

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Full Council Meeting
Held on Wednesday 24th January 2024 commencing at 7.00pm
At Four Marks Village Hall, Lyminster Bottom, Four Marks

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Cllrs Briggs, Smith, Pullen (R), Pullen (M), McAllister, Medhurst, Black and Speed
STAFF:	Jo Tsigarides, Clerk, Louise Steele, Locum RFO
PUBLIC:	Seven members of the public.
OTHER:	District Councillors Day and Allsopp.
APOLOGIES:	Cllr Gebbett, Cllr Coulson.

24.01 APOLOGIES AND APPROVAL OF ABSENCES

Apologies were received from Cllr Gebbett (health issues) and Cllr Coulson (holiday) and were duly accepted by the Council.

24.02 OPEN SESSION – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no items raised and the Open Session ended at 7.02pm, standing orders were applied.

24.03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS

Cllr Smith declared a personal interest in Agenda item 11.2 along with a possible pecuniary interest if planning application 56082/004 should be discussed at any point.

24.04 FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

On the proposal of Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Black, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was:

RESOLVED To approve the Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Wednesday 20th December 2023 as a true reflection of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

24.05 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Cllr Briggs noted the forthcoming District Council by-election which will be held on the 15th February 2024 and the emerging Local Plan consultation and related event that was scheduled to be held at Four Marks Village Hall on the 19th February 2024 between 3.30pm and 7.30pm.

The Council were advised that Cllr McAllister will be representing the Council at the Inquiry into Planning application 56082/004. Following on from a virtual meeting earlier that day with the EHDC planning team, it was requested that numbers of attendees are confirmed prior to the 6th February 2024 due to the limited capacity in the meeting chamber at EHDC, Penns Place, Petersfield. Any Councillors wishing to attend should notify the Clerk.

Smart marketing had informed the Council that there had been difficulty in contacting some of the existing users of community facilities due to GDPR concerns from the facility managers. The Parish Office had provided as many details as possible, and data is expected imminently.

Cllr Briggs stated that the budget recommended by the Finance and General Purposes Committee would be reviewed by the Council at that night's meeting and this would determine the precept demand.

24.06 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

District Cllr Day provided a report and emphasised that residents should be encouraged to vote in the forthcoming District by-election. District Cllr Allsop also addressed the Council with a similar message and introduced the nominated Conservative candidate who was permitted to speak to the Council.

On the request of Cllr M Pullen, the District Liberal Democrat candidate also in attendance was permitted to address the Council.

24.07 COMMUNITY BUILDING PROJECT COMMITTEE

24.07.1 To note any updates from the Committee Chairman.

Cllr McAllister confirmed the Chairpersons report in that the Council is currently waiting for data from the marketing company and that in tandem, a meeting is being arranged with the sports consultant.

24.08 OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

24.08.1 To note the Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on Wednesday 3rd January 2024.

The Minutes were noted.

24.08.2 To receive an update on clock at Oak Green Parade and discuss repair.

Cllr Briggs outlined a plan to remedy the issues with the village clock and it was agreed that quotations would be sought for the works for presentation either to the Open Spaces Committee or the Full Council, whichever was sooner.

24.08.3 To consider Committee recommendation to manage resurfacing of tennis courts with funds accumulated.

Following a review of the information in the circulated report, the Council discussed finishing the resurfacing project that the tennis club Committee had agreed to prior to agreeing to dissolve.

On the proposal of Cllr Black, which was seconded by Cllr Medhurst and with all Councillors in agreement, it was:

RESOLVED to manage the project to resurface the tennis courts at Four Marks recreation ground using funds accrued by the Tennis club, earmarked reserves and the reallocation of the Supporting Communities match funded grant and to appoint the recommended contractor.

24.08.4 To consider Committee recommendation regarding future management of the tennis courts.

The Clerk advised that the LTA administer a 'Club spark' membership and had provided the Council with details in the documents. Cllr M Pullen asked how much resource would be involved in this membership plan and the Clerk had previously asked the LTA about this. They stated that there would be minimal involvement needed and that the only element which might place pressure on staff would be the coin sales for the floodlights. This is something that could be updated should there be excess funds from the tennis club.

