

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Full Council Meeting
Held on Wednesday 18th October 2023, commencing at 7.00pm
At Four Marks Village Hall, Lyminster Bottom, Four Marks

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Cllrs Briggs, Smith, Gebbett, Pullen, McAllister, Medhurst, Coulson and Speed
STAFF:	Jo Tsigarides, Clerk Nicole Williams, Administration
PUBLIC:	Three members of the public
APOLOGIES:	Cllr Black

23.162 APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

Apologies from Cllr Black (personal reasons) were given and duly accepted by the Council. There was a general discussion about Cllr absences.

23.163 OPEN SESSION – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairperson informed the public that the meeting was being recorded as part of a trial but that the public gallery was an exclusion zone for the device. Any recording of the public would not be intentional, but audio would be captured. The Chairperson then reminded the public that each person wishing to speak would be allocated three minutes and that they would be responded to either formally or in an appendix to the Minutes, whichever was most appropriate.

The Clerk read out a brief statement from the Chair of F4FM would was unable to attend. It thanked the Parish Council for the support given for the information briefing and provided a summary of the evening. A question at the end asked the Council what steps they would take to ensure that the EHDC Draft Local Plan takes account of local feeling, requirements, and issues such as flooding, traffic, sustainability and harm to the rural character of the village. It summarised that residents feel that they are left with little District Council support and so it is felt that the Parish Council needs to step up and get residents views across.

MOP (Member of the Public) One made an observation that Ward Councillors were not on the EHDC Planning Committee and expressed disappointment at this.

They then asked about the graffiti at the skate park and an issue with grass cuttings on the football pitch. They questioned whether a personal relationship between Councillors and an individual was preventing the situation with the grass cuttings being resolved.

The MOP then noted the resignation of Kellie Knight and enquired as to whether any more Councillors would be stepping down.

There being no further items to raise, the Open Session ended at 7.18pm, standing orders were applied.

23.164 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS

No declarations of interest were made.

23.165 FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

On the proposal of Cllr Speed, seconded by Cllr Coulson, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was:

RESOLVED To approve the Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Wednesday 20th September 2023 as a true reflection of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

The Clerk confirmed for the benefit of the public that there is nothing legally that prevents a Councillor from proposing or seconding a resolution to approve Minutes if they were not in attendance.

23.166 CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

The Chairperson confirmed that the Civility and Respect Pledge had been signed and was on display at the Parish Office. They requested that copies are also displayed in the noticeboards where possible.

Thanks were given to FF4M and SMASH for hosting a recent information sharing event on the 8th October 2023.

23.167 COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION

The Chairperson noted the resignation of Kellie Knight and informed the Council that a by-election will take place on the 7th December 2023 with Nominations opening on the 2nd November 2023. EHDC had advised that as the cost of the election will not be shared across the ward, that the estimated cost is between £8000-£9000.

23.168 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllrs Day and Allsop had sent last minute apologies due to a District Councillor briefing. A written report from Cllr Neslon is attached to the Minutes.

23.169 PLANNING MATTERS

23.169.1 To receive any appropriate updates from the Planning Committee Chairman.

The Chairman indicated that they would like to write a letter to EHDC challenging the settlement hierarchy. This was discussed at length and it was concluded that they would prepare a draft with the Clerk which would be circulated to Councillors for any further comment before sending.

As Cllr Black had indicated that apologies may be given for an extended period, a request was made for further members. Cllr Pullen offered himself to the Planning Committee, with Cllr Briggs offering to be a reserve member.

23.169.2 Planning Matters for Consideration.

FOR DISCUSSION				
Date received	Ref No:	Location	Proposal	Decision
21/09/2023	26233/024	Little Kitfield, Kitwood Road, Four Marks, GU34 5AS	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an Existing breach of planning condition 2 of 26233/011 (in accordance with the approved plans) seeking to retain increased	12/10/2023 – extension agreed with planning officer for comment.

