



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

**Minutes of a Governance Committee Meeting held on
Monday 29th January 2024 at 7.30pm in the
Parish Council Office, Langton Green Recreation Ground**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs Mrs Lyle (Chair), Ellery (7.34pm), 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

Apologies had been received from Cllr Curry (ex-officio) (attending another meeting).

3. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

4. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

5. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Governance Committee meeting held on **2nd November 2023** 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 Cllrs Rowe, Lyle and Ellery had carried out the November, December and January Governance checks, respectively. Cllrs Rowe, Turner and Lyle would carry out the February, March and April checks.

- b) **Internal Auditor (IA):** There was nothing new to report. The recommendations from his report, previously reported, had been or were in the process of being actioned.
- c) **Annual Audit (Mazars):** There was nothing new to report.

9. Risk Management – insurable risk

- a) **Insurance Policy check:** There was nothing new to report. The committee discussed the rebuild costs for the Pavilion and the Clerk was asked to contact the original builder to establish the current rebuild cost. The Clerk was also asked to check with the current insurers if they index link the sums insured and what is their current insurance value of the Pavilion.
- b) **Review of Fixed Asset Register:** There was nothing new to report. Cllr Rowe had previously questioned whether both hard copy and electronic copies of the Fixed Asset Register were required as the information was backed up by our IT provider. Councillors agreed that electronic copies going forward would be acceptable.
- c) **Photographic record of assets:** There was nothing new to report.
- d) **Risk Assessment:** The Clerk reported that the Internal Auditor had recommended that consideration be given to cyber risk. The Clerk was asked to liaise with Cllrs Curry and Ellery regarding the processes in place to mitigate any cyber risk and consider whether cyber insurance was appropriate.

10. Risk Management – working with others

- a) **Staff members:** The Clerk reported that staff appraisals were currently being organised. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had circulated an updated Model Contract of Employment and the Clerk was asked to compare with current contracts and ask staff if they would prefer the new NALC contract or include anything from it within their current contracts. There was some discussion about mileage rates and concern was voiced about tax liability if an increase was made outside of any Government uplift. At the next meeting this year's staff pay awards would be discussed.
- b) **Security**
See 9d) above regarding cyber risk
- c) **Emergency Planning**
At the last meeting the Clerk had been asked to produce a list of emergency numbers. Relevant information was available from the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) website. The Clerk was asked to link the information on the Speldhurst Parish Council (SPC) website and to share on the local Facebook groups. The Clerk was also asked to look into the possibility of establishing a list of volunteers who might be able to help in an emergency (eg clearing fallen trees).

11. Risk Management – self-management

- a) **Councillor Vacancy:** The Clerk reported that despite a second notice advertising the casual councillor co-option vacancy, there had been no interest. The Clerk was asked to contact the local schools and ask them to share the advert with their parents/carers. Councillors would also be asked at the February Full Council meeting to promote the vacancy.
- b) **Committees:** The Clerk reported that no changes were proposed but reminded councillors that some committee Chairs were due to change this year, including the Governance Committee.
- c) **Policies:**
 - **Standing Orders:** Councillors agreed that due to the pending changeover of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) role to the Clerk and that NALC were due to issue a new set of Financial Regulations, the review should be postponed until councillors have the benefit of that review.
 - **CCTV Policy:** Cllr Lyle reported that she was in the process of completing the Surveillance Camera Commissioner Self-Assessment Tool which was a Government recommended link for best practice. Following the completion of the self-assessment, it may be necessary to update the current CCTV Policy. Both documents would be presented to next Governance Committee meeting for councillors' consideration.

- **Governance Checklist:** The Clerk was asked to liaise with Cllrs Curry and Ellery regarding the wording for the inclusion of two new items for checking CCTV recordings and recent updates on the computer.

12. Items for information

- Cllr Rowe expressed concern that, although it is noted on council meeting agendas that the meetings are being recorded for the purposes of writing the minutes and that the recording would be deleted once the minutes of this meeting have been approved and signed by the Chair, a recent Freedom of Information (FOI) request had requested copies of the recordings of the Full Council meetings. The Clerk was asked to seek clarification from the Information Commissioner's Office (IOC). Cllr Rowe suggested that councillors be given the opportunity to refresh their vote on whether to have future meetings recorded.
- Cllr Lyle referred to a Risk Management Guide that our insurance company had provided. She suggested that, for a future project, each committee be asked to look at the sections relevant to their remit and compare our current risk management and make recommendations as necessary.

There being no further items, the meeting closed at 8.36pm.

Chair

Governance Committee

Action No.	Action	Owner	Date created	Status
11/23	Produce asset register of I.T. equipment	Clerk/Chair	24/4	In progress
30/23	Organise Governance Checks as follows: November – Cllr Rowe December – Cllr Lyle	Clerk/Cllrs Rowe and Lyle	02/11	Complete
31/23	Chase Cloudy IT regarding 2FA – requirement to use an App.	Clerk	02/11	Complete
32/23	Ask Finance Cttee to consider additional EMRs for other Amenities items (eg replacement fencing and car park bollards).	Clerk	02/11	Complete
33/23	Apply to TWBC requesting zero rating for Pavilion following dissolution of SPC Pavilion Ltd after checking with HMRC/Companies House.	Clerk	02/11	Complete
34/23	Remove SPC Pavilion Ltd sign from outside the front of SPC Office.	Clerk	02/11	Complete
35/23	Establish List of emergency numbers for disaster management.	Clerk/Chair	02/11	Complete
36/23	Remind Cllrs on behalf of Gov Cttee to confirm their attendance at scheduled meetings or submit their apologies in advance so a quorum can be established.	Clerk	02/11	Complete
01/24	Organise Governance Checks as follows: February – Cllr Rowe March – Cllr Turner April – Cllr Lyle	Clerk	29/01/24	
02/24	Investigate re-build cost for Pavilion from original builders.	Clerk	29/01/24	
03/24	Check with insurance company if they do CPI adjustments and what they increased the insurance on the Pavilion to.	Clerk	29/01/24	
04/24	Investigate encryption protection on appropriate documents.	Clerk	29/01/24	
05/24	Check all computers used by staff and councillors are running the latest systems.	Clerk	29/01/24	
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	
07/24	Compare NALC model contract with current SPC contracts.	Clerk	29/01/24	
08/24	Emergency numbers list to be included on our website and shared on Facebook	Clerk	29/01/24	

	and look into building up a list of local people who might be able to help.			
09/24	Contact local schools and ask them to share the councillor vacancy with the with their parents/carers.	Clerk	29/01/24	
10/24	Contact IOC regarding cllrs' concern re providing meeting recordings for FOIs and offer for cllrs to refresh vote on whether they are happy with recording.	Clerk	29/01/24	
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.			