



# **FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL**

## **ANNUAL PARISH REPORT**

**YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2020**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**The Annual Parish Meeting, a meeting for the local electorate called by the Chairman of the Parish Council, has this year had to be postponed due to Government restrictions on gatherings as a result of the Coronavirus COVID 19 global pandemic.**

**In place of this year's meeting a summary document has been compiled with reports usually presented at the Annual Parish Meeting, as follows:**

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| <b>1. Chairman's Report</b>                      | <b>Page 3</b>  |
| <b>2. Responsible Financial Officer's Report</b> | <b>Page 5</b>  |
| <b>3. District Councillors' Report</b>           | <b>Page 13</b> |
| <b>4. County Councillors Report</b>              | <b>Page 14</b> |

**Should there be any questions on the any of the contents please contact the Executive Officer who will pass these on as appropriate.**

**The Minutes of last year's meeting will remain unapproved until the next meeting.**



## **PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019 - 2020** from Janet Foster, Chairman

In 2019, in which an election was due, we had ten residents offering to become Councillors. Two were new and eight agreed to continue, making a full complement without the expense of an election. As chairman I would like to thank all Councillors for giving their time with no monetary reward and working hard in helping to make Four Marks a better place. I would also like to thank Sarah Goudie, our Parish Executive Officer for the many and diverse duties she carries out. Sarah works diligently and patiently with all the demands from the public, official authorities and Councillors.

We increased the parish precept to £128,000, a 13.5% increase which for a Band D dwelling will be an additional £7.25 a year. This increase is largely due to the future works of removing the diseased ash trees and our policy to plant two trees for each ash felled. We also want to continue providing the services that we believe you want in Four Marks. This includes the more frequent emptying of the waste bins used by the increasing number of dog owners using our open space areas.

The following are some examples of what we have done in the past year:

- Grounds maintenance contracts for all our open spaces including the recreation ground, cemetery and Swelling Hill pond with grass cutting, bin emptying, and tidying.
- Major works at Swelling Hill pond: de-silting and removal of diseased ash trees.
- Electrical safety testing of the Benians Pavilion (FMPC property).
- Kept our rights of way network free of obstructions.
- Organised the Four Marks 10K and shorter fun runs.
- Mapped all the footpaths to encourage people to use them for exercise and fitness.
- Installed a half pipe in the skate park.
- Continued to sponsor the Speed Watch and Street Watch teams and their volunteers who help create a safer community.
- Supported a variety of local charities and services.
- Enhanced the Christmas light display at Oak Green.
- Started work on actions to combat climate change e.g. tree planting.

In planning and new developments we:

- Made comments on all planning applications using the EHDC Joint Core Strategy, Medstead and Four Marks Neighbourhood Plan and Village Design Statement in our parish and in the neighbouring parishes when applicable.
- Worked closely with Medstead Parish Council, to ensure that we have a greater voice regarding planning issues that challenge our communities.
- Spent a great deal of Councillors' time along with our Executive Officer on the delivery of large housing developments in the East Hampshire district. With our neighbouring parish councils, FMPC organised a public meeting where 400+ attended explaining what, how, who and when this would all be decided. Our Councillors read all the EHDC documents and the proposed developer's documentation and attended the exhibitions



with developers before making detailed comments on each of the ten sites on behalf of the community. We still await the outcome.

From the developer contributions totalling £30,000 we have carried out the following:

- Essential Works at Swelling Hill pond
- Replacement safety surfacing at the play area

With grants from our County Councillor and District Councillor:

- Purchased new HCC & Four Marks flags.
- Two new benches, one for the Pond and one for the Cemetery £999.00
- Contribution of £600 towards the VE 75 celebrations
- Contribution of £690 towards the artwork for the proposed pond information sign.

The new Council set up a small working group to move forward for a new community recreational hub building with good progress. Visits have been made to other similar facilities to see size, layout of rooms, how they are managed and of course the costs involved.

During the year we have given comments on various documents from EHDC, HCC and CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England). We also met with HCC highways to discuss local issues and the Chairman of the Mid Hants Railway.

We took on a temporary part time assistant to Sarah our Parish Executive Officer to work on particular projects. Jo Tsigarides has proved to be a great resource to Sarah and is now an employee.

We have ended the year with the Coronavirus lockdown in force. The Council is still working but it has meant the cancellation of face to face meetings, working from home, Annual Parish Meeting, organised events and locking the play areas at the recreation ground as instructed by the Government. Following Government legislation, the council has been allowed to rearrange both timings and alternative arrangements for council meetings. It means doing things differently, but we hope to resume meetings in May.