The LTA had advised that their membership is £75 per court and that the fees/charges should enable the Council to accumulate a sinking fund of £1800 per court per year to cover the future maintenance. It was agreed that the Open Spaces Committee should discuss and drill down into appropriate fees and any reductions for existing members.

On the proposal of Cllr Black, which was seconded by Cllr Medhurst, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was:

RESOLVED to subscribe the LTA Club Spark membership for future management of the tennis court facility.

24.09 PLANNING COMMITTEE

24.09.1 To note the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Wednesday 3rd January 2024.

The Committee Minutes were noted and Cllr McAllister gave details of a virtual meeting which took place earlier that day which was attended by Cllr McAllister, Cllr R Pullen, the Clerk, a representative of Fight for Four Marks and members of the EHDC planning team. The purpose of the meeting was to ensure that the content of the Parish Council representation complimented others.

24.09.2 To receive update on Local Plan Consultation virtual briefing.

Cllr McAllister appraised the Council of the potential ramifications of the emerging local plan. There was also reference made to the changes in the NPPF which were presented before Christmas and could have an impact on the five-year land supply need reducing it to a four-year land supply requirement.

24.10 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

24.10.1 To note F&GP Minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2023.

The Minutes of the meeting were noted.

24.10.2 To note next meeting date and time.

The next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee would take place on Wednesday 31st January 2024 at 12pm at the Scout Hut, Uplands Lane, Four Marks. This change to the meeting schedule is to ensure that the Locum RFO can attend.

24.10.3 To receive the 2024/2025 budget and precept request for Full Council approval.

A detailed report of the recommended budget had been prepared by the Locum RFO and Cllr Briggs highlighted the key points.

On the proposal of Cllr McAllister, which was seconded by Cllr R Pullen and with all Councillors in agreement, it was:

RESOLVED to approve the prepared budget for the financial year 2024/2025 which required a precept demand of £189 900 and a raise of 5.25% on the 2023/2024 budget.

24.10.4 To agree to transfer any unspent general reserves into a new earmarked reserve the future Neighbourhood Plan.

A need to accrue funds for a future Neighbourhood Plan had been identified and the RFO had advised that there could be approximately £30 000 of general reserves at the end of the financial year. The Finance and General Purposes Committee had provided a recommendation to the Council that a new reserve should be created and an amount of not more than £30 000 should be transferred into it when appropriate.

On the proposal of Cllr R Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr Smith, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was:

RESOLVED to create a new earmarked reserve for Neighbourhood Plan Costs at the end of the financial year, to which a maximum of £30 000 of general reserves would be transferred into.

24.10.5 To create earmarked reserve for tennis club maintenance.

Following on from the previous discussion about the membership plan and the need to accrue a sinking fund, it was agreed that a new earmarked reserve for tennis club income would be created.

On the proposal of Cllr R Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr Speed, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was:

RESOLVED to create a new earmarked reserve for future tennis club maintenance.

24.11 STAFFING COMMITTEE

24.11.1 To consider moving Agenda item 11.2 into a closed session

On the proposal of Cllr M Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr R Pullen, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was:

RESOLVED to move Agenda item 11.2 into a closed session as it concerned confidential staffing matters.

24.12 OFFICER REPORT

24.12.1 Officer report and any notable correspondence.

A complaint that had been raised by a resident regarding speeding along the A31, specifically when the speed limit changes from 40mph to 30mph was discussed. The Clerk was asked to consult with Highways to see if there would be anyone available to meet with the resident and discuss the matter further.

On the 22nd January 2024, a very detailed complaint from a resident concerning Kingswood Copse had been received. It referred to the past, present and future management and in addition that there were concerns that a cycle path had been added into the area. The complaint would require further investigation and would be discussed at the next meeting of the Open Spaces Committee.

The Allotment association had advised that there are now three vacant plots with no waiting list which is unusual. The Clerk had agreed to try and get interest through Facebook and the website.

