

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Spaces Committee
Held on 7th January 2026 commencing at 7.00pm at Benians Pavilion**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Cllrs Davies, Medhurst, Gebbett, Coulson, and M Pullen
IN ATTENDANCE:	Victoria Ursulean Assistant Clerk
	2 members of public
APOLOGIES:	None

26.01 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

26.02 OS OPEN SESSION – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Resident One requested permission to place a memorial bench in the cemetery (agenda item 5.3) and explained that it would not just be a memorial to her late father, but also that there is no bench in the location which is covered by extensive tree roots and unlikely to be used for grave space. There are no current benches in the shade either. Cllrs agreed to consider this when the agenda item was discussed.

With no further items raised, the Open Session ended at 7.12pm.

26.03 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

26.04 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES

On the proposal of Cllr M Pullen which was seconded by Cllr Gebbett, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was: **RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on the 5th November 2025.**

26.05 OS ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

26.05.1 To consider allowing a food truck to trade on a Saturday

A food truck had approached the Council for approval to trade at the recreation ground on a Saturday as his Fridays were booked up. Cllrs agreed to a trial at the pre agreed time of 5.30pm until 8pm, and would review it in March.

On the proposal of Cllr Gebbett which as seconded by Cllr Medhurst and with all Cllrs in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to give the food truck a trial on Saturdays.

26.05.2 To consider another food truck trading outside the Pavilion

The Assistant Clerk explained that an initial email had been sent requesting permission to trade but no further information had been provided. This item was deferred until further communication was received.

26.05.3 To consider resident's request of installing benches in the cemetery

There were two memorial bench requests for the cemetery. Both were discussed extensively. In conclusion, Cllrs agreed to allow a bench along the hedge behind row J but wanted to review the ground for the other request as it is in an area that gets boggy during bad weather.

On the proposal of Cllr Davies which was seconded by Cllr Coulson and with all Cllrs in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to allow one bench and consider the other subject to a ground assessment.

26.05.4 To consider additional bin next to the bus stop outside Travelodge

A resident had requested the installation of a bin next to the Travelodge bus stop as there is always litter left on the pavement. The Assistant Clerk had enquired into the cost of an extra bin lift which would be £8.95 per week.

There is a bin in the container which could be utilized but the cost of installation needed to be investigated. Also, permission from HCC should be sought. This item was deferred until further information could be obtained.

26.05.5 To consider allowing the Ropley History Network to undertake an excavation in the east of the Swelling Hill pond's green in May of 2026.

A letter was received from the Ropley Historical Society to excavate the area where the small pond is. Cllr Davies wondered if it was something that the school would like to be involved with. There was a consensus that a risk assessment should be made and shared with the Council, along with any insurance and a plan for the time required. It was advised that the Council's insurance company should also be contacted and the item be deferred until this information was obtained.

26.06 OS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

26.06.1 To discuss the well at Swelling Hill Pond

Cllr Gebbett had compiled a report regarding works required to the well. The pipe that feeds the pond is blocked and the grate above the well is fixed in place. Quotes were requested.

At 8.35pm the meeting was closed, and the meeting reopened at 8.37pm.

26.06.2 To discuss the steps at Swelling Hill Pond

The two sets of steps at the pond were discussed. It was thought that the concrete steps should be a priority as they are deemed dangerous, but both should be quoted for. Cllrs requested that a handrail be incorporated.

26.06.3 To discuss footpaths; leafletting of adjacent properties

The Assistant Clerk produced a leaflet which could be distributed to the neighbouring properties of the worst affected footpaths. Cllrs agreed that 50 leaflets should be printed and Cllrs Davies and M Pullen offered to deliver them. Cllr Davies requested a priority list for the footpaths.

26.06.4 To discuss the sleepers behind Oak Green Parade

In the car park behind Oak Green Parade shops, there is a bank which is held back with sleepers. These have become very rotten and require replacing. Cllrs suggested placing blocks behind new sleepers to give them a longer life. Quotes were requested.

26.06.5 To discuss flailing the hedges on the football field

The Open Space contractors had suggested flailing the hedges on the football field which have started to encroach on available space. This would be the most efficient way of reducing the hedges and is also a good time of year to carry out this work. Cllrs discussed the look of flailing and decided that they would rather the hedges be cut back by hand but were happy for the open space contractors to flail the ground.

26.07 OS ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

26.07.1 To approve the installation of a tennis divider net

A resident had offered to provide and install a divider net in the tennis courts at cost price, that being £800. Cllrs requested a comparable price, the Assistant Clerk provided a price from a website of £550 plus installation costs. Cllr M Pullen felt that tennis should be encouraged and agreed that the quote of £800 be accepted should there be enough money in the budget. All Cllrs were in agreement.

26.08 OS AREA UPDATE AND REPORTS

26.08.1 To note area update

The Assistant Clerk noted that a tree had fallen over the basketball area in the skate park in December but this was rectified by a tree surgeon the following day. Priority 2 tree works were being carried out during the week including trees at the recreation ground and Swelling Hill Pond.

A resident who volunteers for footpath maintenance showed our contractors the worst affected paths so that they can carry out some work as per their contract.

The two noticeboards commissioned from the Men's Shed are currently in the office and require fixing in place. Cllr Medhurst offered his time one weekend and the Assistant Clerk would send an email to gain other people's availability.

26.08.2 To receive an update from the Playground working party

There hadn't been another meeting, but Cllr M Pullen volunteered his time to come up with a plan for the new play area with the Assistant Clerk.

26.08.3 Badger Close update

Cllr M Pullen was looking at the nature cameras and would install them in the orchard.

26.08.4 Kingswood Copse update

The Assistant Clerk mentioned that the grant from CPRE had been awarded for the hedge whips to be used along the fenceline of the copse. Cllr M Pullen offered to collect them when required, and also suggested that coppicing of the trees was looked into.

26.08.5 Footpath working party

As discussed, volunteers need to be sought once the leaflets have been delivered. Cllr Davies suggested a sponsored walk around Four Marks which would involve walking the footpaths and clearing them enroute.

26.09 OS EVENTS

26.09.1 Village picnic

After discussing possible dates, Cllrs agreed on 28th June 2026.

26.10 OS NEXT MEETING: 4th February 2026

26.11 OS Meeting closed: 9.03pm

Signature

Date