

Report to Council

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of Director of Finance

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Date: 23 July 2019

## **Appointment of parish members to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee 2019-2023**

### **Executive Summary**

Article 10 of the Council's Constitution – The Corporate Governance and Standards Committee makes provision, amongst other things, for the composition of the committee to include the appointment of three co-opted members of any parish council in the Council's area (known as "parish members").

The co-opted parish members have no voting rights and are appointed for a period of four years, coinciding with councillors' term of office (2019-2023). Shortly after the 2 May local elections, parish councils were asked to submit nominations in respect of these appointments and this report sets out the details of nominations received.

### **Recommendation to Council**

That the Council appoints the following three parish members to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee for a term of office expiring in May 2023:

- Julia Osborn (Send Parish Council)
- Ian Symes (Effingham Parish Council)
- Tim Wolfenden (Shalford Parish Council)

### Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure the composition of the Committee includes three co-opted parish members in accordance with Article 10 of the Council's Constitution.

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To appoint three parish members to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee in compliance with Article 10 of the Constitution.

## **2. Strategic Priorities**

- 2.1 Having three parish members co-opted to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee helps the Council deliver on its commitment to residents to be open and transparent.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 Article 10 of the Council's Constitution (The Corporate Governance and Standards Committee) makes provision, amongst other things, for the composition of the committee to include the appointment of three co-opted members of any parish council in the Council's area (known as "parish members").

- 3.2 Co-opted parish members participate in the consideration of business presented to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, although they do not have a vote. They also have a role to play in respect of misconduct complaints against parish councillors; specifically a requirement<sup>1</sup> for at least one parish member being present when misconduct complaints regarding members or co-opted members of parish councils are being considered.

- 3.3 Parish members shall be appointed by the Council for a four-year term, coinciding with the term of office of borough councillors, with serving parish members being eligible for re-appointment.

- 3.4 Following the 2 May local elections, all parish councils within the borough were invited to nominate parish councillors as co-opted parish members on the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee. By the 14 June deadline, six nominations had been received. However, by 19 June, three of the nominees withdrew leaving three remaining as follows:

- Julia Osborn (Send Parish Council)
- Ian Symes (Effingham Parish Council)
- Tim Wolfenden (Shalford Parish Council)

- 3.5 Article 10 states that where there are up to three nominations received, the Council shall consider their formal co-optation as parish members on the Committee. To assist the Council in that regard, the nominees were asked to submit a personal statement in support of their respective nomination. These personal statements are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

## **4. Consultations**

- 4.1 All 23 parish councils within the borough were invited to nominate a parish councillor as a representative on the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee.

## **5. Equality and Diversity Implications**

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<sup>1</sup> within the Council's adopted Arrangements for dealing with allegations of misconduct by councillors

- 5.1 Public authorities are required to have due regard to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) when making decisions and setting policies.
- 5.2 The Corporate Governance and Standards Committee is responsible for monitoring and auditing the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy.
- 5.3 Appointed parish members will be encouraged to engage with appropriate training for the role provided by the Borough Council.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 Under the Council's adopted scheme of allowances, each parish member shall be entitled to receive a small Co-Optee's Allowance, which is currently £351 p.a. They are also entitled to claim the same travelling and subsistence allowance to which councillors are entitled. There are no other direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 Although there is no statutory requirement for the Council to co-opt parish members to its Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, the Council's adopted Arrangements for dealing with allegations of misconduct by councillors requires at least one parish member to be present when misconduct complaints regarding members or co-opted members of parish councils are considered. Having more than one parish member on the Committee ensures that cases concerning allegations of misconduct by a parish councillor would be considered and dealt with in a timely manner.

## **8. Human Resource Implications**

- 8.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report

## **9. Summary of Options**

- 9.1 The appointment of three parish council members to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee is a requirement of the Constitution. Therefore, if the Council is satisfied with the three nominees, there is no alternative option other than to appoint them formally to the Committee for the period 2019-2023.

## **10. Background Papers**

None

## **11. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Personal statements submitted by nominees for appointment



### **Profile**

Julia has been a parish Cllr for Send Parish Council since 2015.

