

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Spaces Committee
Held on 4th February 2026 commencing at 7.00pm at Benians Pavilion**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Cllrs Davies, Medhurst, Gebbett, and Coulson
IN ATTENDANCE:	Victoria Ursulean Assistant Clerk
	One member of public
APOLOGIES:	Cllr M Pullen

26.12 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr M Pullen sent apologies due to illness. These were accepted by all Councillors present.

26.13 OS OPEN SESSION – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Resident One was in attendance for item 7.2, requesting permission for an excavation at Swelling Hill Pond. He said that the area of the dig would not exceed 4x1m between the ponds, leaving enough space for people to move around it. He stated the importance of the geology at the site as it is very rare to find.

The Assistant Clerk mentioned that the Archery Club would like to hold some additional sessions on the cricket field in the summer. Cllrs were in agreement that these could go ahead, ensuring that the football club could use the pitch beforehand on the September dates.

Cllr Coulson added that the date of the Village Picnic should be changed as Cllr Smith was not available to do the car show on the current date of the 28th June 2026. Cllrs agreed to discuss this during item 9.1.

With no further items raised, the Open Session ended at 7.15pm. Standing Orders were applied.

26.14 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

26.15 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES

On the proposal of Cllr Medhurst which was seconded by Cllr Coulson, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was: **RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on the 7th January 2026.**

26.16 OS ITEMS FOR REVIEW/CONSIDERATION

26.16.1 To review the bench policy and consider bench application

Cllrs Gebbett and Medhurst had carried out an assessment of the ground at the cemetery and the locations for benches that had been applied for. They had agreed that the bench application along the back hedge could be approved as the tree roots there would make it very difficult to use it as a burial plot. It would also provide a bench with some shade.

The second bench application and a review of the policy has been deferred until remedial action can take place.

On the proposal of Cllr Medhurst, which was seconded by Cllr Gebbett, and with all Cllrs in agreement it was **RESOLVED** to approve one bench and defer the other until remedial action has taken place.

26.17 OS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

26.17.1 To discuss resident's request of scalplings along path parallel to Telegraph Lane.

A resident had mentioned that the footpath three was very muddy and difficult to navigate and suggested that the Council consider the laying of scalplings.

Cllrs all agreed that the path is overgrown and muddy at one end. Quotes were requested to install plastic grids and scalplings.

26.17.2 To discuss ideas for infrastructure projects

Cllrs discussed the well at Swelling Hill Pond and also considered that purchasing the Mission Hall would be a good area for a community hub.

The meeting was closed at 7.40pm to allow Resident One to speak. He mentioned who owned the site originally, and that due to the condition of the site, it might be difficult to apply for grants to restore it.

The meeting was reopened at 7.42pm.

26.18 OS ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

26.18.1 To approve a new food truck trading from the recreation ground

A new application from a pizza van was received.

On the proposal of Cllr Davies which was seconded by Cllr Coulson and with all Cllrs in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the application for a pizza van to trade from the recreation ground on alternate Friday evenings from 5.00 – 8.30pm.

26.18.2 To approve excavation at Swelling Hill Pond in June 2026

Ropley History Network (RHN) had requested an excavation at Swelling Hill Pond of which the Cllrs were enthusiastic. The Council's insurance company had stated that our public liability insurance would cover the dig but advised that RHN should also have their own insurance and provide a risk assessment, which they have done. The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.48pm to ask Resident One if he would consider involving the school in some way. He was eager to promote interaction in the community and happy to involve the school.

On the proposal of Cllr Davies which was seconded by Cllr Coulson, and with all Cllrs in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the excavation at Swelling Hill Pond.

26.19 OS AREA UPDATE AND REPORTS

26.19.1 To note area update

The Assistant Clerk noted that the Gardener had given one month's notice due to a heavy workload. A resident had noticed that the wooden wall at the front of the shops had deteriorated and required work.

The bus stop grant was being looked at and we are awaiting some more information.

LOCATION	ACTION REQUIRED	STATUS	NOTES	WORK COMPLETED
Badger Close	Boundary encroachment	In progress	Clerk to research further	
	Badger Orchard	Ongoing		Lengthsman cut back weeds Aug '25
	Badger run upkeep	Ongoing		Trees behind 36 cut back Sept '25
				Trees behind 33 cut back Oct '25
Cemetery	Inspection	Ongoing	Carried out on 29/09/25	Memorial bench installed Aug '25
		Agenda item	New memorial bench applications	
Lymington Bottom Green				Memorial bench installed Oct '24
Oakgreen Parade	Flower bed maintenance	Ongoing		
	Replacement of sleepers in the car park	In progress	Quotes being obtained	
	Repainting of parking spaces	To do	To review spacing and repainting – future meeting	
Recreation Ground	Containers	To do	Removal of items to be decided	Skate park repainted June '25
	Football clubs/pitch	Ongoing	Ongoing liaison with clubs	Tennis court gate tech installed July '25
	Water refill point	Ongoing	Last service - Feb '25	Earth bund next to Scout Hut March '25
				Memorial tree planted Oct '25.
				Memorial bench installed on cricket pitch Aug '25
Swelling Hill Pond	South of pond/car park area	Ongoing	Adverse possession claims	Silt removal completed 2024
	Steps	In progress	Quotes being obtained	Fencing replacement and small pond fencing completed
	Pathway	In progress	Angling club laid gravel to pathway Dec 2025	Wildflowers planted Nov '24
	Well	In progress	Quotes being obtained	Gravel laid to path by Angling Club
	Car park remedial works	In progress	Contractor accepted	Revetments filled Aug '25

Kingswood Copse	Ongoing maintenance for nature and wildlife.	In progress	Plan decided at meeting – Clerk to follow up. Hedge whips planted by gardener in January 2026.	Woodland Trust donated hedge plants Nov '24
Climate change mitigation	Solar Panels at Benians Pavilion	In progress	Awaiting information from Benians Committee Chairman following site visit	Nature boxes installed
	Parish trees	Complete	Priority two tree works to be carried out Jan '26.	Report completed 7th July 2025
	Bus stop maintenance	Ongoing	Clean booked for Oct '25.	New panels for Gospel Hall installed w/c 23/9/2024. Clean completed 17/08/25.
	Bus stop solar lights	In progress	Grant application sent Nov '25.	

26.19.2 To receive an update from the Playground working party

There hadn't been another meeting. The Working Party had not met and so no update was provided.

26.19.3 Badger Close update

None.

26.19.4 Kingswood Copse update

The Assistant Clerk mentioned that the hedge whips had been planted by the gardener along the fence line. Photo is within the supporting documents.

26.19.5 Footpath working party

The Assistant Clerk had a meeting with the OS contractors who had agreed to walk the paths once a month during the growing season and cut back anything required. Cllrs discussed the entrance to the footpath along Gradwell Lane and suggested seeking permission from HCC to make it safer.

26.20 OS EVENTS

26.20.1 Village picnic

The Assistant Clerk had started the task of emailing potential stall holders and entertainment. The Cllrs were asked to decide on inflatables as there were multiple quotations. It was agreed to accept a quotation for £1200 for three items pending a grant, and also to consider Zorbing should a grant be available. They also discussed changing the date.

26.20.2 Great British Spring Clean

The annual litter pick co-ordinated by Keep Britain Tidy will be running from 13th – 29th March 2026. Cllrs decided to run this event on the 28th March.

26.21 OS NEXT MEETING: 4th March 2026

26.22 OS Meeting closed: 8.28pm

Signature

Date