



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

**Minutes of a Governance Committee Meeting held on
Monday 18th November 2024 at 7.30pm in the
Parish Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Ellery (Chair), Curry, Lyle, Rowe and Turner.

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

There were none.

3. Disclosure of Interests

The Clerk declared an interest in item 12 relating to the review of staff salaries and pensions for future budgeting.

4. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

5. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on **22nd August 2024** 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 monthly checks were up to date. Cllrs Curry and Lyle had carried out the last two checks. The Clerk would contact councillors to arrange the following months' checks.
- b) **Internal Auditor (IA)** – The Clerk advised that the IA was due to visit on 25th November.

- c) **External Audit – Audited AGAR 2023/24 (Mazars)** – The Clerk fed back the response from Mazars on their comment about cashbook figures for the bank reconciliations. Councillors asked the Clerk to raise this with the Internal Auditor for further clarification.

9. Risk Management – insurable risk

- a) **Insurance Policy check** – The Clerk reported that the current 3-year insurance policy (2022-2025) was due for renewal in 2025.
- To consider the increase in the current insurance policy to cover the purchase of Speldhurst Chapel. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council the approval of the insurance Adjustment Premium of £251.10 to cover the purchase of Speldhurst Chapel, which would be reimbursed by the Community Shop.
- 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. Cllr Norton had carried out the Car Park Risk Assessment. Councillors suggesting adding an additional item regarding ice and referring to the winter weather policy and advice of our insurance company. The Clerk would amend and keep a record on file.

10. Risk Management – working with others

- a) **Staff members:**
- The Clerk reported that, despite having to deal with the diagnosis and ongoing issues with a chronic condition connected with a close family member, the Assistant Clerk (CB) continued to carry out her duties.
 - Instead of updating the Clerk's contract to include the addition of the role of Responsible Financial Officer, a letter confirming the change would be sent to the Clerk by the Chair and countersigned by the Clerk.
- b) **Security** – The Clerk reported that the disposal of the IT equipment, included in the Speldhurst Parish Council Hardware Strategy report and approved at Full Council, was in progress through Kent County Council's device recycling scheme.
- c) **CCTV** – The Clerk reported that the annual CCTV maintenance contract was due for renewal. **RESOLVED** – To recommend to Full Council the approval of the CCTV maintenance contract with WJ-Sunstone at a cost of £1,896.25 including VAT.

11. Risk Management – self-management

- a) **Councillor Vacancies:** The Clerk reported that there was currently one vacancy following the resignation of Cllr Muress. The notice for the casual vacancy has been posted and if no calls for an election are made by 2nd December, the vacancy can then be advertised for co-option.
- b) **Committees:** A number of committee membership changes were discussed and it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council the approval of the following:
- Cllr Littlefield to join Amenities, Highways and Planning
 - Trevor Myles to join Highways as a member of the public
 - Cllr Ellery to leave Highways and join Amenities
 - Cllr Lyle to replace Cllr Ellery as Chair of Governance
 - Cllr Cleaver to join Governance
 - Cllr Curry to replace Cllr Tarricone as Vice-Chair of Planning
 - Cllr Curry to leave Air Traffic
 - Cllr Curry to replace Cllr Tarricone on Environment WG
 - Cllr Tarricone to leave Air Traffic

The committee discussed the merits of continuing with the Air Traffic Committee, which would be raised at Full Council.

The Clerk advised councillors that there was a live consultation regarding remote meetings which she was asked to circulate to all councillors to complete before the deadline of 19th December.

[Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings - GOV.UK](#)

- c) **Policies:** There were no policies to review at present.
- d) **Standing Orders** – Cllr Curry had advised councillors at the November Full Council meeting that he would like to change the order of the Full Council agenda to enable councillors to discuss the committees’ business earlier in the meeting. This would mean a change to the wording of a paragraph in the Standing Orders. **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council the adoption of the amended Standing Orders (paragraph 5n refers).

12. Proposed/Planned/Planned non-repeating Expenditure – In response to the Finance Committee’s request to identify potential future expenditure to assist in budget planning, the committee discussed the predictions on salaries, pensions, IT equipment, CCTV and the Pavilion, which would be fed back to the Finance Committee meeting on 25th November. The committee proposed a 5% increase in salaries for budgeting purposes only and this was not a recommendation for any salary adjustment for 2025/26. Furthermore, the committee calculated the effect of the recent budget change for employers NI which amounted to approximately £3,550.

13. Items for information

- Cllr Ellery explained that due to work and family commitments, he did not have the time to continue as Chair of the Governance Committee. Cllr Lyle agreed to take over as Chair until May. An item would be included on the December Full Council agenda to request approval of the committee membership changes.
- Date of 2025 meetings - Mondays:
27th January
28th April
21st July
10th November

There being no further items, the meeting closed at 9.03pm.

Chair

Governance Committee Actions

Action No.	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
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	Close and refer to TWBC
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 Rialtas conversion/training.</i>	Clerk	22/04/24	Complete

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 Chased TWBC
19/24	Organise Governance Checks: Sept: Cllr Curry - <i>Complete</i> Oct: Cllr Rowe – <i>Completed by Cllr Curry</i> Nov: Cllr Lyle - <i>Complete</i> Dec: Cllr Ellery	Clerk	22/08/24	In progress
20/24	Confirm reappointment of April Skies as Internal Auditor.	Clerk	22/08/24	Complete
21/24	Seek clarification from Mazars regarding cashbook figures for bank reconciliations.	Clerk	22/08/24	Complete
22/24	Add the following onto Sept 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	Complete
23/24	Prepare proposals on future spending for November Governance Committee.	Cllr Curry/Clerk	22/08/24	Complete
24/24	Prepare proposal to discuss with Sunstone re CCTV.	Cllr Curry	22/08/24	Complete
25/24	Add updated Clerk's contract on November Governance Cttee agenda.	Clerk	22/08/24	Complete
26/24	Organise dates for 2025 meetings.	Clerk	22/08/24	Complete
27/24	Include link to TWBC emergency plan on SPC website.	Clerk/Asst Clerk (CB)	28/11/24	
28/24	Seek further clarification from Internal Auditor on response from External Auditor.	Clerk	28/11/24	
29/24	Include item on FC agenda regarding the insurance adjustment premium for the purchase of Speldhurst Chapel.	Clerk	18/11/24	
30/24	Amend Car Park Risk Assessment to include ice and keep record.	Clerk	18/11/24	
31/24	Include CCTV renewal on Dec FC agenda for approval.	Clerk	18/11/24	
32/24	Email Cllrs to ask them to respond to "Remote Meetings" consultation.	Clerk	18/11/24	
33/24	Include committee membership proposed changes on Dec FC for approval.	Clerk	18/11/24	
34/24	Include amended Standing Orders on Dec FC for approval.	Clerk	18/11/24	
35/24	Feed in proposed expenditure on salaries, pensions, NI, CCTV and IT to Finance Committee for their budgeting meeting.	Clerk	18/11/24	