately).
RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council the approval of the amended Governance Committee Terms of Reference.
- e) **Proposed/Planned/Planned non-repeating Expenditure** – The Clerk reported that the Finance Committee had requested each committee to identify potential future expenditure for the next 3 years to assist in budget planning. The committee had been requested to review salaries and pensions and to provide a budget recommendation for the next financial year. Cllr Curry said he would prepare a report for discussion at the November meeting to include predictions for future expenditure on salaries, pensions, IT equipment, CCTV, internal and external auditing.

14. Items for information

- Date of next meeting: Monday 18th November 2024. The Clerk would liaise with the committee regarding dates for 2025.

There being no further items, the meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Chair

Governance Committee Actions

Action No.	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
11/23	Produce asset register of I.T. equipment	Clerk/Chair	24/4	Complete
04/24	Investigate encryption protection on appropriate documents.	Clerk	29/01/24	Complete
06/24	Investigate encryption on office computers and the need for an IT/Cyber policy and flag for review in 18 months.	Clerk	29/01/24	Complete
08/24	Emergency numbers list to be included on our website and shared on Facebook and look into building up a list of local people who might be able to help.	Clerk	29/01/24	In progress
09/24	Contact local schools and ask them to share the councillor vacancy with the with their parents/carers.	Clerk	29/01/24	Complete
11/24	Future project – Share out to cttees the Risk Management Guide and ask them to look at relevant sections. Compare our current risk management to see if it needs to be included.	Clerk	29/01/24	Closed (request given to committees)
12/24	Organise Governance Checks: May: Cllr Lyle June: Cllr Turner July: Curry	Clerk	22/04/24	Complete
13/24	Contact relevant surveyor to assess future potential running and maintenance costs for the Pavilion.	Clerk	22/04/24	Complete
14/24	Review the Asset Register and include more details and set up folder for copies of invoices of new items purchased.	Clerk	22/04/24	In progress
15/24	Research the additional obligations, training and the requirements prior to the year-end change over to accruals. <i>Attended conversion/training with Rialtas.</i>	Clerk	22/04/24	In progress
16/24	Add the following to the FC agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Audit • Internal Audit Report • Reappointment of Internal Auditor • Statement of Internal Control • Risk Assessment (updated) • Appointment of Clerk as Data Protection Officer • Confirmation of Fixed Asset Register • Staff Salary Review • Staff Hours 	Clerk	22/04/24	Complete

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee Membership Standing Orders CCTV Self-Assessment Internal Audit Terms of Reference 			
17/24	Book onto data protection refresher training course. <i>Possible TWBC session being organised. Cllr Lyle wishes to attend.</i>	Clerk	22/04/24	In progress
18/24	Seek quotations for insurance renewal.	Clerk	22/04/24	Closed
19/24	Organise Governance Checks: Sept: Cllr Curry Oct: Cllr Rowe Nov: Cllr Lyle Dec: Cllr Ellery	Clerk	22/08/24	
20/24	Confirm reappointment of April Skies as Internal Auditor.	Clerk	22/08/24	
21/24	Seek clarification from Mazars regarding cashbook figures for bank reconciliations.	Clerk	22/08/24	
22/24	Add the following onto the September FC agenda: IT Hardware disposal recommendation CCTV Policy Photographing, Recording and Filming of Meetings Policy Terms of Reference	Clerk Cllr Curry to reword statement to be read out at FC re the recording of meeting.	22/08/24	
23/24	Prepare proposals on future spending for November Governance Committee.	Cllr Curry/Clerk	22/08/24	
24/24	Prepare proposal to discuss with Sunstone re CCTV.	Cllr Curry	22/08/24	
25/24	Add updated Clerk's contract on November Governance Committee agenda.	Clerk	22/08/24	
26/24	Organise dates for 2025 meetings.	Clerk	22/08/24	