

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Wednesday 31st March 2021 commencing at 7.00pm
This meeting was held by Zoom Video conferencing**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Cllr Janet Foster (Chairman), Cllrs Anne Tomlinson, John Davis and Simon Thomas
IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Goudie (Executive Officer - EO)
	No members of the public
APOLOGIES:	None

21.12 FGP OPEN SESSION/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman, welcoming all members to the meeting, asked if there were any items under the open session.

The EO advised she had been circulated a draft document in preparation for the return to face to face meetings, which would be adapted and presented to Council for approval at the next meeting. The EO confirmed that she had approached the Village Hall to book the large hall for the June and July meetings, as the small hall would not be Covid restriction compliant, however due to a booking clash, the Council would not be able to use the Large Hall on 21st July and no Wednesday's moving forward from September. Further discussions would be held on a suitably compliant venue moving forward.

The EO, following a brief discussion with the Chairman, suggested that as the Annual Meeting was approaching this would be an appropriate time to discuss changes, and asked whether consideration should be given to splitting this Committee and have two, one for Finance & Staffing matters and one for Policies & Procedures, both meeting twice a year or as appropriate. After a brief discussion, members did not see any merit or benefit in doing so, therefore the proposal would not be taken further.

There were no additional issues raised therefore the meeting commenced at 7.15pm. Standing Orders were applied.

21.13 FGP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

21.14 FGP DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

21.15 FGP MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 27th January 2021 were proposed as accurate by Cllr Thomas seconded by Cllr Davis and would be signed by the Chairman at the next available opportunity, due to current restrictions and the meeting being held remotely.

There were two matters arising from the previous meeting.

Benians Pavilion. The EO advised that due to the high content of the Agenda and deferral of items from the previous meeting, this item had not been added to the Agenda as previously agreed. There had been no further information as to when the accounts would be circulated, or a date for the AGM. Cllr Davis also questioned the updating of the Licence to Occupy as this had not been signed the previous year and was now out of date.

After a lengthy and detailed discussion, it was agreed that the Council have a duty of care to ensure that all Council assets are managed and protected appropriately, including the Pavilion, and agreement needed to be reached as to what the Pavilion Committee want to be identified as, and moving forward ensure that there are appropriate

standards, with a firm structure and proper accounting procedures in place. Any extension work must be authorised by the Council, conform to building regulations.

Action points agreed:

- The EO would request a copy of their Constitution.
- The EO would send the Constitution and current Licence to Occupy for comment and alignment to Cllr Tomlinson and propose updates to the existing agreement following the ending of the Sport England restrictions.
- The EO would request an Agenda item at the AGM to discuss the Constitution, updated Licence to Occupy and the future structure of the Committee.

Developers' contributions. The EO confirmed that she had written to District Councillor Ingrid Thomas and asked for assistance chasing decisions on the specified S106 contribution requests, and in response would be sending copies of the two outstanding applications. Whilst concerning that it is a difficult process to extract S106 funding from Local Authorities, it was agreed that a polite but firm chasing approach should be established at this point in time, rather than an all guns blazing, being aware that staff had been redeployed due to the current restrictions.

21.16 FGP CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES

21.16.1 Updated Rules and Regulations.

Following circulation of the draft regulations amended following discussion at the previous meeting, and further amendments had been made to the document. The following additional comments and amendments were made;

Regulation 2. Wording change to indicate no Interments to take place on Bank Holidays as it was currently open to the wrong interpretation.

Regulation 28. Brackets removed to include Exclusive Right to Erect a Memorial.

Regulation 55. 'if deemed to be damaging' removed from regulation.

The document was then agreed and would be formally presented to Full Council for adoption at the April meeting.

