

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Space Committee
Held on Wednesday 3rd February 2021 commencing at 6.05pm
This meeting was held via Zoom Video Conferencing**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Cllr Anne Tomlinson (Chair), Cllrs Neil Bonter, John Davis and Janet Foster
IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Goudie (Executive Officer - EO) Jo Tsigarides (AEO) Cllr Bryan Timms (part) 3 members of the public
APOLOGIES:	None

21.10 OS OPEN SESSION/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman welcomed all Councillors and attendees and asked if anyone had anything to raise under the open session.

Cllr Davis asked if the parking area at Swelling Hill Pond could be added to the next Open Spaces Committee Agenda for discussion.

Cllr Foster advised that she had been approached by someone asking if they could have some of the wood from some recently felled trees. The EO advised that there is no access to the area and that the wood should remain as it lays for nature. Cllr Timms advised that he had some available and suggested they contact him to arrange.

The EO raised the provision of wildlife signs for the areas that were being left to grow to encourage wildflower growth. The AEO suggested contacting the school to see if they would like to design them as a project. Cllr Foster and the AEO agreed to liaise with the school initially and report back at the next meeting.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Timms for attending at such short notice, and the Committee, at the Chairman's request, agreed to bring the Footpaths item forward, so Cllr Timms could be excused from attending the whole meeting.

There were no further items to raise under the Open Session, therefore the meeting commenced at 6.20pm. Standing Orders were applied.

21.11 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

21.12 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

21.13 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the Open Space Committee Meeting, previously circulated, held on Wednesday 6th January 2021 following proposal by Cllr Foster, seconded by Cllr Davis, and agreed by all Councillors as a true reflection of the meeting and would be signed by the Chairman at the next meeting in person.

21.14 OS ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

21.14.1 To approve the purchase of 18 trees for the planting programme.

The EO had previously circulated a quotation for consideration, and as per the Council's Financial Regulations and a requirement for the S106 application, two further quotes were sought for comparison. All three quotations were considered, with one being just under £4,400 plus VAT and the other two just over £5,000 plus VAT, for an identical specification, it was therefore RESOLVED, following approval by all the Committee, to award the contract to the provider of the lowest quotation. The EO confirmed that as and when it was again possible to apply for S106 developers' contributions, an application would be submitted, however confirmed that there were enough funds in the allocated budget to make the purchase to ensure the trees are planted in the current planting season.

21.15 OS ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

21.15.1 Digital Mapping

The AEO gave a demonstration on the newly acquired digital mapping programme, and the work she had carried out to date on the various layers. There was also the option of adding in Cemetery and Allotment plots if required, but also the potential for mapping events, such as the 'scarecrow trial' or similar. The AEO was currently in the process of adding the Council's assets. The AEO was thanked for the informative presentation and work already completed.

21.15.2 Uplands Lane, Parking bays

The EO had advised that there was a small amount of allocated S106 contributions for Uplands Lane improvements and asked the Committee to consider tarmacking the parking bays, although 'scalpings' had previously been laid they were now just mud again, and noting the expiration date of August 2021, suggested that this could be an ideal way of using the funds.

There was concern raised with permanent hard standing and subsequent water run-off, and that perhaps a more permeable surface may be more appropriate. It was also suggested that the area from the Pavilion access road to the Bowls club was in a bad state of disrepair and perhaps the funds could be better spent improving the surface in this location instead. It was noted, firstly, that any resurfacing carried out now was likely to be compromised by construction traffic if the new facility goes ahead and secondly, that there probably would not be enough funds to do both. It was therefore agreed to seek quotations for both suggestions, with permeable options for the parking bays, and bring to the Committee for further discussion in due course.

21.15.3 Access between Barn Lane Field and Recreation Ground

The issue of crop damage and miss use of footpaths was raised at Full Council, and the access between the Barn Lane field and the Recreation Ground specifically. The EO had reminded the Council that several attempts had been made by the land manager to block the access, all of which over time had been thwarted. Usually, the dog walkers stick to the edge of the field, but as that path has become muddier, it has now grown wider and now encroaches onto the crop fields.

Several suggestions were made, including installing signs advising that that it was private land with no public right of access, however the EO was sceptical as to how long the signs would last, but was prepared to source some suitable signage. However, it was agreed to contact the land manager to see if they would be amendable to signs being put up in a bid to try and stop the continual use of this unofficial right of way and prevent further crop damage.

