



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 Thursday 26th November 2015 at 7.30pm

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Parker (Chairman), Mrs Jeffreys, Mrs Soyke, Barrington-Johnson and Milner

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:** There were none
4. **Declarations of Lobbying:** There were none
5. It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on **15th September 2015** 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:** Further to the decision to create a Staffing Working Group it was decided that the following Councillors would be members: Cllr Barrington-Johnson, Cllr Mrs Jeffreys and Cllr Parker
8. **Review of Internal Audit**
 - a) Check on financial records – No checks were made in October and it was agreed that the check made by the Internal Auditor in November would be sufficient. The Clerk will produce a new list for 2016.
 - b) Internal auditor – Alison Stevens visited on 6th November and produced a report which the committee reviewed. She highlighted a requirement of the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils Practitioners Guide 2014 (GALCP) for new systems that Parish Councils should have in place for handling correspondence, circulation, responses, filing and documentation. A Code of Conduct for Employers is another requirement. The Clerk will produce a draft copy for approval at the next meeting.
 - c) Annual Audit (Littlejohn LLP) – the contract with PKF Littlejohn ends at the end of the financial year 2016/17. NALC, DCLG and SLCC will procure audit for smaller authorities unless it is decided to opt out. It was **RESOLVED** not to opt out and remain within the “sector led body”.

9. Risk Management – insurable risk

- a) Policy check – the policy has been adjusted while the pavilion is being demolished. This has led to a pro-rata reduction in the premium of £358.37 which will be paid into our account. The policy will increase when the new pavilion is built.
- b) Review of Fixed Asset Register – this has been updated to include all new land transferred from TWBC, reduced by the value of the Pavilion (during the build) and to include all defibrillators
- c) Photographic record of assets – updated to include all defibrillators and the newly acquired land at The Boundary. The land at Lampington Row and Ashurst is yet to be added.

10. Risk Management – working with others

- a) Staff members
 1. Progress report on new assistant clerk – The clerk reported that the new assistant, Kate Plunkett, was progressing well.
 2. Consideration of Mrs Flemington staying as a locum – Mrs Flemington has said that she would be prepared to cover staff shortages if required. The Committee was appreciative of her help and asked Mrs Flemington to investigate terms and how she would invoice the Council so that the Finance Committee could review the financial implications. The Clerk will contact Withyham Parish Council for advice.
 3. To review the Clerks' job description – the job description is due for review and the Clerk said that it lacked detail. He would make some proposals for the Committee to consider.
 4. To consider the new regulations that all employees must automatically enrol into a pension scheme and the future implications for the council. The staging date for the Council was 1st November 2016 and the Clerk and the new Assistant Clerk have said that they will both opt out. It is a statutory requirement that auto-enrolment must be in place by the staging date and procedures are required. It was agreed to investigate National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) and ask Cllr Mrs Lyle for advice because she has already used them.
- b) Contractors
 1. To review the Groundsman's contract – it was agreed to review his contract and recommend an increase in hours per month from 32 to 36 hours for his work on the mobile SIDs as well as other extra work. The new contract will be reviewed at the next committee meeting and then put forward for Full Council approval.
- c) Security
 1. To consider improving the system of backing up data – the Clerk went to Hawkhurst Parish Council to see how they use Microshade (a system he is recommending). The incident the previous day (electricity cut at 9.30am till 3.30pm by pavilion contractors) meant that the office was closed. Having a system such as Microshade would allow working from home as well as a continuous back up of data. It was agreed to invite the company to give a presentation of the product.

11. Risk Management – self-management

- a) Health and safety – It was agreed to ask Cllr Mercieca to produce a draft policy in a simple and short format.

12. Items for information – the Clerk's appraisal is due and is to be carried out by the new Staffing Working Group who would report to the Committee at the next meeting. Cllr Barrington-Johnson will ask Councillors for input.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Chairman