Please check our website, notice boards & social media for meeting dates. Contact details can also be found in the Four Marks Village News.

[Janet.foster@fourmarks-pc.org.uk](mailto:Janet.foster@fourmarks-pc.org.uk)



## FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

### ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT APRIL 2020

In accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England, the Parish Council accounts are audited each year by an independent internal auditor, currently Auditing Solutions Limited.

An Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) is prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer (currently the Executive Officer) for the internal auditor to audit and sign following successful completion of audit. The AGAR will then be approved by the Parish Council and signed by the Chairman for submission to the external auditors, currently PKF Littlejohn LLP.

The external auditor compares the financial year's accounts with the previous year's accounts and can, if necessary, carry out further audit should they so wish.

The AGAR will be returned, confirmed and signed by the external auditor and displayed for 21 days on the website and local notice boards together with a notice advising that anyone can request to see the documents in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

The Annual Parish Meeting has historically been the forum for presenting the previous two year's audited accounts, and the provisional year end results for the recently completed financial year. As the financial accounts are now available on the website and upon request, at last year's meeting for the first time, the provisional accounts for the recently completed financial year (year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019) were presented with the previous financial year's results for comparison.

This year however, due to the Coronavirus COVID 19 outbreak, all public gatherings were stopped with effect from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 for at least three weeks, so therefore the decision was taken to cancel this year's Annual Parish Meeting.

This report, and the provisional financial figures contained within it, would have been presented at this meeting. Please note, as always, that the figures contained within this report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 are **provisional**, they have not yet been reconciled against the bank statements or audited, and therefore are subject to change.

Last year there was a request to include the Parish Council's proposed budget within this report which is prepared the previous October, so the spending requirements can be projected and an appropriate Precept amount can be calculated and requested through the Council Tax for the next financial year.

**Sarah Goudie, Executive Officer, Four Marks Parish Council**

**17<sup>th</sup> April 2020**



**FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL**

**PROVISIONAL ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT  
APRIL 2020**

**PROVISIONAL RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS SUMMARY**

<b>DETAIL</b>	<b>Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 £</b>	<b>Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 £</b>
<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>162,359</b>	<b>185,032</b>
Add Total Receipts	150,950	175,329
<b>S/T</b>	<b>313,309</b>	<b>360,361</b>
Less Total Payments	128,277	151,402
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>185,032</b>	<b>208,959</b>
<b>Cumulative Funds represented by:</b>		
TSB Deposit a/c	850	0
CCLA Deposit Fund	78,391	136,309
Benians Trust Fund – NS&I	37,977	38,281
Unity Trust Bank	67,814	34,369
<b>Total</b>	<b>185,032</b>	<b>208,959</b>
<b>Reserve Balances represented by:</b>		
Year end balance	22,673	23,927
General Reserves	76,368	62,159
Earmarked Reserves	85,991	122,873
<b>Closing balance</b>	<b>185,032</b>	<b>208,959</b>

**Note 1**

The TSB deposit account was closed by TSB during this financial year and funds transferred to Unity Trust Account.



**FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT (UNAUDITED)**

**PROVISIONAL RECEIPTS**

	Year ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019 £	Year ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020 £
Burial Ground	4,330	5,400
Donations	1,878	0
Grants (1)	0	4,882
Developers Contributions (1)	6,720	30,427
Sports Pavilion Income	4,000	4,000
Sports Pitches/ground hire	2,425	2,209
Allotment income (EMR)	2,347	2,476
Wayleave	72	72
Reimbursements	629	395
Entry Fees – Events	906	1,334
Precept	109,000	113,200
Bank interest/dividend	708	1,223
Asset Disposal	1,000	0
Festival Committee (EMR)	1,951	1,369
VAT on Receipts	14,985	8,341
Rounding	(1)	1
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>150,950</b>	<b>175,329</b>

**Note 2. Variance explanation**

- 1 Grants and Developers Contributions have now been split into separate headings as per new legislative audit requirement.



**FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT (UNAUDITED)**

**PROVISIONAL PAYMENTS**

Payments detail	Year ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2019 £	Year ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2020 £
<b>STAFF COSTS</b> (Box 4)	<b>37,285</b>	<b>33,815</b>
<b>OTHER PAYMENTS</b> (Box 6)		
Mileage & Travel	701	802
Chairman's allowance	63	26
Bank charges (1)	52	190
Administration – general (2)	1,788	3,113
Village Hall Hire	377	332
Subscriptions	1,257	1,233
Audit charges	1,090	1,005
Training & Publications (3)	460	1,133
Insurance	2,190	2,204
Election costs (4)	0	120
Legal & Professional fees	3,474	350
Event expenses	1,134	746
Utilities	8,264	8,427
Office Rent (5)	2,667	0
General – labour, servicing & materials	6,208	5,194
Open Spaces – labour, servicing & materials (6)	35,852	43,670
Allotments expenses (EMR)	2,034	2,233
Developer contribution expenditure (7)	6,026	25,427
Community Building Fund (EMR)	1,169	0
Grants & Donations S.137 (8)	2,100	0
Grants & Donations – other	2,000	2,867
Neighbourhood plan (9)	172	567
Capital expenditure (10)	235	1,750
VAT on payments (11)	11,681	16,198
Rounding (2)	(2)	0
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>128,277</b>	<b>151,402</b>





**FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT (UNAUDITED)**

**PROVISIONAL PAYMENTS**  
**(Continued)**

**Note 3. Variance explanation**

1. *Current account provider was changed mid-way during previous year, the new account incurs bank charges, increase is due to the figure being a full year of charges.*
2. *Increase in costs due to new website design and implementation.*
3. *Increase due to additional training for new Councillors and clerk's residential conference*
4. *Although there was no need for a parish council election, the Council are still charged a portion of local election costs, 2019 being parish and district council election year.*
5. *Office move into Parish Council owned property negating rental costs*
6. *Increase due to essential maintenance at the Cemetery, installation of access bollards, tree removal due to Ash die back and subsequent tree replacement planting at the Recreation Ground, and hire of Christmas lighting scheme at Oak Green.*
7. *Two new projects; desilting Swelling Hill Pond and replacement safety surfacing in the children's play area.*
8. *The Parish Council now fulfils the criteria and has adopted the General Power of Competence, (15<sup>th</sup> May 2019), so the use of LGA 1972 Section 137 is no longer required to allow expenditure for certain purposes not otherwise authorised, for example, grants to local charities.*
9. *In addition to the annual insurance cost, the increase in expenditure is due to the printing of flyers for a local consultation on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group, which was reimbursed.*
10. *Increase in Capital Expenditure is due to the purchase of a second-hand roller for the cricket square.*
11. *VAT is based on invoicing.*



**FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT (UNAUDITED)**

**EARMARKED RESERVES**

<b>Earmarked reserve accounts</b>	<b>Opening balance £</b>	<b>Net transfers £</b>	<b>Closing Balance £</b>
Benians Trust Fund	37,977.33	303.82	38,281.15
Kingswood Copse	2,014.70		2,014.70
Badger Close	5,215.10	-640.00	4,575.10
Bus Shelters	846.83		846.83
Barry Seward Memorial Tree Fund	1,000.00		1,000.00
Defibrillator Fund	190.00		190.00
Allotments	2,783.15		
Tennis Courts	3,571.63	1,000.00	4,571.63
Community Building Fund	17,380.00	25,000.00	42,380.00
Election Provision	3,500.00	-119.60	3,380.40
FM Youth Club Fund	9,561.79		9,561.79
Festival Committee	1,950.64	1,369.00	3,319.64
Playground Maintenance	0	10,000.00	10,000.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>85,991.17</b>	<b>36,881.87</b>	<b>122,873.04</b>



**FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL  
ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT (UNAUDITED)**

**BENIANS TRUST ACCOUNT**

**AS AT 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2020**

**Balance brought forward from 2018/19**

National Savings	<u>£37,977.33</u>	<b><u>£37,703.90</u></b>
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**Income – Interest**

National Savings	£303.82	£ 303.82
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**Expenditure**

<b>Balance carried forward:</b>		<b><u>£38,281.15</u></b>
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**FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT (UNAUDITED)**  
**2020/2021 PROVISIONAL BUDGET**  
**AS PROPOSED OCTOBER 2019**

