

PARISH OF GODALMING

AT AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE PARISH OF GODALMING HELD IN THE GODALMING CHAMBER

ON THURSDAY, 15 MARCH 2012 AT 6.30 PM

* The Town Mayor (Councillor Cosser)
* The Deputy Town Mayor (Councillor Wheatley)

* Councillor P Martin	0	Councillor RA Gordon-Smith
* Councillor Poulter	*	Councillor Thomson
0 Councillor C Gordon-Smith	*	Councillor Lister
0 Councillor T Martin	*	Councillor S Reynolds
* Councillor Wilson	*	Councillor Woodham
0 Councillor A Bott	0	Councillor S Bott
* Councillor Hunter	*	Councillor Noyce
* Councillor Robinson	*	Councillor Thornton
* Councillor Welland	*	Councillor Williams

* Present # Absent without apology 0 Apology for Absence L Late

400. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 19 January 2012 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

401. PETITIONS/STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No petitions/statements/questions had been received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order No 80.

402. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

Members declared no Personal or Prejudicial Interest in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting, which is required to be disclosed by Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 No.1159.

403. REPORT OF THE POLICY & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

TO RECEIVE the oral report of the Policy & Management Committee.

The Policy & Management Committee met immediately before this Full Council meeting and considered the review of the effectiveness of the systems of internal control for Godalming Town Council. The Vice-Chairman of the Policy & Management Committee reported on the deliberations of that Committee with a view to informing the Council's debate on the next Agenda Item Minute 404-11 below refers.

404. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEMS OF INTERNAL CONTROL FOR GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL

Members noted that in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 all bodies are required to undertake a review of the effectiveness of systems of internal control annually by 31 March each year.

Members noted that the five areas that must be covered are:

- Scope of Internal Audit
Has the scope of the internal audit been discussed with the Internal Auditor to ensure that all the relevant risks are covered?
- Independence
Is the Internal Auditor sufficiently independent, objective and unbiased?
- Competence
Does the Internal Auditor have sufficient knowledge to be able to carry out the audit?
- Relationships
Are the relevant responsibilities of Members, Clerk and RFO clearly defined?
- Planning & Reporting
Is the body aware of a timetable of when the internal and external audits will take place and when the reports from these will be expected?

Members were also invited to consider the following questions;

Internal Audit Process

- Is the work of the Internal Audit reviewed regularly?
- Are the reports on the work of the Internal Auditor presented to the committee?
- Are the reviews and risk assessments undertaken from the Work Programme by the Audit Sub Committee on behalf of the Joint Burial Committee reported to the committee?
- Are the Annual reports from the Internal Auditor presented to the Policy & Management Committee?

External Audit Process

- Are the Annual reports from the External Auditor presented to the Policy & Management Committee?
- Does the Policy & Management Committee ensure that recommendations from the External Auditor are implemented?

After considering the report of the earlier Policy & Management Committee Members resolved that the following would be the Council's response to the areas that it had been invited to consider:

- Scope of Internal Audit

the scope of the internal audit had been discussed with the Internal Auditor in order to ensure that all the relevant risks were covered and all Members had received a copy of the agreed Internal Audit Plan presented to Policy & Management Committee on 17 November 2011 (Minute 254-11 refers);

- Independence

the Internal Auditor is sufficiently independent, objective and unbiased evidenced by the fact that Mulberry and Co is an external accountancy firm trading independently. Mulberry and Co had a particular specialism in Town and Parish Councils. Members noted that it is good practice to change the Internal Auditor every 3-5 years and that Mulberry & Co is about to start its fourth year as the Council's Internal Auditor;

- Competence

the Internal Auditor has sufficient knowledge to be able to carry out the audit as demonstrated by the fact that Mark Mulberry (the Internal Auditor) is a Chartered Certified Accountant and Registered Auditor;

- Relationships

the relevant responsibilities of Members, Clerk, RFO are clearly defined in the job descriptions for the Clerk and the RFO and the terms of reference of the Audit Sub-Committee. However, Members agreed that this clarity might be improved by the forthcoming review of Standing Orders agreed by the last meeting of this Committee (Minute 368-11 refers);

- Planning & Reporting

the Sub-Committee was made aware of the timetable of when the internal and external audits would take place and when the reports from these would be expected. The next Internal Audit is to be conducted on 22 May 2012 and reported to the next Audit Sub-Committee at a meeting to be held on 21 June 2012 – the Sub-Committee's observations will then accompany the Internal Audit Report to the Policy & Management on 28 June 2012. An Extraordinary Full Council meeting will need to be called for immediately after the Policy Management & Management meeting on 28 June 2012 so that Full Council might formally agree the annual return. The annual return is to be sent to the External Auditor by 6 July 2012 and expected to be received back by 30 September 2012. The annual return will be considered at the next scheduled meeting following its receipt from the External Auditor. The Committee noted that, with the demise of the Audit Commission, the external audit arrangements for the Committee's accounts for the year ending 31 March 2012 had been unclear but recent correspondence from BDO indicated that BDO would be continuing in this role although no formal communication to that effect had been received. The timetable for external audit is prescribed under the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011;

- Internal Audit Process

- the work of the Internal Auditor is reviewed regularly; initially by officers, then in detail by the Audit Sub-Committee. Findings and recommendations of the Audit Sub-Committee are reported to the Policy & Management Committee;

- the reports on the work of the Internal Auditor were presented to the Policy & Management Committee; the most recent having been received on 17 November 2011 (Minute 254-11 refers);
- the reviews and risk assessments undertaken from the Work Programme by the Audit Sub-Committee on behalf of Godalming Town Council and the Godalming Joint Burial Committee were reported to the Policy & Management Committee on 23 June 2011 and 17 November 2011;
- that the Annual reports from the Internal Auditor are presented to the Policy & Management Committee and noted that the last Annual Report was received on 23 June 2011;
- External Audit Process
 - the Annual Reports from the External Auditor relating to Godalming Town Council are presented to the Policy & Management Committee, the most recent being received at Policy and Management on 17 November 2011 (Minute 255-11 refers);
 - if there were recommendations from the External Auditor then Members would ensure that they were implemented. Recommendations were considered at the Policy & Management meeting on 17 November 2011 (Minute 255-11 refers). Members had discussed a reminder of the legislative requirements around the keeping of the minutes because some of the copy minutes submitted for audit purposes were not initialled by the Committee Chairman. The recommendation in 2010 for the Godalming Joint Burial Committee had been implemented (JBC Minute 50-10 refers).

405. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS, ETC.

The following resolution was passed nem con.

THAT THE TOWN CLERK BE AUTHORISED TO SIGN OR WHERE APPROPRIATE, TO HAVE SEALED ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN COUNCIL ANY ORDERS, DEEDS OR DOCUMENTS NECESSARY TO GIVE EFFECT TO ANY OF THE MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE REPORTS RECEIVED AT THIS MEETING OR IN ANY RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL.

406. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Full Council is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 3 May 2012 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber.

407. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.