			ridge height of building.	
The Council has no objection to this application based on evidence that the breach occurred in excess of ten years ago.				
27/09/2023	20252/004	Land at 103 and to the rear of 97 to 105, Blackberry Lane, Four Marks, Alton	Proposal Outline application with all matters reserved except for access for creation of new vehicular and pedestrian access from Blackberry Lane, erection of up to 35 dwellings with associated landscaping and parking, Local Area for Play (LAP) and open space	18/10/2023 – extension agreed with Planning Officer for consultee comment.
<p>The Council strongly objects to this application on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site lies outside of the Settlement Policy Boundary of Four Marks and contravenes National and Local Policy which seeks to focus development on sustainable areas within Settlement Policy Boundaries. • The proposed application contravenes CP1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development), CP2 (Spatial Strategy), CP10 (Spatial Strategy for housing) and CP14 (affordable housing for rural communities), CP19 (development in the countryside) of the East Hampshire District Council Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy. • There would be a breach of Policy One of the Medstead and Four Marks Neighbourhood Plan and provisions within the NPPF. • There are concerns about the provision of deep-bore soakaways in that the installation would further contribute to flooding issues on Lymington Bottom Road, and it is noted that the LLFA do not regard this as a sustainable solution. No infiltration tests or winter monitoring have taken place and there is no mention of any maintenance strategy (contrary to CP25). • The Design and Access Statement incorrectly states that the Watercress Line provides services to Winchester and Alton. This is a tourist railway operating for part of the year between Alton and Alresford. • The Council considers that there is no need for a new play area as there are adequate facilities at the nearby recreation ground. There are no other suggestions to contribute to the village infrastructure. • The junction at Blackberry Lane and Lymington Bottom Road is dangerous with limited turning access. The additional traffic would add to this. It is also considered that there will be an impact on general traffic as people will access local facilities by car, contrary to CP31 (Transport). 				
06/10/2023	49313/009	Woodcote, Boyneswood Road GU34 5DY	See below	27/10/2023

*Beech tree cut back branches over hanging footpath approx 4-5 metres and reduce height by 5-7 metres
 No 3- Oak Tree reduce lowest northerly stem by 3 metres leaving an overall length of 5-6 metres and cut away from BT cable
 No 4- Oak tree one sided canopy leaning towards property/driveway carry out approx 2-3 metre reduction leaving overall height of 13-14 metres and overall width of 7-8 metres
 No 5 - Beech tree carry out approx 3-4 metre crown reduction leaving overall height of 15-16 metres and to match canopy of No 4 Oak, to also carry out 5.5 metre canopy raise from ground level over driveway/highway
 No 6 - Sycamore one sided South leaning canopy over neighbouring property reduce by approx 3-4 metres leaving an overall height of 14-16 metres
 No 7 - Beech tree with included bark at 11 metres on the East side carry out approx 5-6 metres height reduction leaving approx 14-15 metres height
 No 8 - Beech tree carry out approx 3 -4 metre height reduction leaving an overall height of approx 18-19 metres
 No 9 Twin stemmed Beech tree , East stem to be removed, Easterly lowest limb reduce to match canopy on Westerly stem, remaining West stem to be reduced to approx 18-19 metres in height
 No 10- Beech tree carry out 30% crown reduction leaving an overall height of 16-17 metres and overall width of 7-8 metres
 No 11 - Beech tree carry out 30% crown reduction leaving an overall height of 18-19 metres and overall width of 7-8 metres
 No 12- Beech tree remove Northerly stem at approx 4 metres from ground level and carry out crown reduction leaving overall height of 18-19 metres
 No 13- Beech tree carry out 30% crown reduction leaving an overall height of 18-19 metres and overall width of 7-8 metres
 No 14- Beech tree remove South stem to allow remaining stem to grow, reduce remaining crown by approx 3-4 metres leaving overall height of 18-20 metres
 No 15- Beech tree carry out 30% crown reduction leaving an overall height of 18-19 metres and overall width of 6-7 metres
 No 16- Beech tree carry out 30% crown reduction leaving an overall height of 18-20 metres and overall width of 7-8 metres*

In line with the Parish Council's Tree Management policy, recognising the importance and amenity value of trees (and hedgerows) within the environment, would only support work to, and removal of, trees (or hedgerows) that would not be detrimental to the health and stability of any remaining trees, and necessary for reasons of essential maintenance, or health and safety of persons and property.

With respect to this application, the Council defer to the planning officer's decision in this regard.

10/10/2023	60213	4 Yarnhams Close, Four Marks, GU34 5DH	Single storey extension to side and rear	31/10/2023
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The Council has no objection to this application.

23.170 OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

23.170.1 To note the Minutes of the meeting held on the 5th October 2023 and receive updates.

Cllr Gebbett gave a full appraisal of the recent meeting and noted that the Christmas tree is being supplied by a local retailer this year. The tree will be delivered on the 1st December 2023 and the lights will be installed on the 4th December 2023. There were some discussions about holding a light 'switch on' event or a carol service which Councillors will begin to arrange.