21.15.4 Cemetery – ongoing improvement work

The EO had previously asked for ideas for 'improving' the area behind the bin, where the new soakaway had been dug. Due to the shading of the Oak Tree, and the location of the new soakaway, there would be limited growth of any type of shrub or hedgerow. Cllr Foster advised that there are some shrubs that like dark and damp areas, and it was also agreed that wildflowers such as crocuses, snowdrops and even cyclamen thrive in this kind of environment and would not be affected in the Autumn by leaf drop.

It was agreed to seek advice on appropriate shrubs and wildflowers and put together a suitable planting plan for consideration and commencement in the Spring/Summer.

21.15.5 Footpaths

Following several issues being raised at Full Council, the EO asked the Committee and Cllr Timms to consider a more practical way forward to monitor issues with reference to footpaths effectively, and avoid issues being raised at Council meetings delaying action. It was acknowledged by both the EO and Cllr Timms that the AEO had built up a good relationship with the Hampshire Access Team and local Ramblers, and that it would make sense moving forward that any issues with footpaths be directly reported to the AEO for action. The AEO confirmed she was more than happy to take on this role from now on, and if Cllr Timms, as footpaths officer, receives any queries directly, he will now pass them directly to the AEO. Councillors will be made aware of the new procedure at the next meeting.

It was also suggested, and agreed, that the Footpaths update should be moved to the Open Spaces Committee meetings rather than Full Council, and anything of note in this regard would be reported under the Open Spaces Committee reports, where applicable.

It was acknowledged that the footpaths were all in a bad state due to the unprecedented circumstances of extreme wet weather coupled with so many more people out walking, although Four Marks is still considered to be rural and therefore mud is expected, however it was agreed that some are considerably worse than others.

Following concerns raised at the Full Council, with reference to Footpath 4, the AEO had contacted the Access team who had already looked at the issue. They confirmed that any work carried out would have to be self-funded by the Parish Council, although the AEO was advised that this could be added to the current grant application which would mean that potentially up to 50% of the costs could be reclaimed through the grant process. It was agreed to seek a quotation to see how much laying hard ‘scalpings’ with crush on top would cost from the entrance up to just past the worst point.

Reference was also made to the cut across the land by the sub-station at the top of Blackberry Lane, Cllr Timms noted that it was safer for pedestrians to cut the corner from Telegraph Lane to Blackberry Lane, and that Cllr Hammond’s suggestion was warranted. The EO advised that although the land belongs to HCC, it would be very unlikely that they would consider the suggestion of laying hard standing in this location, however may be receptive if the Parish Council cover the costs of the work. The EO agreed to contact HCC to discuss options.

21.15.6 Badger Close, corridor re-planting

Following the removal of two trees last year from both the north and south wildlife corridors, the EO asked the Committee whether to consider any replanting to compensate for their loss. Following a brief discussion, it was suggested contacting the contractor who works on the Badger Close wildlife areas for advice on what to plant in their place, if anything.

21.16 OS AREA UPDATE

Location	Action required	Status	Notes
A31 Winchester Road	- Proposal to replace bench and notice board, wild-flower planting and bin	Ongoing	Notice board ordered Footpath map awaiting final amendments Wildflower signs to be designed/ordered Bench to be ordered, grant received, bin from from Oak Green to be installed and added to collections – all to be done

			at the same time – quotes to be sought for the work
Allotments	-Fencing, estate side, and wildlife corridor breach reports	Pending	Awaiting site visit
Badger Close	- Replacement fencing - replacement for removed tree to be agreed	Awaiting action Pending discussion	Contract awarded, awaiting installation (difficulty with materials supply)
Cemetery	- VE Day memorial tree now planted awaiting plaque - <i>Update of burial regulations and consideration for new procedures (F&GP)</i> -breach in regulations	Ongoing Ongoing	Awaiting delivery of plaque, installation to be agreed Letter sent, taking restrictions into consideration, will chase Spring/Summer
Kingswood Copse	- Ash Tree, maintenance works and planting	Awaiting action	Work starts Thursday 28 th Jan and likely to take up to 4 days
Lymington Bottom Green	- Wildflower Planting -To the Pond sign	Pending Pending	Sign for where wildflower planting has taken place Location agreed, but issue with sign, awaiting action
Oak Green	-no reported issues		
Recreation Ground	- Training area and tennis courts floodlights ; agree purchase of replacement light housings, electrician to be contacted for costs for installation - Vandalism and CCTV – - Security lighting approved, contractor awarded contract, awaiting installation - new CCTV motion activated camera to be installed at the Pavilion to attempt to curb night time anti-social behaviour - Cricket pitch ; pitch aeriated and treated, moss treatment to be carried out in Spring, barrier now fixed - Public Spaces Protection Order ; still awaiting response to alcohol free zones request outcome	Pending Awaiting action	Electrician and platform hire companies to be approached prior to purchase of lights for quotation Awaiting date of installation from contractor
Station Gardens	- No reported issues		
Swelling Hill Pond	Shoring works Land Registry boundary issue - boundary registration, now submitted	Pending Awaiting response Awaiting confirmation of boundary	Postponed until Spring/Summer 2021 Contractors to be contacted for quotes

