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Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Space Committee held at Benians Pavilion on Wednesday 4th November 2026 at 7.32pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Chairman Cllr Thomson, Cllr Medhurst, Cllr M Pullen, Cllr Gebbett.**

IN ATTENDANCE: **Victoria Ursulean (Assistant Clerk)**

26.107 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Cllr Coulson sent her apologies.

26.108 OS OPEN SESSION – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
The Assistant Clerk noted that an email had been received from a resident complaining about the smell of the mushroom manure that the allotment association had arranged. This is an annual delivery that is put in the car park to avoid damaging the grass next to the allotments.
The new Groundsman at Oak Green Parade has asked where he can put the excess leaves from the area. Cllr Thomson suggested using her own compost heap, and Cllr M Pullen suggested asking the gardener.

26.109 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS
None noted.

26.110 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES
On the proposal of Cllr M Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr Medhurst and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Open Space Committee meeting held on the 7th October 2026.**

26.111 OS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
26.111.1 To discuss the cost of work to the sleeper wall at Oak Green Parade and make a recommendation to Full Council
Cllrs discussed the prices that were received to repair the wall behind the parade of shops. The quote to use concrete with steel supports was considered the best fit due to the longevity it would provide, the lower cost and also the amount of time required to install it would be less. Therefore, it was agreed to recommend Contractor One at £24,750 to the Full Council.
Cllrs suggested that Cllr Briggs inform the parade of shops personally and that letters be sent to the residents.

Cllrs agreed to defer agenda item 5.2 to the end of the meeting.

26.111.2 To discuss the budget for 2027/2028
Cllr Thomson was concerned about the displayed cost centers in the budget report which had been distributed to Cllrs. She felt it was confusing and wanted to hold a meeting with the RFO to understand this further. Cllr M Pullen said that preliminary figures could be provided as a definite budget wasn't required until February 2027.

26.111.3 To discuss recent Badger Close Tree Survey and associated works
A tree report had been conducted in the badger orchard and badger runs, Cllrs noted that there was nothing urgent that was required. The inspector had said that ivy around several trees should be cut back to avoid causing them any harm.
Cllr Thomson mentioned that she and Cllr M Pullen had walked down the badger run and that it didn't look like badgers were using it but would like to install nature cameras to observe any wildlife activity.
A list of residents' complaints had been shared with the Cllrs. All Cllrs agreed that it is the Council's responsibility to ensure the badger run and orchard are safe for the passage of wildlife and also that any trees within it are safe for

residents. The provision of fences was not thought of as a necessity within the run.
A quotation to trim the hedges around the orchard had been obtained at £450.

On the proposal of Cllr Thomson, which was seconded by Cllr M Pullen and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to approve hedge maintenance works to the badger orchard.

26.102 OS ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

26.102.1 To approve the cost of work to the cemetery and car park hedges

Quotes to carry out work to the cemetery (£1300) and car park hedges (£350) had been provided and were approved by Cllrs.
On the proposal of Cllr M Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr Thomson and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to approve hedge maintenance works to the cemetery and car park opposite the play area.

26.102.2 To discuss and approve the cost to fill dips in the cemetery

Over time some dips to the plots in the cemetery had naturally occurred. Due to health and safety concerns, quotations had been requested to fill them in. Contractor One has said that the spoil from the graves could be used and then a thin layer of topsoil so that grass seed can take. They suggested carrying out the work nearer to summer so that their machinery doesn't leave rucks in the grass.
Cllrs discussed all of the quotes received and considered how many plots would need to be worked on. It was suggested to start on the worst affected plots and then reassess what would need to be completed.
On the proposal of Cllr Gebbett, which was seconded by Cllr Thomson and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to approve Contractor 2 to fill the dips in the cemetery.

26.103 OS AREA UPDATE AND REPORTS

The fly tipping at Oak Green Parade had been removed and the potholes filled. New goals provided to the youth football teams via a grant were delivered and work to the youth 11v11 pitch to mend the goal mouths is in progress. The bi-annual cleaning of the village signs had been completed, and maintenance work to the skate park and some of the wooden equipment in the play area had also been carried out. Bulb planting had been done by the Friends of Swelling Hill working party, including 190 Narcissi, 90 Crocus and 125 Species Tulips.

LOCATION	ACTION REQUIRED	STATUS	NOTES
Badger Close	Badger Orchard	Ongoing	Cllr to install nature cameras
	Badger run upkeep	In progress	Schedule of works to be created by arb.
Cemetery	Inspection	Ongoing	Annual inspection to take place August 2026
		Ongoing	Bench placement/memorial opportunities.
Lymington Bottom Green		Complete	Planting in memorium
Oakgreen Parade	Flower bed maintenance	Ongoing	New gardener started March 2026
	Sleeper wall in car park	Agenda	Out to tender
	Groundsman	Ongoing	Leaf spoil refuse
	Repainting of parking spaces	Ongoing	To review spacing and repainting – future meeting
Recreation Ground	Containers	Ongoing	Removal of items to be decided- Volunteers?
	Football clubs/pitch	Ongoing	Ongoing liaison with clubs. Goal posts for youth teams purchased with grant.
	Water refill point	Ongoing	Next service due 01/01/27
	Artificial cricket pitch	Ongoing	Feasibility study received, planning application in progress.
	Allotment water meter	Ongoing	Quote to install smart meter?
Swelling Hill Pond	Car park remedial works	Complete	

Signed: Date:

	Steps	Complete	
	Pathway	Complete	
	Well	Ongoing	Angling Society investigating
	Benches	Complete	Bench work complete, new picnic bench to be installed
Kingswood Copse	Ongoing maintenance for nature and wildlife	Ongoing	
Climate change mitigation	Parish trees	In progress	Tree survey at Badger Cl complete
	Bus stop maintenance	Ongoing	New grant application accepted
	Bus stop solar lights	Complete	Completed September 2026

26.103.1 Play area

Cllr M Pullen said that a meeting would be held to go through a specification list for the play area and to get 3 quotations.

26.103.2 Social media

Cllr Thomson suggested the following be submitted on social media channels - Bulb planting at Swelling Hill pond has been carried out by a working party of three volunteers who will be meeting every 10 days to carry out maintenance tasks. A tree survey has been conducted on the trees at the badger orchard and along the badger runs in Badger Close with the aim of keeping residents and wildlife safe, and the area well maintained.
We would like to express our appreciation to the talented Knitty Stitchy team who have made the green such a special place for our community's service on Sunday.

26.104 OS EVENTS

26.104.1 Christmas Carols

The Christmas Carols have been scheduled for the 12th December with the Church of the Good Shepherd. Tesco have kindly agreed to donate 10 boxes of mince pies which Cllrs were grateful for. Mulled wine will need to be purchased.

26.105 OS NEXT MEETING: 4th November 2026

26.106 OS MEETING CLOSED AT 8.45pm

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Council have the right to exclude the public and press from a meeting in respect of confidential or sensitive information which is prejudicial to the public interest and may pass a resolution, without notice, to do so.

Signed: Date: