

PARISH OF GODALMING

AT A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

OF THE PARISH OF GODALMING HELD IN THE GODALMING CHAMBER

ON THURSDAY, 27 MARCH 2014 AT 6.30 PM

* The Town Mayor (Councillor T Martin)
* The Deputy Town Mayor (Councillor Wilson)

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

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

409. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16 January 2014 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

410. 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 4.

411. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Members made no declarations of interest in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting, which is required to be disclosed by the Localism Act 2011 and the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.

412. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, LETTERS, ETC

There were none.

413. COMMITTEE REPORTS

The reports of the following Committees setting out decisions taken pursuant to delegated powers were RECEIVED

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee commended its work programme to Full Council The main items on the work programme included business continuity, environment, legal, reputation, stationery suppliers, major risk finance, insurance, assets, schedule of financial responsibilities, payroll,

superannuation administration scheme, health and safety, financial regulations and festivals administrative procedure (copy of the work programme attached to the record minutes).

Members AGREED the following recommendations from the Audit Committee:

- Replace the carpet for general office as soon as possible.
- Establish whether the thermostat can be adjusted on the radiator in the general office to control the heating.
- Establish whether anything could be done to alleviate the cramped working conditions within the office.
- Request that the Communications working group as part of their remit consider the process of updating the website.
- Progress the electronic payments as soon as the guidelines are received from NALC with a view to updating the financial regulations to reflect changes and bank mandates where appropriate.

Members also NOTED that the Audit Committee had agreed to ask Sagepay to provide a service to enable receipts to be taken by telephone or virtual terminal. However, it was decided that it should first be established, whether there would be a penalty for leaving the system early. The RFO agreed to report back to the Chairman of the Audit Committee whether this was likely to be a problem. If this should be the case, councillors agreed that the Council would approach Card Saver to supply this service.

Members NOTED that the Audit Committee had made a number of other recommendations to Full Council about the appointment of the Internal Auditor and as part of its review of the effectiveness of audit arrangements – those recommendations were dealt with elsewhere on the agenda (Minute 417-13 and 418-13 refer).

Planning & Environment Committee

There were no recommendations to Full Council.

Policy & Management Committee

Upon the recommendation of the Policy & Management Committee Members ADOPTED a revised Equality and Diversity Statement (copy attached to the record minutes)

Members ACCEPTED the Policy & Management Committee's recommendation that no changes to the Council's Financial Regulations were required until the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) issued new model regulations (provided such model regulations were issued in the next three months).

414. **TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The reports of the following committees setting out decisions taken pursuant to delegated powers were RECEIVED:

	Meetings Dated
Audit Committee	6 March 2014
Planning & Environment Committee	30 January 2014 20 February 2014

13 March 2014

Policy & Management Committee

20 February 2014
13 March 2014

415. GODALMING JOINT BURIAL COMMITTEE

The oral report of the meeting of the Joint Burial Committee held on 27 March 2014 was noted.

416. 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.

417. INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW, AUDIT WORKPLAN AND LETTER OF ENGAGEMENT

Members to RECEIVED, CONSIDERED and APPROVED the Interim Audit report (of an audit conducted on 25 November 2013, by Mark Mulberry of Mulberry & Co) and the Audit Workplan submitted by the Internal Auditor. Members further AGREED that the Mayor should sign the Letter of Engagement from Mulberry and Co to continue as the Internal Auditor for Godalming Town Council and Godalming Joint Burial Committee for the ensuing year 2014-15 (copy of all documents attached to the record minutes).

418. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AUDIT 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 the systems of internal control annually by 31 March each year. Members agreed that the work programme and reports from the Internal Auditor and the Audit Committee that they had considered (see minutes 413-13 & 417-13 above) offered them the reassurance that they required regarding systems of control generally. That being the case Members moved on specifically to consider the effectiveness of audit arrangements.

In undertaking their review Members CONSIDERED the work of the Audit Committee on 6 March 2014 and its recommended responses to questions posed by the review.

The questions considered by Members and their responses are set out below:

- 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 the Audit Committee on 6 March 2014 (See minute 385-13);

- 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 about to start its sixth year as the Council's Internal Auditor;
- 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 descriptions for the Clerk and the RFO, in Financial Regulations and the terms of reference of the Audit Committee;
- 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 Committees are 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 May 2014 and reported to the next Audit Committee at a meeting to be held on 12 June 2014. The outcome of which, will then be reported to Full Council and Joint Burial Committee meetings on 26 June 2014 so that Full Council and Godalming Joint Burial Committee might formally agree their annual returns. The annual returns are to be sent to the External Auditor in July 2014 and the expectation is that it should be received back by 30 September 2014. The annual returns will be considered at the next scheduled meeting following their 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 Full 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 Audit Committee; the most recent having been reported on 6 March 2014 (Minute 385-13 refers).

Are the reviews and risk assessments undertaken from the Work Programme by the Audit Committee on behalf of Godalming Town Council reported to the committee?

- the reviews and risk assessments undertaken from the Work Programme by the Audit Committee on behalf of Godalming Town Council were reported to Full Council on 27

June 2013 (Minute No. 96-13 refers), 21 November 2013 (Minute No. 245-13 refers). The reports are also be reported to this meeting.

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

- the Annual Reports from the Internal Auditor are now presented to the Audit Committee (although previously Policy & Management Committee noted that the last Annual Report was received on 28 June 2013) and then received by Full Council.

External Audit Process

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

- the Annual Reports from the External Auditor relating to Godalming Town Council and Godalming Joint Burial Committee are presented to the Audit Committee, the most recent being received at Audit Committee on 10 October 2013 (Minute 202-13 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. Recommendations were considered at the Audit Committee on 10 October 2013 (Minute No. 202-13 refers) and Full Council (Minute No. 245-13 refers).

Does the Audit Committee provide regular reports relating to its recommendations and the agreed Work Programme to the Policy & Management Committee?

- The Audit Committee reported its recommendations to the following Full Council meetings on 27 June 2013 (Minute No. 96-13 refers), 21 November 2013 (Minute No. 245-13 refers), and this meeting.

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

BDO Stoy Hayward has been and continues to be the External Auditor for Godalming Town Council and the Godalming Joint Burial Committee. As BDO is appointed by the Audit Commission to undertake the external audit for both Godalming Town Council and the Godalming Joint Burial Committee there is currently no facility to change provider if the Council so desired.

Characteristics of the Review

Can it be seen as a Catalyst for Change?

Evidence Work Programme and Reviews undertaken to assess Risk and the areas that are developed from these reviews

Does it Add Value?

Value is provided by the follow up actions that are taken from the work programme to make improvements to enhance our services.

Is it Forward Looking?

Identifies risks and incorporates them into the Work Programme which is reviewed and updated at each meeting of the Audit Committee to ensure it is forward looking and meeting events e.g. Website added under Reputation

Is it Challenging?

It 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 audit to complete its work?

Good communication lines.

419. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Full Council meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 8 May 2014 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber.

420. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that copies of the confidential report of the Wilfrid Noyce Centre Working Group (to be considered by the Policy & Management Committee on 24 April 2014) were now available and could be collected by any Member who wished to read the report in advance of the normal distribution date.