Julia holds MSc in Public Administration from the University of London and has a professional background as a researcher. As a research assistant she has conducted research into local authorities employment practices; EU growth and jobs policies and participated in workshops on the EU budget review and assessing the EU's multi-annual financial framework spending priorities.

### **Contact**

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# JULIA OSBORN

### **Why I am standing for parish member to the corporate governance and standards committee**

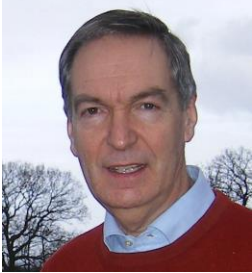
Since the introduction of the Localism Act (2011) the role and remit of parish councils has significantly changed, and some might say enhanced. From Neighbourhood Planning to the General Powers of Competency, parish councils have taken on many new and varied powers and with this comes new responsibilities and challenges. I am keen to ensure parish councils receive support and guidance from GBC in facing these new endeavors; as well as to encourage parish councils to proactively embrace these new opportunities.

My key role as parish member will be to represent parish councils in the context of the Borough Council's corporate activities; and in relation to the Localism agenda.

My key aim is to bring a fresh/new perspective from a younger and female parish Cllr to the role of parish member in giving oversight to issues of complaints.

I will work to ensure our parish councils uphold high standards and the treating of all members with respect regardless of age, race or background; and I will work to ensure parish Cllr's (and Borough Cllr's) can trust in procedures and ultimately the complaints process with any difficulties they face in their roles.

# Ian Symes – Personal Statement



I am a parish councillor and chairman of Effingham Parish Council. I have served on the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, and its predecessors, since 2009.

My aims and actions as a parish member are to represent the interests of parish councils and ensure they have a strong voice at GBC, and to uphold the interests of all parish councillors so that complaints made against them are dealt with fairly.

My most common criticism is that GBC either forget parish councils, or do not fully understand how parish councils operate. Proposals are sometimes put forward affecting parish councils and councillors that often do not make sense in a parish context. I have always insisted that these proposals must be reworked to make sense at parish level. It is also essential that the role of parish councillor is fully understood, for example, by the Monitoring Officer when there is a complaint against a parish councillor. After all the roles of parish and borough councillor are significantly different.

## **Why am I standing again?**

To continue to represent the interests of parish councils and councillors to ensure they have a strong voice in the Committee and are dealt with fairly when there is a complaint.

## **Achievements as member of the Committee**

Achievements as a member of the committee include:

- Persuading GBC and the Committee to continue to have representation from parish councils by opposing a motion placed before the Committee to dispense with parish member representation. This followed the Localism Act.
- Persuading GBC and the Committee to continue to have a parish member present every time a matter relating to parish councils or parish councillors is considered.
- The Committee has responsibilities for dealing with complaints against parish councillors. I was a member of the work group reviewing protocols for complaints against councillors and worked to ensure that they were fair and equitable towards parish councillors.
- Continually requesting that training, given by GBC to its own councillors, be made available to parish councillors. Recent examples include GDPR and standards training.
- Using my professional experience challenging and scrutinising auditors and officials on audit reports, treasury management and finance matters, and checking that where money has been pledged to a project in a parish the funding continues to be available.
- Scrutinising how new regulatory legislation is implemented by the Committee especially when it also relates to parish councils, examples being FOI and GDPR.

**Tim Wolfenden personal statement**

I have lived in Guildford for over 20 years, the majority of these in Shalford. I have a keen interest in local affairs. I have been a governor at Shalford Infant School (which all my children attended) and more recently at Guildford County School (currently attended by my two eldest children), where I was chair of the finance & premises committee. I have recently been elected onto Shalford Parish Council, having previously served as a co-opted member, and I now sit on the finance and planning committees. I am a keen cyclist and helped establish a local cycle campaign group. Amongst other interests, my wife and I also have an allotment in Shalford.

I have relatively recently retrained to be a school teacher and now teach maths at Christ's College in Bellfields. Previously, I was operations director for a division of a global engineering company, with responsibility for day-to-day management of the business. During this time I implemented revised governance structures; I also represented the business on the local audit committee. Earlier in my career as a business consultant I gained experience advising organisations on operational management and associated governance.

I would like to use a combination of my professional skills and local knowledge to support the work of the Council and, through it, the wider borough community by joining the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee.