FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

SWELLING HILL POND POLICY

As the owner of Swelling Hill Pond, Four Marks Parish Council is responsible for the following:

• The maintenance of the pond (in conjunction with other agencies)

• The general upkeep of the surrounding area

• The management of wildlife and natural habitats

• The safety of residents, visitors, volunteers, and any contractors commissioned to perform 'management & maintenance' work in and around the pond area.

Four Marks Parish Council will ensure the pond's general appearance and maintenance is effectively monitored. The silt levels & water quality will be monitored on a regular basis and any problems will be addressed.

An active pond dredging plan will be budgeted for by ringfencing some funds from each year's council Budget. Previous experience suggests that large excavation works (de-silting & repairs) will need to be carried out every 10 years, the last one being in 2023.

The pond and its surrounding areas will be regularly visited and reviewed. Any minor repair actions will be done by the Council contractor's or others with the requisite skills. All major work will be referred to the Council for scrutiny and decision (including costs).

If other maintenance arises (such as blockages, fly-tipping objects etc.), the Council will investigate and appropriate action will be taken to remove / fix / tidy as appropriate with aid from other agencies as required.

Management of Wildlife and Habitat

The Council is committed to preserving the pond and the surrounding area for the local wildlife that reside there. Biodiversity is of significant importance, and the preservation of the area is key to ensuring it is a safe environment for all flora and fauna in and around the pond. The Council will be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of all the flora in and surrounding the pond. The Council has a duty to uphold the area surrounding the pond as a pleasant, green space for people to enjoy.

Tree maintenance in the pond area will be actively managed by The Council.

Health and Safety

The Council has the responsibility for the welfare of residents and visitors who visit the pond. Common sense when visiting any body of water must be used by residents and visitors. The village pond is not for water-based activities, nor bathing. Young children should not be left unaccompanied at any time. It is the responsibility of the responsible adult in charge to always maintain the safety of children and any other vulnerable adults. The Council provides life belt stations at the pond for emergencies, but accepts no liability for any ill behaviour that leads to accidents and injuries. The Council has a risk assessment process for all activities and a Public Liability Insurance for any work or activity in or around the pond.

Once this policy is agreed, the Council will ensure that it has a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for the pond and pond area and that separate risk assessments are conducted for all activities involving the pond area. It is vital that the outcomes and the control measures required to reduce risk to an acceptable level are in place and they must be advised to all those involved in the activities. The risk assessment, once agreed, will be published alongside this policy document.

Adequate instruction and information must be given to all those involved in activities in the pond area, and this should include instruction as to the risks of water, pond/pond area and wildlife, together with the hygiene implications and the needs of working safely outdoors.

Events at the Pond – Parish Council Led

Any Council led activity that takes place in or around the pond and pond area will have a fully completed risk assessment and control measures will be in place to mitigate any identifiable risks. These could include:

- Public consultations
- Volunteer Programmes
- Presentations
- Active management of the pond and pond area
- Social events
- Public Meetings
- Other events added at the Council's discretion

The Council holds full public liability insurance that covers residents, visitors, and volunteers.

Events at the Pond – Third Party Led

The Four Marks Angling Club are recognised as regular users of the pond and have sought permission from the Council to do so. They maintain fish stock within the pond and as regular users they carry out some basic maintenance.