The Clerk informed the Council that the Remembrance service will take place on Sunday 12th November 2023 and thanked Cllr Smith for removing the old wreaths from the memorial. Cllrs Speed, Coulson and Gebbett volunteered to place the silhouettes and it was advised that this was done w/c 30th October last year.

Cllr Pullen had been arranging the memorial bench for local resident Clive Hawkins and informed the Council that £954 had been raised. Four Marks News had agreed donate funds to cover the shortfall for the bench and installation. The local manufacturer had also given a discount.

23.171 COMMUNITY BUILDING PROJECT COMMITTEE

23.171.1 To receive report from Committee Chairman

The Chairman of the Committee gave an overview of meetings that had taken place (a report is attached to the Minutes). They then confirmed that the marketing company had sent through a proposal, and it was agreed that this is a good option as they are completely neutral.

23.172 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

23.172.1 To note the Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th October 2023.

In absence of the Minutes, the Chairperson gave an overview of the meeting and discussed a new easy access deposit account that will be opened, along with some budgeting notes. A budget meeting will be held in early December 2023.

23.173 STAFFING COMMITTEE

23.173.1 To confirm the membership of Cllr McAllister and appoint a reserve member.

Cllr McAllister formally joined this Committee and Cllr Coulson offered herself as a reserve member.

23.173.2 To review RFO arrangements and any recommendations.

There was a discussion about the recommendations from the internal auditor and the need to recruit a permanent RFO which would be handled by the Staffing Committee. The Clerk reported that due to workload constraints, it would not be feasible for them to take on this workload at all. It was recommended that the Council extends the Locum RFO contract to ensure that they can assist with recruitment and training of the next RFO.

On the proposal of Cllr Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr Gebbett, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was RESOLVED to arrange for the extension of the locum RFO until the end of the financial year if necessary.

23.174 CLERKS REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

23.174.1 To receive report and note any correspondence.

The Clerk advised that the HLC AGM is scheduled to take place on the 4th November 2023 and the Chairperson volunteered to attend.

In addition to the circulated and noted correspondence, the Clerk advised that the Streetwatch Chairman had written expressing their disappointment at the Council's request for further information regarding the grant that was requested for their insurance expenses.

A letter had also been received from EHDC to invite the Council to make a representation at the Planning Committee meeting which was held on the 12th October 2023 with reference to application 54841/006.

23.175 FINANCIAL ITEMS

23.175.1 To note the Conclusion of Audit for the year ended 31st March 2023

On the proposal of Cllr Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr Smith, it was RESOLVED to accept the Conclusion of Audit report for the year ended 31st March 2023 and it was noted that there were no actions arising from the report.

23.175.2 To note Interim Audit report

Following the Interim internal audit which took place on Tuesday 3rd October 2023, a report of findings was circulated. There were some minor administrative points which have now been actioned and a recommendation to recruit a permanent RFO which had been dealt with previously in the meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr Smith, which was seconded by Cllr Gebbet, it was RESOLVED to accept the findings of the internal auditor.

23.175.3 To receive and authorise payments for September 2023

On the proposal of Cllr Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr Medhurst, it was RESOLVED to accept and authorise payments for September 2023 totalling £12477.68.

23.175.4 To receive and authorise payments to date for October 2023

In addition to the circulated schedule, the Clerk noted some additional payments, bringing the payments to date to a total of £14719.90.

On the proposal of Cllr Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr Medhurst, it was RESOLVED to authorise the October 2023 payments to date.

23.176 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

23.176.1 To review Community Engagement points following idea exchange.

Prior to the meeting, the Councillors had an informal idea exchange and had decided to progress the holding of Councillor surgeries. Sites were discussed including a local business and holding a 'pop up' under the clock tower at Oak Green Parade. Cllr Briggs will help to co ordinate these with a view to starting them in November.

Councillors also discussed community engagement with regard to the new building and revamping the Facebook page.

23.177 TO NOTE EXTERNAL COMMITTEE AND AREA REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

23.177.1 Allotments

Cllr Speed had made enquiries regarding the grass cuttings but had not heard anything back.

23.177.2 Benians Committee

The representative advised that the Committee Chairman had requested a meeting with the Council regarding CCTV, a retractable shelter for the area between the bar and the Parish Office and also the possibility of marking out parking spaces in a herringbone pattern by the hedgerow opposite the children's play area. The Clerk would arrange a meeting with the Chairman of the Benians Committee.

