



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 Friday 27th January 2012 at 10am

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllr Pendleton (Chair) Cllrs Mrs Jeffreys, Mrs Soyke and Parker

OFFICER PRESENT: Chris May – Clerk

1. **Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interest:** None received
2. **Declarations of Lobbying:** None received
3. **Apologies for Absence:** No absences
4. The Minutes of the Meeting held on **17th August 2011**, having previously been forwarded to Members, were approved and signed.
5. **Public Open Session:** There were no members of the public.
6. **Matters arising from the minutes:** An email had been received from a resident stating that the Council's Standing Orders were not available on the website. The Clerk said he would action and update the website.
It was noted that the Committee's Terms of Reference, the Internal Financial Control System and the Internal Audit Terms of Reference needed to be reviewed. These would be added to the next meeting's agenda.
7. **Review of Internal Audit:**
 - a) Check on Financial Records – Cllr Pendleton had completed a spread sheet to monitor committees' records such as Terms of Reference to ensure that they were kept up to date. It was agreed that the procedure for checking the financial records would be changed with effect from this month and the Terms of Reference would be changed to reflect this. From February 2012 a member of the Governance Committee would visit the office unannounced and make a check on all records kept and note checks made. These checks would be carried out on a rotational basis: Cllr Parker in February; Cllr Mrs Jeffreys in March; Cllr Mrs Soyke in April and Cllr Pendleton in May and so on.
 - b) Internal Auditor – John Roberts had carried out an internal report on November 17th 2011 and a copy of his report was circulated to members. The Auditor's comments regarding capital expenditure were noted "At the time of the visit occupation of the new office accommodation was being taken up. The presence of the Parish Council staff at the community centre will be helpful to the public, members, and staff. It is very impressive. The building is being part funded by a P.W.L.B. loan and since it is fixed for the duration at

the current relatively low rate, it is at a very competitive cost". It was noted that he had recorded the precept as 1.5% increase when it should have read decrease. The Clerk will advise him.

- c) Review of Annual Audit (Audit Commission) – The Audit Commission's report had been received – it was noted that the accounts were approved and that there had been no comment from the auditor.

8. Risk Management – insurable risk:

- a) Policy check – it was noted that the policy had been updated to include building insurance, furniture and all computers and machines.
b) The photographic check was in need of updating to include the posts at The Green and pictures of the office and contents
c) Storing of computer records off site – the present method is to back up all data weekly on an external hard drive and this is taken home daily. Storing all files off site would mean that all files would be safe in the event of a fire and would be accessible remotely. The Clerk was requested to ascertain the cost for further consideration.

9. Risk Management – working with others

- a) Parish Office – the Clerk reported that the present opening hours of Mon, Tues and Fri 9.30am – 1pm; Wed 2pm – 5pm and closed Thurs was working well. It was agreed that the opening hours would be advertised on the website and on notice boards and a report on how the office was working would be made before a decision would be taken in April to confirm the hours.
b) Staff members – consideration of working hours – it was agreed that as per the budget recommendation the Clerk's hours would increase from 25 to 30 hours per week and the Assistant Clerk's hours would increase from 10 to 15 hours at the commencement of the new financial year. There would no more overtime after that date. A review of staff contracts would be carried out.
c) Complaints Procedure – the Clerk submitted a draft proposal which he was asked to amend for presentation to Full Council at the February meeting with a view to it being adopted at the March meeting.

10. Risk Management – self-management

- a) Press and Media policy – the committee again recognised that this was needed and it would be completed in due course.
b) Data Protection – the Clerk confirmed that the Council was registered
c) Health and Safety – The Clerk would make further investigations of a risk assessment programme. He would attempt to do so and report at the next meeting.

11. Items for Information – It was noted that a number of matters needed to be considered at the next meeting

- An accident report book – for the office, Recreation Ground and play area
- The need for a First Aid Box would be looked in to and the need for any training
- Security would be investigated – number of keys; burglar alarm call out; fire access for Trustees

The meeting closed at 11.25am

Chairman