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Minutes of the Meeting of the Full Council held at Four Marks Village Hall on Wednesday 21st October at 7pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Chairman Cllr Briggs, Cllr Smith, Cllr McAllister, Cllr Medhurst , Cllr R Pullen, Cllr M Pullen, Cllr Thomson and Cllr Gebbett**

IN ATTENDANCE: **District Cllr Day, Jo Tsigarides (Clerk), Debbie Batley (RFO), Two members of the public.**

26.243 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies that were received by Cllr Coulson were duly accepted by the Council.

26.244 OPEN SESSION – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

MOP 1 questioned the data in the Transport Policy of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan and asked what it was based on. Cllr McAllister would check and provide a full breakdown but referred to the Mobile Network Data (MND) for the village as used in a recent planning application. The most up to date method for calculations in the transport policy had been used as per the update NPPF of August 2026.

26.245 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None noted.

26.246 FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

On the proposal of Cllr R Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr Smith and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on the 30th September 2026.**

26.247 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Cllr Briggs summarised the Electors' meeting which took place on the 30th September 2026 recognising the County Councillor's efforts in trying to answer resident questions. A report had been sent subsequently as an update to the meeting from the CC and the Clerk would attach this to the Minutes.

26.248 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

Food waste collections were into the second week; it has been successful so far but there had been an issue with the treatment of the food waste bins by the roadside. Cllr R Pullen expressed disappointment that some residents had chosen not to use the food recycling bins and was told that it was not an enforceable scheme.

Remembrance Sunday preparations were in progress, and District Councillors would attend local services.
The Parish Council had applied for a District Councillor grant for a new printer, but office supplies were outside of the grant remit and so it had been declined.

26.249 CORE POLICY REVIEW

26.249.1 To review and adopt the new Model Standing Order

The new model Standing Orders were presented to the Council. The Clerk noted the following:

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- As per Standing Order 15 b, a record of planning comments would be created electronically by road.
- Standing Order 13 called for dispensations to be submitted in writing to the Clerk in advance of a meeting where a Councillor considered that they had an interest to declare and a decision would then be made regarding the dispensation.

On the proposal of Cllr M Pullen which was seconded by Cllr Briggs, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED to adopt the model Standing Orders (as amended).**

26.249.2 To review and adopt the new Model Financial Regulations

The new model Financial Regulations were presented to the Council. The Clerk noted the following:

- As per Financial Regulation 4.11, addition to or withdrawal from an earmarked reserve could be approved by the Council or Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- Financial delegated authorities had been amended from the model document to reflect those previously agreed in the former Financial Regulations.
- A conflict of Interest clause had been inserted into the Procurement section.
- Provision had been made for multi factor authentication.
- FR 7.15 – additional clause to ensure that related or Councillors with a relationship do not authorise the same payments.

On the proposal of Cllr R Pullen, seconded by Cllr Medhurst and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED to adopt the Model Financial Regulations (as amended).**

26.250 PLANNING COMMITTEE

26.250.1 To receive the draft Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 7th October 2026.

Minutes were noted.

26.251 Planning applications for consideration:

The EHDC Planning portal was down for essential maintenance and so Councillors referred to their own notes, agreeing to submit further comments to the Clerk to formulate responses. Cllr McAllister also noted that the supporting and evidence documents that were being used as evidence for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan such as the SEA assessment, when published, would be given full weight.

26.251.1

Reference: EHDC-26-1084-FUL Location: Land to the Rear of 46-48 Lymington Bottom, Four Marks
Proposal: Demolition of three existing buildings, erection of 41 dwellings with associated parking, creation of access, provision of open space (including play area) infrastructure and landscaping.

Four Marks Parish Council strongly objects to this application and considers that the proposed development represents and inappropriate scale and location which has not been justified by the evidence submitted. The Council has significant concerns around the suitability and sustainability of the site, its relationship with the existing settlement, the low scoring in the Neighbourhood Plan assessment recently undertaken as a potential site, and the adequacy of the Transport Statement provided.

The Council respectfully asks that the application is refused on the reasons set out below:

1. **Unsuitable location and relationship with the existing settlement.**
   The Council considers that the site is of fundamental concern. The suitability of a site should not be assessed simply by reference to the space and the number of dwellings that it can accommodate. The relationship to the existing settlement also needs careful consideration. The site is on a blind bend, causing overwhelming safety concerns, there is a lack of available and sustainable travel options to local services and therefore, there would be a reliance on private car travel which is harmful to the local road network and dangerous. The provision of any footpaths or cycle ways within the development itself does not negate the effect that it will have on the local road network.