23.177.3 Village Hall Committee

Cllr Gebbett provided an update on the current projects that are ongoing in the Village Hall. Cllr Pullen added that investigations are being made into security cameras which will cost approximately £500.

23.177.4 Oak Green

Cllr Briggs reported that the fly tipping issues appear to be resolved currently and that he is working to build relationships with the local businesses.

23.178 Next meeting 15th November 2023

23.179 Meeting Closed at 8.40pm

Report from District Councillor Joanna Nelson

Councillor's Report November 2023

As a District Councillor, I receive a great many emails with information on a wide range of subjects, some of which I hope will be of interest.

The war in Ukraine does not always make headline news these days but currently there are 385 guests (185 families) living with hosts across East Hampshire. This clearly changes from month to month as guests move around. As I write there is at least one host family signed up in Four Marks who do not currently have a family so more hosts are not needed at this time. However, many Ukrainian families need specific items such as furniture when they move into rented accommodation or help with transport. For example there are three families on the lookout for a free or low cost car to help with school journeys, work commute etc. If anyone would like to offer support, the website is www.easthants.gov.uk/support-ukraine. Or contact Igor at igor.ulanov@easthants.gov.uk

Many of us love a bit of retail therapy but the current trend for overconsumption of clothing has a very detrimental effect on the environment. There are many causes like water pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from manufacture - 10 percent of all UK greenhouse gas is from the clothing industry. Also pollution from micro plastics and waste disposal in landfill, the UK produces 800,000 tonnes of fabric waste of which only 1 percent is recycled. Another aspect to be considered is unethical labour practice connected to the clothing industry, including modern slavery.

At the July Full Council Meeting of EHDC the Council passed a Climate Action pledge to become carbon neutral across all Council operations at the latest by 2035. Cutting emissions is just one way of becoming greener and having less impact on the environment.

We all know we have to recycle more but there is a much greater need to reduce the total volume of waste. I've been working with Waste Prevention Champions in East Hampshire on new ways and new funding to help reduce the waste we produce. This will have knock on benefits for each household, parish and district in Hampshire. I am looking forward to seeing this project roll out across the county over the next few months. Let me know if I can arrange a visit from the Waste Prevention team.

There are 20 sets of speed cameras on offer free to local communities to fight back against speeding motorists who have no regard for the dangers along our quiet residential and country roads. For more information contact Natalie Meagher on natalie.meagher@easthants.gov.uk

Bin calendars for October 2023 to September 2024 are now available to download from the website easthants.gov.uk/bincalendar

The Litter Picker Backpack was the brainchild of pupils from St Mary's Bentworth CE Primary School. The creative young ecowarriors devised a system to allow families at the school to litter pick at weekends by providing a littler picker, gloves and a bag inside a backpack. This autumn five more schools will introduce the scheme into their schools, thanks to a grant from EHDC Councillor Ginny Boxall. Young ACAN still has a few litter pickers available for any local schools who would like to participate. Please contact Young ACAN via email young.altoncan@gmail.com

Report from Community Building Committee Chairman

1. A meeting took place with EHDC Community engagement officer on 28/9/2023. The conclusion of the meeting was that the needs assessment should be carried out via smart marketing with EHDC kept informed and advising as required.
2. A meeting took place on 1/10/2023 with the sports consultant to determine involvement. The conclusion of the meeting was that the sports consultant would be available for a few meetings before Jan 2024 if advice was required in the needs collection phase. Action was taken to prepare a brief to outline the expected involvement. This brief would be prepared after smart marketing involvement has been defined.
3. A meeting with smart marketing took place on 11/10/2023 to agree their involvement. Smart marketing were given the background to the requirement in some detail and undertook an action to come back with a proposal. The Clerk took an action to create a spreadsheet of all the known organisations and venues that will need to be contacted as soon as possible. It is intended that the process will be fully transparent with both the needs data set and analysis available to all.
4. A deed of variation and memorandum of trust will need to be agreed with fields in trust to formalise the current playing fields area excluding the land north and south of the playing fields which are used for the cemetery and scout hut. This deed needs to be agreed and signed before the lease on the scout hut can be signed to avoid knowingly signing a lease that is in breach of the existing covenant. A further variation and land substitution would be required at a later date if the practice pitch playing field was required for a community building and had Sport England agreement.