21.16.2 Proposed changes to administration

Following the deferral from the last meeting the EO presented various proposals for updating and changing current administration. The EO updated the Committee on the actions carried out to date, and those agreed at the meeting listed, as follows:

- The burial regulations would be reviewed annually for any changes in legislation.
- It was agreed to introduce a Right to Erect a Memorial, for a fee, where next of kin of the deceased would be able to erect a memorial without purchasing or the transferral of burial rights, when there was no wish for additional interments and would ensure that the memorial was appropriately cared for, rather than being the responsibility of the Parish Council, current fee agreed; £50.
- It was agreed to keep the 50 year in perpetuity for Burial Rights.
- It was agreed to keep the maximum of three Rights owners for one burial plot.
- Timescale for removal of wooden cross markers following a letter to the next of kin was not agreed, however it was suggested, and agreed, that, once a cross has fallen into disrepair and no action had been taken by the contacted next of kin, the plaque would be removed from the cross and kept at the office for the next of kin to collect. It was also suggested that a small marker with the grave number on could be used to replace the cross when removed. The EO agreed to investigate suitable options.

21.17FGP OPEN SPACES/PUBLIC PROTECTION ORDER

21.17.1 Use of Public Open Spaces Policy

The new draft policy had been circulated, the Chairman had sent some prior amendments, and following discussion it was agreed to completely remove the paragraph with reference to Street Vendors, deeming it not applicable at this time. A change to the reference to outdoor fitness classes would be made to ensure that it was in alignment with the Hire of Council Facilities and Recreation Ground Rules of Use.

21.17.2 Recreation Ground – Rules of Use

There were no amendments to this policy and would be proposed for approval as circulated.

21.17.3 UAS Policy

Cllr McCarthy was thanked for his assistance with updating the former Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Policy to the proposed Unmanned Aerial Systems policy.

The option of designating the Recreation Ground as a ‘no fly’ zone was discussed, but was not agreed, and therefore removed from the draft policy.

21.17.4 Hire of Council facilities by third parties

The updated document was approved without amendment, however it was noted that the free of charge fitness classes needed to be added to the list. It was also agreed that there would be no charge to the Basketball Club for using the MUGA as this was a Mental Health initiative as opposed to a sporting club charging fees for instruction. The hire charges would remain the same.

21.17.5 Maintenance of Council Facilities by third parties

There were no additional amendments to this document following circulation and agreed for proposal.

In summary, it was agreed that all the above documents with reference to the use of Public Open Spaces within Four Marks, should be widely publicised, specifically the support of the outdoor fitness classes, to ensure everyone was aware of their existence.

21.18 FGP INVESTMENT STRATEGY

There had been no changes to this document following its deferral from adoption at Full Council after queries had been raised with reference to risk with the investment in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund. A presentation had been given at the last Full Council meeting which had reassured all Councillors, with agreement to remain with Finance Committees decision to invest with CCLA. However, upon reading the document, both prior to and during the meeting, Cllr Tomlinson expressed concern that that the document was inconsistently worded and was a mix of strategy and definition and needed to be amended and split to identify more easily the difference between the two. Cllr Tomlinson agreed to review and restructure the document and circulate to the Committee for approval prior to adoption at Full Council in April.

21.19 FGP STAFF ADMINISTRATION

Both the EO and AEO due to last year’s pandemic situation had unused holiday entitlement. It was agreed that the AEO could carry forward her untaken 9 hours to April. The EO had 7 unused days to take, and although in the contract it says only 5 can be carried forward, it was agreed that under the circumstances there should be flexibility and therefore it was agreed that the EO could carry forward all 7 days and a review of holiday taken would be carried out in September to ensure that this would not be the case again next March.

It was also agreed that the AEO would increase her hours to 8 a week, and this would be reviewed in three months, with a view to increasing to 12 per week in September.

21.20 FGP CODE OF CONDUCT

There had been no further update, and the EO confirmed that she had written to the Monitoring Officer at EHDC to advise that the Parish Council would not be adopting their revised Code of Conduct at this juncture.

21.21 FGP NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 28th July 2021, 7.00pm, Parish Office.

21.22 FGP The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00pm.

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Chairman