

GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL

Tel: 01483 523575
Fax: 01483 523077
E-Mail: office@godalming-tc.gov.uk
Website: www.godalming-tc.gov.uk

Municipal Buildings
Bridge Street
Godalming
Surrey GU7 1HT

9 March 2012

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU to attend an EXTRAORDINARY **POLICY & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** Meeting to be held in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Bridge Street, Godalming on THURSDAY, 15 MARCH 2012 at 7.15 pm, or at the conclusion of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting, whichever is later.

Louise P Goodfellow
Town Clerk

Committee Members: Councillor T Martin – Chairman
Councillor Wheatley – Vice Chairman

Councillor P Martin
Councillor Poulter
Councillor C Gordon-Smith
Councillor Reynolds
Councillor Woodham
Councillor S Bott
Councillor Noyce
Councillor Thornton
Councillor Williams

Councillor R Gordon-Smith
Councillor Thomson
Councillor Lister
Councillor Wilson
Councillor A Bott
Councillor Hunter
Councillor Robinson
Councillor Welland

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on the 23 February 2012, a copy of which has been circulated previously.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

The Chairman to allow members of the public to ask the Council questions, or make a statement or present a petition. This forum to be conducted in accordance with Standing Order 80.

4. DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

To receive from Members, in relation to any items included on the agenda for this meeting, disclosure of any interests which are required to be disclosed by the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007 No.1159.

Members are requested to disclose, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, both the existence and nature of any "Personal" or "Prejudicial" interests that they may have in relation to matters for consideration on this agenda.

Members of the Public have the right to attend all meetings of the Town Council and its Committees and are welcome.

Personal Interests

- (1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) to (5) below, where a Member has a personal interest in any business of the Town Council and attends a meeting of the Council at which the business is considered, the Member must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.
- (2) Where the Member has a personal interest in any business of the Town Council which relates to or is likely to affect a person described in paragraph 8(1)(a)(i) or 8(1)(a)(ii)(aa) of the Code of Conduct, the Member needs only disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest when s/he addresses the meeting on that business.
- (3) Where the Member has a personal interest in any business of the Town Council of the type mentioned in paragraph 8(1)(a)(viii) of the Code of Conduct, the Member need not disclose the nature or existence of that interest to the meeting if the interest was registered more than three years before the date of the meeting.
- (4) Sub-paragraph (1) only applies where the Member is aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the personal interest.
- (5) Where a Member has a personal interest but, by virtue of paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct, sensitive information relating to it is not registered in the Town Council's register of members' interests, the Member must indicate to the meeting that s/he has a personal interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information to the meeting

Prejudicial Interests

Where a Member has a personal interest in any business of the Town Council that Member also has a prejudicial interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice that Member's judgement of the public interest. Where a Member has a prejudicial interest that Member must withdraw from the room or chamber where a meeting considering the business is being held.

5. AUDIT SUB COMMITTEE REPORT

Members to receive the report of the Audit Sub-Committee and to note all risk assessments and reports undertaken in accordance with the work programme of that Sub-Committee (attached for the information of Members).

The Audit Sub-Committee made the following recommendations to the Policy & Management Committee:

- That to help protect the Council's reputation there should be additional Member training covering the following areas: dealing with the media, code of conduct, the putative power of general competence, and visioning & business planning.
- That the Audit Sub-Committee should include a member of the JBC.

The Audit Sub-Committee also made a number of recommendations to this Committee in the form of responses to the review of the effectiveness of the systems of internal control and those recommendations are dealt with under Agenda Item 6 below.

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

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.

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 are 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?

Members to consider the following responses to the questions above as recommended by the Audit Sub-Committee and to form a recommendation to Full Council.

- 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).

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Policy & Management Committee is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 5 April 2012 at 7.15 pm in the Council Chamber or at the conclusion of the Planning & Environment Committee, whichever is the later.

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Brought forward by permission of the Chairman. Requests to be submitted prior to commencement of the meeting.

GODALMING TOWN COUNCIL

Disclosure by a Member¹ of a personal interest or a prejudicial interest in a matter under consideration at a meeting (S.81 Local Government Act 2000 and the adopted Godalming Town Council Code of Conduct).

As required by the Local Government Act 2000, **I HEREBY DISCLOSE**, for the information of the authority that I have [a personal interest]² [a prejudicial interest]³ in⁴ the following matter:-

COMMITTEE: _____

DATE: _____

NAME OF COUNCILLOR: _____

Please use the form below to state in which agenda items you have an interest. If you have a prejudicial interest in an item, please indicate whether you wish to speak (refer to Godalming Town Council’s Code of Conduct paragraph 12(2)).

Agenda No.	Subject	Personal	Prejudicial	Reason	Speak?	
					Yes	No

Signed _____

Dated _____

¹ “Member” includes co-opted member, member of a committee, joint committee or sub-committee – section 83, Local Government Act 2000.

² A personal interest includes:

Any matter registered in the register of interests

Any decision which affects the well-being or financial position of a member or a friend or relative to a greater extent than others.

³ A prejudicial interest is a personal interest so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member’s judgment of the public interest.

⁴ State item under consideration.