

PARISH OF GODALMING

AT A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

OF THE PARISH OF GODALMING HELD IN THE GODALMING CHAMBER

ON THURSDAY, 26 MARCH 2015 AT 6.30 PM

* The Town Mayor (Councillor Wilson)
* The Deputy Town Mayor (Councillor A Bott)

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

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

415. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15 January 2015 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

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

Mr Andrew Dodd of Minster Road Godalming had asked to present a petition in accordance with Standing Order No 4. The Mayor elected to take the petition at this point of the meeting and Mr Dodd came forward to speak in support of the petition. The full petition (112 signatures of whom 73 are registered electors of the Parish of Godalming) is attached to the record minutes but the substance of the petition is reproduced below:

"The Objection

We the undersigned request a £50.00 - £100.00 plaque recognising past Mayors wives and consorts to be placed in Godalming, and the scrapping of the purchase of badges for the proposed £3,500.00

We request that the remaining £3,450.00 is spent funding worthy causes in the community.*

*For example, 100 food parcels for OAP's in the community that are just surviving on their pension, support for ex-serviceman in Godalming, support of the fire-fighters, ambulance or police charities that also work hard in public service with little recognition, 10 new park benches for the community, entertainment for OAP's living in care homes or assisted living or any other worthy project benefiting the community.

Further

We the undersigned request that Godalming Town Council make public the expenditure details on the Godalming Town Council website, and would request a breakdown on expenditure of the New Initiatives Fund over the past 12 months.”

417. **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

Councillor P Martin declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6 (the recommendation from the Mayoralty Committee) on the grounds that his wife is a past Mayoress. Councillor Martin remained in the Chamber when that agenda item was debated.

Councillor P Martin declared a further non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 15 on the grounds that he is Co-Chairman of the Flood Alleviation Scheme Steering Group. Councillor Martin remained in the Chamber when that agenda item was debated.

Councillor RA Gordon-Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6 (the recommendation from the Mayoralty Committee) on the grounds that his wife is a past Mayoress. Councillor Gordon-Smith remained in the Chamber when that agenda item was debated.

Councillor Cosser declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6 (the recommendation from the Mayoralty Committee) on the grounds that his wife is a past Mayoress and would receive a badge if the proposal were agreed. Councillor Cosser remained in the Chamber when that agenda item was debated.

Councillor Wheatley declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6 (the recommendation from the Mayoralty Committee) on the grounds that her husband, Mike, is a past Consort and might benefit were such a decision to be taken. Councillor Wheatley remained in the Chamber when that agenda item was debated.

Councillor T Martin declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6 (the recommendation from the Mayoralty Committee) on the grounds that his wife is a past Mayoress and so could get a badge if approved. Councillor Martin remained in the Chamber when that agenda item was debated.

418. **OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, LETTERS, ETC**

There were none.

419. Council RECEIVED the Chairmen's reports of the Committees as under:

Audit Committee

Upon the recommendation of the Audit Committee it was AGREED that Mark Mulberry of Mulberry & Co be asked to undertake one further year (2015/16 Financial year) as the Council's Internal Auditor but that, in accordance with good practice, a new internal auditor should be sought for the financial year 2016/17.

It was NOTED that the Audit Commission closes on 31 March 2015; that Godalming Town Council will keep the external auditor appointed by the Audit Commission until completion of the 2016/17 audits; and that for the financial year starting on 1 April 2017 Godalming Town Council will be responsible for appointing its own external auditor.

Planning & Environment Committee

There were no recommendations to Full Council

Policy & Management Committee

Upon the recommendation of the Policy & Management Committee it was AGREED that with effect from 1 April 2015 the Town Clerk's post be graded at the lower range of LC4 (SCP 52 – 55) and the Deputy Town Clerk's post be graded at the middle of LC3 (SCP 43 – 47). (The Town Clerk & the Deputy Town Clerk left the Chamber while this item was discussed.)

