



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

**Minutes of a Governance Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 26th April 2021 at 2pm
Conducted online via Zoom Electronic Communication**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mrs Lyle (Chairman), 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 24th February 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Public Open Session

There were no members of the public present

7. Review of Internal Audit

- a) Check on financial records: a check had been made on the payments made in March by the IA. The Clerk had added the checklist to the Documents Folder.
- b) Internal Auditor (IA): The IA had attended the office that morning and had carried out his bi-annual audit which included checking the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). He had completed page 3 and signed the AGAR.
- c) Annual Audit (PKF Littlejohn LLP): Councillors checked the Annual Governance Statement (page 4 of the AGAR) and were satisfied that effective controls were in place. They then further checked the figures on page 5 and **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that the AGAR be signed at the May Full Council meeting.

8. Risk Management – insurable risk

- a) Policy check: The current policy LTA expires in July 2021. Further quotes were requested before renewal.
- b) Fixed Asset Register: The following items were to be added to the register – new Speedwatch equipment; new SID (when acquired) and computer equipment, such as laptops.
- c) Photographic record of assets: was up-to-date.

9. Quality Assurance Check

Cllr Mrs Lyle had circulated a rota for financial checks; she asked the clerk for more information on how VAT is completed and sent. She said that other risks required attention and she would work on them with the clerk in due course.

10. Risk Management – working with others

- a) Staff members:
 - Staff salary reviews: Following Kate Harman’s successful completion of CiLCa Councillors agreed to recommend that her salary be increased from £13ph to £14ph back dated to the 1st April 2021.
 - Recruitment of replacement clerk: Cllr Barrington-Johnson advised the committee that the interviews had been completed and the panel (Cllrs Barrington-Johnson, Pate and Mrs Lyle) had agreed on the order of the top three candidates. There was a majority decision on the fourth candidate, should he/she need to be considered. A starting salary for the top candidate was discussed and agreed and Cllr Barrington-Johnson would make contact after the meeting to try and agree details.
- b) Pensions: During the search for a replacement clerk it had come to light that SPC could be more generous in its pension contributions. It was agreed to recommend to Full Council that SPC’s contribution be raised to 5% to match that of the employees. This would be effective from 1st June 2021. SPC’s contribution would be reviewed next year and incremental rises could be suggested.
- c) Security: There was nothing to add.

11. Risk Management – self-management

- a) The clerk had produced a Statement of Internal Control (SIC). This was a document recommended by the IA and was to be updated annually as part of the year-end documents for his review. The committee reviewed the SIC and Cllr Mrs Lyle she said that she would look to strengthen SPC’s risk assessments other than financial ones in due course. **RESOLVED** that the SIC be adopted by Full Council.
- b) The Samsung tablets continue to disappoint with low battery life but it was agreed that they worked well in the transition period to paperless. The clerk advised that at present the office had two laptops and addition to the two office PCs. He said that when the new clerk arrives two more laptops will be needed to enable flexible working. **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council the purchase of two laptops.
- c) Committees – it was agreed to review the committees in May after the new Chairman and V-C had been elected.

12. Covid Compliance

There was further discussion on risk assessments. Cllr Pate said that the basics for the office had been carried out.

13. Items for information

There were none.

The meeting closed at 3.35pm

Chairman