

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Spaces Committee
Held on 1st July 2026 commencing at The Village Hall at 7.00pm**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Cllrs Thomson, Coulson, Gebbett, Medhurst and M Pullen
IN ATTENDANCE:	Victoria Ursulean, Assistant Clerk
	No members of public
APOLOGIES:	None

26.66 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

26.67 OS OPEN SESSION – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Several complaints had been received regarding the cemetery as the contractor had not been cutting the grass on the graves regularly, only along the paths in between them. The contractor is now scheduled to fully strim bi weekly for the remaining growing months. There will be no extra charge for this.

End of public session: 7.05pm

26.68 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

26.69 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES

On the proposal of Cllr M Pullen, 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 3rd June 2026.**

26.70 OS ITEMS FOR REVIEW

26.70.1 To review the Bench Policy

Councillors had requested a review of the bench policy as there had been some applications to install new memorial benches in the cemetery. Cllrs looked at the number of benches currently in situ and had a discussion about the type of benches that should be installed and what they would like them to be made of. The conclusion was that a larger discussion was required to discuss a bench strategy. Cllrs requested this be added to the next agenda.

26.70 OS ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

26.70.1 To consider and approve quotations for steps at Swelling Hill Pond

There are two sets of steps at Swelling Hill Pond and both require some work. The first set are not level and do not have a handrail, and the second set have a sleeper border with loose gravel which has become too low. Three quotes had been obtained and were discussed.

On the proposal of Cllr Thomson which was seconded by Cllr M Pullen, and with all Cllrs in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Contractor Three to carry out work to the steps at Swelling Hill Pond.

26.70.2 To consider and approve quotations for sleeper wall behind Oak Green Parade

Behind the shops at Oak Green Parade is a car park which has sleepers along the back wall. These are rotting and require replacing. The Assistant Clerk had received some quotations from multiple contractors which were distributed to Cllrs. Cllr Thomson suggested that a retaining wall was required due to the laurel hedge behind the sleepers becoming overgrown, its roots causing the issue with the wall. On looking into ownership of the hedge, it was discovered that it belongs to EHDC. The Assistant Clerk will follow up with the District Council, and also employ a structural engineer to provide a detailed specification to be able to pass onto contractors for a quote.

26.70.3 To consider and approve cost of work to play area equipment

The ROSPA report had stated that two sections of ground at the foot of two skate ramps required replacing as it had divots in it, plus a beam in the skate park had broken and been disposed of. Cllrs looked at the supplied quotations.

On the proposal of Cllr M Pullen which was seconded by Cllr Coulson, and with all Cllrs in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** that Contractor One should proceed with work to the play area.

26.70.4 To consider the cost of additional curved bench within the cemetery

Cllrs had previously discussed the addition of a curved bench at the cemetery in the central area and considered redistributing the benches currently in this area. Cllrs Medhurst and Gebbett agreed to provide the Assistant Clerk with dimensions for a bench so that a quotation could be sought. Cllrs also asked if the bench could be sprayed with a protective oil in a process called acetylation. The Assistant Clerk would pose this question to the bench company.

26.70.5 To consider the draft play area plan – Cllr M Pullen

It was pointed out that the plan didn't include the trees which will be planted along the fence line. The contractor said that they could easily be accommodated. Cllrs also mentioned that there should be more shade provision for families.

Cllrs were concerned that the play area had a high level of reused equipment, and while in alignment with our climate and nature emergency action plan policy, didn't feel this supported resident's expectations, especially considering the disruption and loss of amenity to them during the building phase. Cllrs felt that the play area is the most used and valued element currently in our possession and would like to explore funding options from other sources.

They requested that this be added to the next Community Facilities committee meeting agenda.

26.70.6 To consider carrying out work to the badger run

The Assistant Clerk had carried out viewings of two properties with Cllr Thomson who had expressed concerns about trees within the badger run behind their properties.

Cllrs discussed a phased program of maintenance and agreed that letters should be sent to residents to that effect.

A quote had been received regarding dead wooding an ash tree within the badger run.

On the proposal of Cllr M Pullen which was seconded by Cllr Medhurst, and with all Cllrs in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the quotation for work to the ash tree.

26.70.7 To consider the resignation of the Groundsman at Oak Green Parade, and appointment of a new one.

Cllrs expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the current Groundsman for his hard work and years of dedication to his role.

They also said that the vacancy should be advertised, and possibly to ask the Gardener if he would like to include it within his role.

26.71 OS ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

26.71.1 To approve U18s Alresford football team use of men's pitch on Sunday's at 2pm

All Cllrs were in agreement to recommend that the Alresford U18s should be allowed use of the men's pitch on Sundays at 2pm.

On the proposal of Cllr Medhurst which was seconded by Cllr Gebbett, and with all Cllrs in agreement it was **RESOLVED** to allow Alresford U18s use of the men's pitch on Sundays at 2pm upon recommendation to the Full Council.

26.72 OS AREA UPDATE AND REPORTS

26.72.1 To receive oral update from Clerk

It was noted that the cemetery had been strimmed now and general works carried out.

26.72.2 Social media

Cllr Thomson suggested that a social media post be created at the end of each month to keep residents abreast of what we are doing. All Cllrs brought forward ideas and were in agreement that this should take place.

26.72.3 ROSPA inspection

The ROSPA inspection report had been distributed to the Cllrs for information.

26.72.4 Playground reports

Playground reports which are carried out by Cllr Smith every two weeks, were made available to the Cllrs.

26.73 OS EVENTS

26.73.1 Village Picnic – Feedback

Councillors relayed their thanks to all of the volunteers, stall holders, performers and clubs that made the day so special.

Feedback for the village picnic was made available. The general consensus was that the date needs to be agreed upon at an earlier stage and should not clash with other events happening in neighbouring towns/villages. Advertising of the picnic was also an issue as many residents did not realise it was on despite social media posts and posters around the village. Cllrs considered purchasing further banners for next year to alleviate this.

26.73.2 Fireworks

Cllr M Pullen explained that he'd had a meeting with the PTA from Medstead school who had asked for use of the cricket field for their event on 6th November 2026 at 6.30pm. A price of £750 had been agreed, and an initial sale of 1500 tickets. A further meeting has been agreed for September.

26.74 OS NEXT MEETING – 5th August 2026

26.75 OS Meeting Closed at 8.41pm