Mayoralty Committee

The Chairman of the Mayoralty Committee, Councillor Cosser, spoke to the recommendation of the Mayoralty Committee as recorded below:

“The Mayoralty recommended to Full Council that engraved badges should be awarded to former Mayoresses and Consorts but agreed that the detail of this recommendation should be framed by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Mayoralty Committee, once design and costs had been explored.

It is recommended that sufficient Past Mayoress and Consort badges for all such individuals still living be ordered from the current supplier of the Past Mayor badges (that supplier having given the lower of two quotes obtained by the Town Clerk) at a cost of £3,500 (including the cost of engraving each badge); and that the cost be met from the New Initiatives Fund. This would provide enough badges for the next 3-6 years (depending on the gender distribution of future Mayoresses/Consorts) and future re-orders of 10 badges at a time (at current prices £700) would be met in the relevant year from the Civic Regalia budget.”

Councillor Cosser proposed that the recommendation be referred back to the Mayoralty Committee for that Committee to look at alternative ways of acknowledging the work of Mayoresses/Consorts and/or alternative ways of funding the badges proposed. Council AGREED to refer the matter back to the Mayoralty Committee.

420. The minutes of the undermentioned Committees were RECEIVED:

	Meetings Dated
Audit Committee	19 March 2015
Planning & Environment Committee	29 January 2015 19 February 2015 12 March 2015
Policy & Management Committee	19 February 2015

421. **GODALMING JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE – REPORT**

Members NOTED FOR INFORMATION the oral report of the Godalming Joint Burial Committee of its proceedings on the 26 March 2015.

422. **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2015/16**

Members AGREED and ADOPTED a schedule of meetings for the Civic Year 2015/16.

423. **REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

Members considered a report from the Town Clerk and undertook a review of the effectiveness of internal control – addressing the questions posed and agreeing the answers as given below:

Noting that the review is informed by the work of the Audit Committee which Committee's report was presented earlier on this agenda (Minute 419-14 above refers). Members AGREED that the Audit Committee's work programme deals adequately with the internal systems of control for the Council.

- **Scope of Audit**

Has the scope of the internal audit been discussed with the Internal Auditor to ensure that all the relevant risks are covered?

- 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 have received a copy of the agreed Internal Audit Plan presented to Council on 27 March 2014;

- **Independence**

Is the Internal Auditor sufficiently independent, objective and unbiased?

- The Internal Auditor is sufficiently independent, objective and unbiased evidenced by the fact that Mulberry & Co is an external accountancy firm trading independently. Mulberry & Co had a particular specialism in Town and Parish Councils. Members to note that it is good practice to change the Internal Auditor every 6-10 years and that Mulberry & Co is in its sixth year as the Council's Internal Auditor – the Audit Committee has recommended that the internal auditor is changed effective from the Financial Year 2016/17;

- **Competence**

Does the Internal Auditor have sufficient knowledge to be able to carry out the audit?

- 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**

Are the relevant responsibilities of Members, Clerk and RFO clearly defined?

- the relevant responsibilities of Members, Clerk, RFO are clearly defined in the job description for the Clerk/RFO and the terms of reference of the Audit Committee. There are also clear definitions of responsibility in Financial Regulations. In the last year there has been specific and detailed consideration of these issues consequent upon the retirement of the RFO and the resumption of the RFO role by the Town Clerk; new Financial Regulations have been considered and adopted;

- **Audit 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?

- the Committee is made aware of the timetable of when the internal and external audits will take place and when the reports from these would be expected. The next Internal audit is to be conducted on 30 April 2015 and will reported to the Council at a meeting to be held on 25 June 2015; at which meeting the Committee

should formally agree the annual return including the statement of accounts and the annual governance statement. The annual return is to be sent to the External Auditor in July 2015 and the expectation is that it should be received back by 30 September 2015. The annual return will be considered at the next scheduled meeting following its receipt from the External Auditor.

Internal Audit Process

Is the work of the Internal Audit reviewed regularly?

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

Are the reports on the work of the Internal Auditor presented to the Committee?

