

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Spaces Committee
Held on Wednesday 1st November 2023 commencing at 6.00pm at the Benians Pavilion**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Chairman Cllr Gebbett, Cllrs Speed, Medhurst, Black and Coulson
IN ATTENDANCE:	Jo Tsigarides Clerk Four members of the public
APOLOGIES:	

23.90 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence. Cllr Speed arrived at 6.25pm.

23.91 OS OPEN SESSION/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

MOP1 speaking on behalf of the Four Marks Environmental Group (FMEG) advised that the group is keen to help with the Parish Council hedgerow improvement project. The group would also like to get involved in the restoration of the badger orchard.

MOP2 thanked the Clerk and Cllr Coulson for attending a site visit at their property to discuss the pruning of a Holly bush behind their garden.

Cllr Medhurst noted that the situation with bikes at Old Down Woods had worsened and attempts would be made to contact the landowner of both the field and the woods to get permission to install signage.

The Clerk advised that a resident had complained about some trees being cut down in the badger sett. Contact has been made with the resident whose property borders the sett to gain information and they had not seen anything suspicious. The Clerk arranged to meet Cllr Black on the 2nd November 2023 to review the site.

A resident had emailed the office to report that dogs are being allowed off their leads on the football pitch area. There was a discussion about how to reinforce the messaging and it was agreed that the Clerk will post on Social Media to remind the community of the rules that are in place and the reasoning. This would then go onto the next Open Spaces Committee Agenda for December 2023.

23.92 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were declared.

23.93 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Open Space Committee Meeting, previously circulated, held on Thursday 5th October 2023 following a proposal by Cllr Coulson, seconded by Cllr Medhurst, and agreed by all Councillors as a true reflection of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

23.94 OS ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

23.94.1 To note updates from FMEG including Parish Pollinator Pledge

The Clerk had recently had a meeting with the Chairman and Secretary from the group to discuss various projects including the Parish Pollinator Pledge. The Clerk had contacted the Cubs and the School to see if they would like to get involved and will find out information from other Parishes that had been involved in the trial to see how they

managed the project. It was advised that the groups next meeting will be held on the 9th November 2023 at Four Marks Village Hall.

23.94.2 To discuss restoration of the Badger Orchard.

The badger orchard had become severely overgrown, impacting on fruit trees and opportunities for badgers to forage and so following a meeting with a previous badger protection agent who was involved in the mitigation measures at Badger Close during the time of the development, it was decided to improve this area. The Committee acknowledged that some of the initial works would need to be undertaken by the Open Space contractor with FMEG then helping further into the project. The agent had agreed to attend the meeting on the 9th November 2023 to give further information.

23.94.3 To review Tree Management Policy

The policy was reviewed and aside from some administrative changes, was agreed.

23.94.4 To review Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan

Councillors agreed that the best method to review this document would be to 'track changes' until they produced something that they could move forward with. The Clerk will re circulate a 'Word' format.

23.95 OS ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/REVIEW

23.95.1 To review Christmas tree arrangements/events

The Christmas tree will be delivered and installed on the 1st December 2023 with the lights being installed on the following Monday. At the Full Council meeting on the 20th October 2023, Councillors discussed possibly holding a switch on event or organising Christmas Carols and Councillors Couslon and Black agreed to try and arrange this, working around any dates that the COGS had reserved for carols.

23.95.2 Pruning along hedgerow at football pitch – resident request

The Clerk had completed a site visit following a resident request and reviewed a Holly bush that had significantly grown and was above the hedge line. Photographs were circulated to Councillors to review this. Whilst the Committee acknowledged the amenity value of the Holly bush, it was agreed that it would be cut down to meet the hedge line.

23.95.3 Book exchange at Oak Green Parade

Previously, the Committee had considered a more robust bookshelf for this initiative but the resident who had initially launched it did not ever provide requested plans and the bid for an unused telephone box had been unsuccessful. Currently the exchange is in operation, but the resident has now moved away, and the book donations are getting damaged in the bad weather. The Committee were all in agreement that the share had been well received and that it should be improved. It was suggested that Alton Men's Shed are approached about making a book house in exchange for a donation. The Clerk will follow this up.

