

# FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

## WELCOME

March 2022

Welcome to this inaugural newsletter from your Parish Council.

The Council's aim for 2022/2023 is to better engage with the whole community, giving a snapshot of the Council's achievements over the last year to enhance your village and proposals for the coming year.

The Council continued with its business despite the challenging situation, with staff working from home and the Council initially meeting 'remotely', then as restrictions eased meeting again in person.

Despite several "hiccups" over the last year, the Council were delighted that several of their ongoing projects finally came to fruition in 2021, details of which are inside is newsletter.

**Cllr Janet Foster, Chairman**

## 2021 EVENTS



2021 saw the return of both the Four Marks 10k, although this year held in September instead of July and the Remembrance Sunday parade and service at the War Memorial. Four Marks is now also lucky to enjoy the hugely popular Watercress Line Steam Illuminations as part of the Christmas celebrations.

Christmas in Four Marks





## Four Marks Parish Council working for you

As part of the Council's nature and climate emergency plan, with the loss of so many of the village's Ash Trees, the Council pledges to plant two trees for every one removed. 2021 saw the planting of 10 trees on the cricket pitch at the Recreation Ground, a memorial tree at the Cemetery, 6 new trees at Swelling Hill Pond and 30 new trees in Kingswood Copse, all native species.



The Council commissioned the design of a decorative and informative map showing all the local footpaths within the Village. These were installed at the train station, with the kind permission of Mid Hants Railway, near the bus stop at the Lymington Bottom crossroads with the A31 and as part of the improvements on the small area of open space at the Telegraph Lane and Winchester Road junction together with a new bench.

**The Council also carried out repairs and replacements of existing features, some of which are highlighted below**



Replacement fencing at the Dell, Badger Close



New noticeboard at Lymington Barns, jointly purchased with Medstead Parish Council

The old well was refurbished at Swelling Hill Pond



Two defibrillator cabinets were replaced at Oak Green and the Village Hall



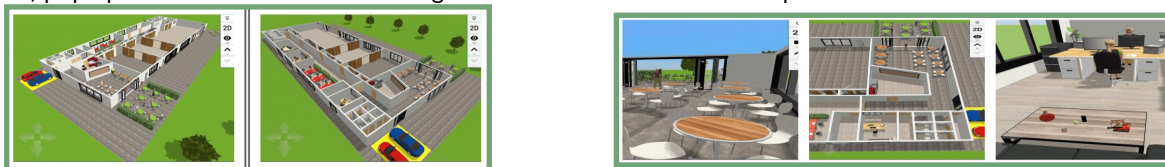
In conjunction with Hampshire Highways new boundary signs were designed and installed at both the bridges, with a local resident donating the cost to prepare the Oak Tree illustration. This was phase 1, of the project, phase 2 is the village gateways, coming soon.

Most of these projects were funded by Developers Contributions, and grant streams from EHDC District Councillors and Hampshire County Council.

## New Community Building & Recreational Hub

Four Marks has received a huge amount of development in the last 10 years and the infrastructure has not kept up with the needs of the village. Over the past few years various working groups have looked at a number of options to improve your community facilities. The Village Hall remains popular and has been undergoing maintenance to enhance it, but due to restrictions, cannot be expanded. Also following a public consultation in 2018, it became clear that villagers wanted the Village Hall to remain. So in 2019 a new project team was formed to take the project in a different direction and find a way to provide a separate facility that would complement and enhance the current provision.

A concept was designed that would provide a recreational hub for all age groups to enjoy, including a café with an outdoor terrace, pop up business centre with meeting facilities centre and 3 flexible sports halls.



**The good news**, the Council has been awarded a CIL Infrastructure grant which should pay for 50% of the building. We are half way there.

**The bad news**, the grant is conditional on the Council securing a match funded loan from the Government and to meet the loan repayments of up to circa £30,000 per annum, the Council needs to increase the Precept, which is the Parish Council portion of your Council tax.

Once the funding is in place the next step of the project will be to appoint the architects and apply for planning permission. There will be public consultations as soon as the designs are available. The community and potential user groups will be involved at every stage.

## The Precept

What is the Precept? The precept is the component of the Council Tax levied on local government electors by the Parish Council. Last year on a Band D property this equated to an annual contribution per property in 2021/2022 of £63.39.