- The reports on the work of the Internal Auditor are presented to the Committee; the most recent having been reported on 15 January 2015;

Does the Audit Committee provide regular reports relating to its recommendations and the agreed Work Programme to the Full Council?

- the Audit Committee reported to Full Council on 26 June 2014 (Minute No. 81-14 refers), 27 November 2014 (Minute No. 255-14 refers) and 15 January 2015 (Minute No 330-14 refers) and to this meeting elsewhere on the agenda.

Are the annual reports from the Internal Auditor presented to the Committee?

- the Annual Reports from the Internal Auditor are presented to this Committee; the last Annual report was received on 26 June 2014.

External Audit Process

Are the annual reports from the External Auditor presented to Council?

- the Annual Reports from the External Auditor relating to Godalming Town Council are presented to the Council, the most recent being received on 27 November 2014 (Minute 255-14 refers);

Does the committee ensure that recommendations from the External Auditor are implemented?

- If there are recommendations from the External Auditor then Members ensure that they are implemented. There were no recommendations in 2014 in respect of the Godalming Town Council.

Mark Mulberry of Mulberry & Co was first appointed as the Internal Auditor in 2010/2011 and has been reappointed for the current year.

BDO has been and until the financial year 2017/18 will remain the External Auditor for Godalming Town Council. BDO is currently appointed by the Audit Commission and from 1 April 2015 will be supervised by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd.

Characteristics of the Review

Can it be seen as a Catalyst for Change?

Yes, the evidence being the Audit Committee's Work Programme and the reviews undertaken to assess risk and the areas that are developed from these reviews

Does it Add Value?

Yes, value is provided by the follow up actions that are taken from the work programme to make improvements to enhance our services and reduce risk.

Is it Forward Looking?

Yes, the review identifies risks and incorporates them into the Audit Committee's Work Programme which is reviewed and updated at each meeting of the Committee to ensure it is forward looking and meeting events e.g. consideration of the new role of Finance Administrator

Is it Challenging?

Yes, the Audit Committee has created its own Work Programme identifying areas and risks over and above the norm that are considered and are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure compliance and to allow Members to take ownership of the risks and how they are managed to meet best practice.

Are the right resources available for the Internal Auditor to complete its work?

Sufficient budget exists to meet internal audit fees (and addition professional fees budget and/or reserves should unexpected circumstances demand more internal audit input). Good communication lines exist between the Internal Auditor and the council's officers and contracted staff.

424. RICHARD WYATT'S TRUST

Members to consider the contents of a letter received from the Clerk to the Carpenters' Company and AGREED that the Town Clerk should reply expressing the Council's regret at the fact that the building (Wyatt's Almshouses) should have reached the end of its useful life as almshouses; the Council's understanding of the financial realities that have led to this conclusion; the Council's thanks for the Carpenters' Company constancy in its support to the almshouses over 400 years and the Council's hope that the links between Godalming and the Company will continue.

425. 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.

426. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Full Council meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 30 April 2015 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber.

427. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

THE COMMITTEE RESOLVED TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM THE MEETING AT THIS POINT PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED IE. COMMERCIALY CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS.

428. GODALMING – FLOOD ALLEVIATION

Members considered a confidential report from the Town Clerk and a confidential oral update from the Deputy Town Clerk. Members agreed the following that:

The Town Clerk is authorised to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (the draft Memorandum is attached as a confidential annexe to the record minutes and will remain confidential until its author releases it for publication);

In principle the Council will contribute such land, in its ownership, as is necessary to the scheme – the detail to be the subject of further reports to the Policy & Management Committee;

The Council will earmark £25,000 as a potential contribution towards site investigation works. The £25,000 to be created as an earmarked reserve by virement of other earmarked reserves (£11,784 from the New Initiatives Fund (line 10), £10,016 from the Projects Fund (line 16), £700 from the Surrey Brochure fund (line 20), and £2,500 from the Godalming Co-ordinator fund (line 31)).