	2019/2020 Agreed Budget £	2019/2020 Actual £	2020/2021 Proposed budget £
<b>BUDGET INCOME</b>			
Cemetery Fees	3,000	5,400	4,000
Sports Pavilion Income	4,000	4,000	4,200
Sports Pitches/ground hire	2,000	2,209	2,500
Wayleave	70	72	70
Events/Entries	1,000	1,334	1,000
Bank interest dividend	600	1,223	600
PRECEPT	113,200	113,200	128,000
<i>Non-budgeted Income (including VAT repayment)</i>		47,891	
<b>Total</b>	<b>123,870</b>	<b>175,329</b>	<b>140,370</b>
<b>BUDGET EXPENDITURE</b>			
Net Salaries/PAYE	34,500	27,867	34,500
Pension contributions	6,000	5,948	6,000
Mileage and Travel	800	802	800
Chairmans Allowance	200	26	200
Bank charges	300	190	300
Administration	1,800	3,113	1,800
Village Hall Hire	400	332	400
Subscriptions	1,450	1,233	1,450
Audit charges	1,000	1,005	1,200
Training and publications	700	1,133	1,000
Insurance	2,250	2,204	2,250
Legal and Professional fees	2,000	350	4,000
Event expenses	1,000	746	1,000
Utilities (including rates and bins)	8,970	7,950	9,970
General; labour, annual servicing & materials	7,500	5,194	7,500
Open Space; labour, annual servicing & materials	40,000	43,670	55,500
Community Building Fund	7,000	0	6,300
Grants and Donations	5,000	2,867	5,000
Neighbourhood Plan	1,000	567	200
Capital Expenditure	1,000	1,750	1,000
<i>Non-budgeted expenditure</i>		43,273	
<b>Total</b>	<b>123,870</b>	<b>150,220</b>	<b>140,370</b>



## **DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT MAY 2019-APRIL 2020**

The new team of three district councillors following the election last year would like to thank everyone who voted for us. We hope we will be able to help our residents within the expanded ward with any problems that arise, please do contact one of us if you need our help on district council matters.

We meet every Thursday morning at 9.30 (except at the current time due to restrictions) at Benians in Four Marks and welcome you to come along to discuss any issues you may have. For the time being, please contact us via email.

We try to make use of Diana's knowledge and experience to deal with environmental issues, she also serves on the district Environment Panel and the Climate Change Panel. Diana has been very active in setting up the tree warden scheme with officers which aims to assist by checking any trees that look to need attention. If you would like to join this local group please contact Diana who will give you full details, it is not onerous and is very important to protect our local trees. During this lockdown period Diana has been organising a photography competition for children who are encouraged to take photographs of nature near their homes or in their gardens. To enter please send the photographs to Diana with details of who took the picture and where.

Jonathan has become very involved in many local community issues and has been working hard to establish the community food cupboard project. He is a member of the district overview and scrutiny committee who look at how decisions are made and look into all matter concerning governance of the district council. He also regularly updates a Facebook page with details of what is happening at the district council for example information about rubbish collections, council projects and decisions.

I have carried on working on the planning committee and keeping a close eye on all planning issues in the ward. This year has been largely taken up with helping to prepare the Local Plan review, this is a huge project that has been delayed several times owing to the complexity of the task. We held a public meeting to discuss the Large Sites that had been put forward by developers, half of which were in our ward.

The support of our residents at the meeting was amazing, the letters written and points raised were of huge importance. The number of comments raised significant issues which then needed to be investigated by the planning policy team. When developers responded to those issues once again the volume of the paperwork was huge. This has all meant that we are still waiting for a decision to be made as to which two large sites will go forward into the plan. The decision was due to be made at the end of April but at present I am not sure if the lock down will affect that timetable. It does seem that there are a huge number of delays that are beyond our control, but I am sure that getting the plan right so that it is passed by the planning inspector the first time is of prime importance.



As part of my portfolio duties as a member of the cabinet I have responsibilities for investigation of fly tipping. We have recently been able to employ another officer to help with this, they have been quite successful in prosecuting offenders. It is really important that if householders have rubbish to dispose of they check the license of any contractor who is taking it away so that they do not become responsible for a fly tip which could result in a serious fine. I have heard mutterings that fly tipping is inevitable when household waste sites are closed due to coronavirus, this obviously untrue, we each remain responsible for rubbish we create, we just need to store it carefully until the household waste centres reopen. The district council is continuing to collect normal waste as usual.

Another part of my portfolio is environmental health, this department has recently been working really hard. Many of the cases relate to bonfires, in normal circumstances bonfires are not as much of an issue as they are at present. However, we do have a number of residents who feel it is ok to burn things that release toxic smoke, it is never permitted to burn packaging, polystyrene, rubber or other manmade materials. The environmental health officers will take action against people who do burn such things and any noxious bonfires should be reported through the Easthants web site.