In terms of the immediate, surrounding area, this development is dense and out of keeping with the local character. The housing mix was not available at the time of making this representation, but the Council asks that the Planning Officer considers whether the housing mix is appropriate and reflects local need. In terms of the layout, the Council has observed that there are only 8 visitor spaces for 41 dwellings which will potentially cause vehicles to obstruct roads and park negligently within the development or push cars out onto the main road which is another safety factor.

2. Low assessment score on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan

The Council has significant concerns over this proposal in the context of the emerging Neighbourhood Plan because the site received a low score through its assessment process, thus reinforcing its lack of suitability as a site. This is an evidence-led process through which potential sites are evaluated against characteristics, needs and constraints in the Parish. It raises legitimate questions about the realistic suitability of this site. The applicant should demonstrate why a site which has preformed poorly in this assessment should nevertheless be considered suitable for a development of 41 dwellings.

3. Concerns regarding the Transport Assessment and Highway/pedestrian connection.

The Council is not satisfied that the Transport Assessment adequately demonstrates that the development would be acceptable. There would be additional vehicle movements associated with everyday life and the Council has concerns about the modelling and data used, particularly the National Travel Survey (2024) which bases its findings on data that encompasses several heavily urban areas where there is a propensity to walk more due to the nature of city living, flat walking surface and lifestyle. The NTS states that nationally, up to 81% of journeys of up to one mile are undertaken on foot and this is the statistic that they have used which the Council argues is not reflective of more rural areas such as Four Marks. Officers should ensure that the transport plan is robust and reflects the geographical and practical context in the location proposed.

The key issue is not whether walking is possible in principle, but whether it is realistic, safe and convenient. The Council also refers the LTP4 strategy which encourages walking and cycling but then has a huge impact on the road network in terms of its physical layout. The Planning authority needs to ensure that the balance is met between safe, particle, useable walking opportunities versus the fragile road network that is already at capacity.

4. Sustainability and reliance on private vehicles.

The Council recognises the importance of delivering houses, but the traffic and reliance on private vehicles must be factored in. There is a local bus service, but this serves the A31, and it is not realistic to assume that this will be walked to and used by potential residents. The Council asks that the applicant demonstrates realistic alternatives to private car use.

5. Cumulative impact on Local Infrastructure

The proposal must be considered in context of the wider pressures on Four Marks and the surrounding area. The cumulative effects of residential development places additional demands on the highway network, education provision, healthcare, drainage and other community infrastructure. The Local Planning Authority must consider this application alongside the other applications already approved and submitted within the village.

In conclusion for the reasons stated above, specifically around sustainability, infrastructure, cumulative harm and transport, the Council asks that this application is refused.

26.251.2

Reference: EHDC-26-0340-OUT Location: Land adjacent to Avon Lodge, Four Marks
Proposal: Outline planning application for the erection of up to 45 dwellings with new vehicular and pedestrian access points, parking, public open space, biodiversity area, landscaping, sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS) and associated works. All matters reserved except for a means of access. Access from Alton Lane.

The Council maintains it's previous objection to this proposal and notes that the proposal is not compliant with the

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Draft Neighbourhood Plan, Reg 14, and that the connectivity proposals do not adequately connect the site to the neighbouring site.

It has also been noted that the TPO trees have been ignored within the application, and the Council has asked for further investigation on this matter.

(Cllr Thomson asked that the Clerk writes to the Arboricultural Officer at EHDC to ask about the ongoing preservation of the tree line along Alton Lane and to raise concerns that trees with TPO's are being ignored on applications)

26.251.3

Reference: EHDC-25-0055-OUT Location: Land South of Winchester Road, Four Marks
Proposal: Outline application for of up to 115 new homes; formation of means of vehicular access onto Winchester Road and pedestrian and cycle links to Barn Lane and a pedestrian link to Four Marks Recreation Ground; laying out of green infrastructure comprising play space, new landscaping and habitat creation; allotments; and drainage and other infrastructure. (With Some Matters Reserved) (Access to be Considered)

The Council notes that there is a minor update to this application and would like to reconfirm its previous objection.