23.95.4 Archery group request regarding access to containers.

The Archers had emailed to ask if something more permanent could be put in place to give them safe passage to their storage containers when the ground condition was bad in the winter. Previously, they had supplied their own foam mats. The Committee would like to get quotations for honeycomb to be filled with gravel and review the cost/potential funding for this at the next meeting.

23.96 OS AREA UPDATE AND REPORTS

23.96.1 To note area update.

The Clerk noted that the Allotment Association had organised a Pro-Grow delivery to take place on the 3rd November 2023. This would be self-organised.

Location	Action Required	Status	Notes
Allotments	Hedgerow improvement	Agenda Item	Woodland Trust pack being delivered early Nov.
Badger Close	Boundary Encroachment	In progress	Clerk to research further – Nov 23 Agenda
	Pine Road Area	In progress	Clr Gebbett reviewing.
Cemetery	Replacement gate stops.	Pending	Awaiting installation. Booked October 2023
	Replacement bench	Ordered	
	Composter	Ordered	
	Works to oak tree	In progress	
Lymington Bottom Green	Wildflower area and sign	In progress	Signs delivered – to agree 2023 installation.
	Village sign remedial works	In progress	
	Works to Sycamore tree	In progress	
	Poppy planting	In progress	
Oak Green parade	Flower bed maintenance	In progress	NW to contact Alton Men’s Shed to build in exchange for a donation.
	Phone box/book share	In progress	
Recreation Ground	Cricket equipment	Pending	Clerk to organise.
	Containers	Completed	Repainting completed in October
	Report of Japanese Knotweed	In progress	First application completed.
	Container Access	In progress	
	Football pitch/club	Ongoing	Ongoing Liaison with Club regarding use.
	Floodlights for training area	In progress	Costs have been requested.
	Footway along football pitch	In progress	Measurements and preference on finish have been sent to landscape architect.
	Holly bush	In progress	S106 app – awaiting construction quotes.

			Will be reduced to hedge line – contractor instructed.
	Children’s Play area	In progress	Awaiting date for works. Cllr Smith to produce report following training.
	Water refill point		Service completed July 2023. – contract expires October 2024; notice must be given July 2024 if contract is to be terminated.
	Skate Park	In Progress	Contractor booked Graffiti removal completed. Nature camera to be installed by contractor.
Climate change mitigation	Solar Panels at Benians Pavilion	Pending	Awaiting information from Benians Committee Chairman following site visit
	Nature boxes	Pending	Boxes produced – awaiting installation.
	Parish Trees	Completed	All trees in the report dealt with except for the tree at Cemetery – awaiting it to be in leaf to assess damage.
	Footpaths	Ongoing	Enquiries have been made re a kissing gate at FP17a
	Bus stop maintenance	In progress	Extinction Rebellion have been contacted regarding flyposting. Cleaning has been completed. No flyposting stickers have been put in place.
Swelling Hill Pond	Silt removal project	In progress	S106 application has been made
	South of pond/car park area.	In progress	Adverse possession claims in progress
	Fencing replacement and small pond fencing.	In progress	Quotations being sought
Station Gardens	General		Newly planted pear tree doing well.
Kingswood Copse	Ongoing maintenance for nature and wildlife.	In progress	Resident has alerted Council to dead Willow tree – to review/action.
		In progress	Letter has been sent to residents to reaffirm boundary and report any suspicious behaviour. Dog bin overflowing and reported.

23.96.2 Grass cutting deposits at football pitch

Councillor Speed has agreed with the allotment association that they will use the grass cuttings as and when they are there, clearing the space.

23.96.3 Update on Swelling Hill Pond

The Council are still awaiting the outcome of the S106 funding application.

23.96.4 Update on Pine Road Land

No further update.

23.97 OS NEXT MEETING: 6th December 2023

23.98 OS Meeting Closed at 7.00pm.