24.13 ACCOUNTING REPORTS AND FINANCIAL ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

24.13.1.1 To receive and approve the December 2023 payments

On the proposal of Cllr Smith, which was seconded by Cllr R Pullen, and with all Councillors in agreement it was:

RESOLVED to approve the December 2023 payments totalling £18312.93.

24.13.2 To receive and authorise January 2024 payments to date.

Cllr M Pullen had noticed a large contractor payment on the schedule which had previously been discussed by the Open Spaces Committee and expressed disappointment in the execution of the works and the condition that the site was left in. Cllr Smith and the Clerk had attended the site visit, and it was felt that the contractor had met their obligations. Cllrs Briggs, Smith, and Speed would take on the tidying of the site.

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 January 2024 payments to date totalling £14430.87.

24.14 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

24.14.1 Update on future events and activities.

Forthcoming events were briefly discussed:

- Community litter pick to tie in with the Great British Spring Clean.
- Village picnic – meeting to be held on Monday 29th January 2024 at Benians Pavilion for anyone able to attend.
- 10k run, to be arranged.
- Councillor surgeries. Cllr Medurst would continue to work with Garthowen and arrange a time to begin these in February 2024.

24.14.2 To discuss annual newsletter and contents.

Examples of previous annual newsletters were shown to the Council and the Chairperson asked that ideas for contributions to this year's newsletter be sent to the Clerk to collate before the 20th February 2024. It had been agreed that the newsletter should be printed on recycled paper before the 1st March 2024 with distribution shortly after.

The Clerk would begin working on a timeline of projects achieved and coming up and the RFO would prepare a financial report on the 2024/2025 budget.

24.14.3 Annual Parish meeting – date and format

It was confirmed that the meeting will take place on the 24th April 2024 at Four Marks Village Hall. The Chairperson and the Clerk would create a programme for the event which would include community recognition awards, representation of community groups and guest speakers. The Clerk would contact the office of Donna Jones to see if she was available and try to secure a speaker on community wind farms and retrofitting.

24.14.4 To receive update on Vision Planning meeting held on the 15th January 2024.

A meeting was held at Four Marks Village Hall on the 15th January 2024 where eleven people attended to share initial ideas to contribute to short term vision plan (to be presented at the Annual Parish meeting) a mid term plan (to go to the next election date) and a long term vision until 2040.

Work had begun on streamlining the original ideas into statements and this would continue. It was suggested that as the process develops, there are further opportunities for the public to engage.

24.15 TO NOTE EXTERNAL COMMITTEE AND AREA REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

24.15.1 Allotments

Cllr Speed had nothing to report.

24.15.2 Benians Committee

There was nothing to report.

24.15.3 Oak Green

Cllr Briggs advised that three fence panels on the boundary fence of the car park had come down in the storm and that repairs had been arranged. It was also noted that the bottle bank is operating well and being frequently emptied.

24.15.4 Village Hall

Cllr R Pullen noted that the heating system had been fixed for the time being but that investigations were being made into sourcing an air-to-air heat source pump.

24.15.5 Highways – R Pullen

Following a recent Highways liaison panel meeting, it has been decided to prioritise the ‘Safer Routes to School’ programme. There was a discussion about additional parking spaces on Gradwell Lane.

24.15.6 EHAPTC

A meeting was scheduled for the 29th January 2024 but may have to be rearranged. Cllrs Pullen and Black will advise the Council when this take place.

24.16 Next meeting: 21st February 2024.

24.17 Closed Session

24.17 To consider recommendation from the Staffing Committee regarding Assistant Clerk appointment.

Following interviews held for the position of Assistant Clerk on the 8th January 2024, Cllr R Pullen provided a recommendation on behalf of the Staffing Committee regarding the appointment of the new Assistant Clerk.

Following a proposal by Cllr R Pullen, which was seconded by Cllr Briggs, and agreed by all Councillors it was: **RESOLVED to agree the appointment of the recommended candidate to Assistant Clerk at a starting salary of SCP 13.**

24.18 Meeting closed at 8.28pm.