Meeting closed at 7.34pm, MOP 2 questioned the archaeological information provided within the planning application. Cllrs advised that there was a statement and to check the Planning Portal when it is functioning again.
Meeting re-opened at 7.37pm

26.251.4

Reference: EHDC-26-1077-FUL Location: Land North of Gambrel, Four Marks
Proposal:Detached dwelling.

The Council discussed the nutrient issues with this land but this would be discussed further at the next Planning Committee meeting.

26.250.3 Update on EHDC Planning Committee representation (15/10/26) EHDC-26-0388-PIP

Councillor Thomson provided an oral update about the presentation made at the Planning Committee. Maintained previous objection in terms of sustainability and considering amendments to the NPPF in August 2026. There was a discussion at the meeting about the unfair burden of housing on Four Marks but the Officer report argued that the development would provide much needed housing in Four Marks. Seven Cllrs voted for the application and two Cllrs abstained, approving the application.

26.251 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
26.251.1 To receive an update on Neighbourhood Plan from NPSG Chair

Cllr McAllister advised that there was another drop in at Medstead Village Hall on Saturday 24th October 2026 from 1-5pm. The consultation ends on the 12th November 2026.
It had been advised by EHDC that a SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) would be needed but it was to be confirmed as to whether a HRA was needed. It was again confirmed that once published, the SEA can be used as evidence on responses.

26.251.2 To receive an update on SEA screening and review associated costs
On the basis that SEA screening was required, the quotes were reviewed and on the proposal of Cllr R Pullen, seconded by Cllr Thomson, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED to approve the quotation provided by Places Services.**

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26.252 OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

26.252.1 To receive the draft Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 7th October 2026.

The Minutes were noted.

26.252.2 To review and adopt the Swelling Hill Pond Policy

Cllr Thomson explained that at some point, this policy may need further updates to incorporate an archaeological element but that the Committee were satisfied with it currently.
On the proposal of Cllr M pullen, seconded by Cllr Gebbett and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED to adopt the Swelling Hill Pond Policy.**

26.252.3 To consider and approve a request to hold an archaeological dig at Swelling Hill Pond.

The Ropley Historical Society had approached the Council regarding holding another archaeological dig following on from the successful dig that took place in May 2026. On the proposal of Cllr M Pullen, seconded by Cllr Medhurst and with all Councillors in agreement, if was **RESOLVED to give permission for Ropley Historical Society to undertake a dig at Swelling Hill Pond.**

26.253 COMMUNITY FACILITIES COMMITTEE

26.253.1 To receive the draft Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th October 2026 and receive updates from the Committee Chairman.

Minutes were noted.

26.253.2 Discussion on room data sheets and any actions.

Room data sheets had been developed in principle so that baseline costs can be established with the intention being that main users would become 'room champions' to help inform the final set up of each room.

26.253.3 To reconfirm the resolution from March 2025-to consider and approve that all CIL funding drawn down by Four Marks Parish Council will be attributed to the Community Building Project.

On the proposal of Cllr McAllister, which was seconded by Cllr Smith, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED to agree that all CIL funding drawn down by Four Marks Parish Council will be attributed to the Community Building Project earmarked reserve.**

26.253.4 To consider using the Framework 'Westworks' for the main contractor tender and approve the £12 000 associated fee.

Cllr McAllister explained the use of the Framework 'Westworks' for the purpose of the building project. On the proposal of Cllr R Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr Thomson and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED to use the Westworks Framework and approval was given for the £12000 initial fee.**

26.254 WORKING PARTIES

26.254.1 To receive update on Firework Event

Cllr M Pullen reported that funding had been difficult this year as the previous Committee had had contacts and access to free equipment which the current PTA did not have. Ticket sales were going well.

26.254.2 To receive update on Councillor coffee meet and greet.

Cllrs Thomson and M Pullen, along with the Clerk had held a meet and greet coffee station outside Four Marks Village Hall on the 13th October 2026. The inclement weather had meant that less parents had been walking to school that morning, however it was still a positive experience and worth doing again.

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26.254.3 To receive update from playground working party.

Cllr M Pullen updated on the most recent meeting, where it was agreed to try and get some precise costs. Cllr McAllister asked that quotes were obtained for the overall project and for a phased approach.
Cllr R Pullen would pass on details of a competitive playground company that were at the HALC AGM.