	- boundary fencing, seek further quotes ready for confirmation from Land Registry -refurbishment of Well	registration Ongoing	Seeking quotations
Footpaths	Footpath 2 Awaiting action on laurel obstruction Footpath map boards - awaiting amendments and approval, permission to sought from HCC for proposed locations Ongoing footpath issues	Awaiting action Ongoing Agenda item	AEO chasing HRow
Benians Pavilion	- Blocked Drain; awaiting detail on further options - Guttering replacement	Pending Awaiting action	Early February
Climate Change	- Water refill station	On hold	
Open Spaces – General	PARISH TREES Ash tree removal Tree planting -Swelling Hill – 5 trees -Recreation Ground – 13 trees Species to be agreed GRASS CUTTING & MAINTENANCE Hedgerow to be instated along access to pavilion road BUS SHELTERS Maintenance/Cleaning VILLAGE SIGNAGE Gateway signage; Lymington Bottom Road /Boyneswood Road Gateway signate: A31 LYMINGTON BOTTOM ROAD Awaiting Pedestrian crossing works, site will then be cleared, and once carried out, decision to be made whether to approach Highways further NOTICE BOARDS Proposal to replace Lymington Barns board 50/50 using S106 contributions	Ongoing Agenda item Pending On hold Pending Pending Awaiting quotations	Planning application to be submitted Quotes to be sought for job Formal approval for quotation Awaiting quotation Review in Spring Awaiting contact from HCC design technician Note. Trees have now been cut down to hedgerow (have assumed that it was carried out by adjacent residential property) MPC leading project Current hold on S106 applications

There were no matters arising from the Area Update.

Cllr Foster proposed, due the sensitive and confidential nature of the following item, that it should be discussed under a closed session, this was seconded by the Chairman, Cllr Tomlinson, and agreed by all Councillors.

Members of the public were excluded from the meeting at this point.

21.16.1 Kingswood Copse

The EO had circulated a recent communication from a resident which had highlighted several issues which needed a response.

The EO gave a brief report of the recent maintenance work that had been completed in the copse, including the planting of 30 new (approx. 1m) guarded trees. Some of the diseased trees had been left as monoliths for the birds, and some had been felled and left, leaving the impression they had been windblown, ideal for the understorey. Others had been cut up with the brush and rings strategically left in an ununiformed manner, to encourage and house the different species of wildlife. As discussed earlier the surplus wood should not be removed. The importance of the area was discussed and although informal public open space, it was agreed that it should remain with as little human intervention as possible. The EO did remind the Council that, although this is an informal public open space, it does have a duty of care to ensure there is no damage to surrounding property or persons using the area, and can be accessed safely, however ideally it should remain untouched to allow nature and wildlife to thrive.

Cllr Foster suggested changing its name moving forward, as copse was no longer appropriate, which was acknowledged for consideration.

The response to the communication was discussed at length, and after several suggestions, it was agreed that a formal letter would be written, acknowledging past actions, detailing the work that had been carried out and why, and that the Council's open space contractors would take over the monitoring and maintenance of the area from now on. The Committee agreed that the area that had been mowed the copse side of the residents' fences must now be left to grow back naturally, but that a small corridor, no more than 1m, could be strimmed back for future maintenance to their fences. The EO would draft a letter for Committee approval prior to sending.

21.17 OS DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 3rd March 2021, 6.00pm, via Zoom Videoconferencing.

21.18 OS The Chairman closed the Meeting at 7.30pm.