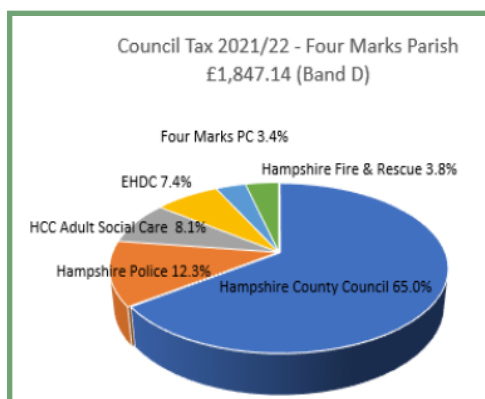
This year's Precept request will be £166,230 (£133,780 2021/2022) to incorporate the Government loan annual repayment charge. Based on the above request on a Band D property the contribution per property will be increased to **£78.41**. Although this will show on your Council tax bill as 23.68% increase, the increase is £15.01 per annum, or 29 pence per week, less than the equivalent of a packet of supermarket own brand rich tea biscuits.

How is your Precept spent?

### Top FMPC costs in 2021/22 Budget : £142,850

- Open Space 32%
- Staff Costs 33%

These two items are 65% of our total annual expenditure.



- The Four Marks charge is 16% lower than the EHDC parishes' average, and lower compared to similar sized Town/Parish Councils.

The Finance & General Purposes Committee prepare the budget every October and a detailed financial report is given at every Annual Parish Meeting in April. The Parish Council accounts are available on the website, if you are not able to access the website but would like further information on the accounts, please contact the Parish Office.

## What does your Parish Council do?

The Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the A31 Bus Shelters, Cemetery maintenance and administration, provision and emptying of additional general and dog waste bins on Parish Council land, local monitoring of footpaths, provision of information noticeboards, the maintenance of Parish Council owned open space areas at Badger Close, Kingswood Copse, Lymington Bottom Green, Oak Green (front car park and bus stop area), the children's play and open space areas at the Recreation Ground, the gardens off Station Approach and Swelling Hill Pond.

The role of the Parish Council, as the first tier of local Government, is to serve the needs of the residents of Four Marks, 'First the Community'. The Council currently has 10 Councillors who serve a four year term of office, they are unpaid elected representatives of the community and currently employ two members of staff. Although the Council itself has limited powers, it can raise issues and negotiate directly with both EHDC and HCC over local matters of concern and are formally consulted on all planning applications.



## Who are your Parish Councillors?

The Council currently has 10 Councillors, elections are held every 4 years, the next election will be in 2023.

### Councillors

CLlr Janet Foster  
CLlr Anne Tomlinson  
CLlr Mike Sanders

Chairman  
Vice-Chair

CLlr Neil Bonter  
CLlr John Davis

CLlr John Hammond  
CLlr Kellie Knight  
CLlr Shaun McCarthy

CLlr Reg Pullen

CLlr Bryan Timms

### Council staff

Executive Officer  
Assistant to the EO

Sarah Goudie  
Jo Tsigarides

### Committee

Sits on all committees.  
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Planning Committee Chairman  
Community Project working party member  
Open Spaces Committee member  
Finance & General Purposes Committee member  
Open Spaces Committee member  
Planning Committee member

Planning Committee member  
Community Project lead  
Finance and General Purposes member  
Open Spaces Committee member  
Community Project working party member



## Parish Council and Committee Meetings

Full Council meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month, except August, at Four Marks Village Hall, 7.00pm, unless otherwise stated. Open Spaces and Planning Committee meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month, either at the Four Marks Village Hall or the Benians Pavilion. Finance & General Purposes Committee meetings are held quarterly at the Benians Pavilion.

These meetings are open to the public and there is an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions regarding items on the agenda or to raise any other issues of concern.

### ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**Wednesday 27th April 2022, 7.00pm at Four Marks Village Hall**

This is not a Council meeting, this meeting is called annually by the Chairman to engage with the community and invite public participation. This meeting is the opportunity to hear the annual reports from the Parish, District and County Councillors, together with a topical presentation and the opportunity for the public to question the Council. Save the date, and keep an eye out in the Four Marks News, the Council's website and the noticeboards.

### Contact Us:

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