26.255 FINANCIAL ITEMS

26.255.1 To receive the following reports for the financial year 2026/2027 to September 30th 2026:

Expenditure against budget
Balance sheet
Earmarked reserves

Cllr M Pullen asked the RFO about the overspend on the telephone and broadband budget and it was confirmed that this was correct. The football goals and the speed camera costs were both discussed but reassurance was given that these items were grant funded.

26.255.2 To note bank balances at end of September 2026 and receive the bank reconciliations.

Bank balances were noted.

26.255.3 To consider and approve the payments for September 2026 and October 2026 to date.

On the proposal of Cllr R Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr Smith and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED to approve the payments for September 2026 totaling £24545.91 and October 2026 to date totaling £11367.87.**

26.255.4 To consider and approve the Notice of Conclusion of Audit from BDO LLP.

On the proposal of Cllr R Pullen, seconded by Cllr Smith, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED to approve the Notice of Conclusion of Audit from BDO LLP.**

26.255.5 To consider and approve appointing two new bank signatories for Unity Trust accounts.

On the proposal of Cllr Briggs, which was seconded by Cllr M Pullen, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED to approve the appointment of Cllr M Pullen and Cllr McAllister as signatories to the Unity Trust Bank Account.**

26.255.6 To discuss Asset Register review.

Cllrs M and R Pullen volunteered to review the Asset Register.

26.256 CLERK REPORT

26.256.1 To receive oral report along with correspondence.

The Clerk noted important correspondence that had been received along with significant matters that had taken place during the last month.

Earlier that day, an 'ABCD' meeting had taken place with representatives from EHDC. They advised that they were attempting to secure funding for an official 'Community Builder' within the community. It had been agreed at this meeting that Four Marks would continue with a Stewardship Group predominantly from the Council and that it would be beneficial to collaborate with Medstead if a Stewardship Group can be made there.

26.256.2 To receive information on Community Asset Transfer letter and discuss.

A letter had been received by the Leader of EHDC regarding Community Asset Transfer opportunities. This had been circulated to Councillors along with a map of the EHDC owned assets in the village. It was agreed that Councillors may consider submitting a request but would need time to review this properly and that it would be an item on the

A second question had also been posed by EHDC as a preliminary enquiry as to whether the Council would consider adopting a play area in any of the new developments, specifically the 'Cresland One' application on Blackberry Lane. Councillors were reluctant to agree to this, particularly in the absence of the full details which had not been supplied as requested.

26.256.2 To consider resident correspondence and discuss response.

A resident had written to the Council on the 16th October 2026 raising questions about relationship between the Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, specifically where comments made by the Council could be seen to conflict with the views of the NPSG and a response had been prepared by the Clerk in conjunction with Councillors. No amendments were suggested and the Clerk was instructed to send it.

26.257 TO NOTE EXTERNAL COMMITTEE AND AREA REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS (as applicable)
26.258 Allotments –Cllr Thomson

There had been ongoing discussions with the group regarding formalising the agreement in place and the water charges payable. A meeting had been scheduled for the 28th October 2026 at 6pm.

26.259 Benians Committee – Cllr Smith

The signed LTO was yet to be returned, and this would be followed up. The Council were also unsure about when an AGM was scheduled to take place.

26.260 Oak Green - Cllr Briggs

Cllr Briggs had attended the site for a smart meter to be installed but British Gas had not arrived, and this had been reported.

26.261 Village Hall – Cllr Briggs

The next meeting was to be confirmed.

26.262 Highways – Cllrs R Pullen and Medhurst.

There had been some follow up on the residents' upkeep of riparian ditches along Alton Lane. The work at Five Ways Junction had not been completed in the anticipated timescale and Cllr Richardson had been asked when the next Highway Panel meeting would take place.

26.263 EHAPTC – Cllr R Pullen

Cllr R Pullen had attended the HALC AGM and reported that there would be an increase in the annual subscription fee of £15per annum.

26.263 Four Marks Primary School – Cllr M Pullen

Cllr M Pullen had attended a productive meeting with the new headteacher, Mr Glew who was making attempts to interact with the wider community.

26.264 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.

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26.265 NEXT MEETING 18th November 2026

26.266 MEETING CLOSED AT 8.45pm

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