During the course of this year each district councillor has had £4500 to fund projects in the ward that benefits residents. The range of projects this money has enabled us to help is very varied below is a list of some of those projects (not all)

In Medstead money went towards the Christmas lights, the dragons' teeth to prevent access to the village green and the allotments.

In Chawton money went towards fencing and gates to help prevent fly tipping, improvements to footpaths, a gate to restrict height of vehicles accessing a car park and for play equipment.

In Four Marks a major project was undertaken to improve the area around swelling hill pond grant money was used for a display board panel and benches, the development of an early years area at the school and improvements to the recreation ground.

Further money was granted to a project which has been led by Dr Hugh Bethell to produce a directory of available health resources for our parishes. This will be delivered to every house and be available at surgeries, again delayed due to the coronavirus lockdown.

Thank you for all the helpful comments and information you have passed on to us during this year we look forward to continuing to serve you and to our community getting back to normal. We should all be very proud of the way in which we have helped each other and risen to the challenges that have arisen through this period of national turmoil.

As ever please do contact us if we can be of any assistance.  
Ingrid, Diana and Jonathan

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## COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

The most notifiable interventions for 2019/20 on behalf of Four Marks residents ( excluding virus issues ) have been to do with Highways.

The Four Marks/Medstead Highway Development Steering Committee has meet regularly in the Castle in Winchester with County Highways Officers.

We were expecting work to have already started on the new proposed Lymington Bottom/Lymington Bottom Road/A31 Winchester Road lighted pedestrian crossing but that has been delayed with a hoped-for start date now in the late summer.

The reversal of the give-way traffic flows under the Lymington Bottom Road railway bridge has been agreed by County with work on that to be completed in 20/21.

The 'Bellway' junction improvement plan at the Boyneswood Road/A31 Winchester Road junction has, unfortunately, been kicked into touch by a Highways safety audit. (Current thinking does not approve of cars waiting in a parallel position at a busy road junction because the vehicle turning right cannot properly see to the left if there is a left turning car waiting at the junction and vice versa).

Perhaps the biggest ambition, the proposal to build a footbridge parallel to the Boyneswood Road bridge, is still 'work in progress'. I have met informally with the new Chairman of the Mid Hants Railway and was impressed by his 'can do' attitude and his desire to help the Four Marks/Medstead community. Unfortunately, the first formal meeting at the Castle with senior Highways Officers to discuss the proposal has had to be postponed for obvious reasons, but I will try and set up a MS Teams/Zoom meeting asap.

We have found developer funding for a revamped footway along the Shrave which falls partially in the Chawton as well as the Four Marks parish. This has been a problematical but very necessary proposal following all the cul-de-sac developments there as the present footway is not suitable for wheelchair users or young families. I hope work will start on this in 20/21.

We were able, at last, to get most of the desired improvements done to the Brislands Lane/Lymington Bottom junction. Like a number of Highway improvements however, proper annual maintenance holds the key going forward.

The winter rains seem a long time ago now, but we did see improving outcomes from some of the drainage works done by Highways over recent years.

Thanks to a useful intervention from Councillor Timms, County's Countryside Access Team has improvement wheelchair access to the footpath adjacent to the Swelling Hill pond.



Residents and parents will have noticed some useful activities around the now enlarged Four Marks Primary School to try and ease the parking problems there. Drainage remains an issue and will be a major priority for the new municipal year.

On your behalf, I gave some stalwart evidence to the District Council planning department on the proposed revision of the Local Plan which is still being deliberated upon. I visited senior Highways Officers in Winchester to specifically make the point that the junctions onto the A31 are now at full capacity and that Four Marks (and Medstead) should not have any of the new 600 house developments foisted upon it. It will take time to build up the infrastructure for all the recent developments and time to assimilate the substantial increases in population into our community - to do otherwise would be extremely foolhardy.

I sent a pre-Easter bulletin to all 16 parishes in this County Council Division expanding on the scope County's support and emergency services. There is a good pathway for following up quickly on any vulnerable residents in danger of falling through the safety net and Hampshire's social care services are ready and waiting to help. My contact details are readily available, and I know the Four Marks Parish Council has been magnificent in supporting all the community.

I am pleased that many businesses have reported that the Government grants of either £25,000 or £10,000 depending on the level of business rates has been a godsend. Government quickly got the required funds to County who then liaised with the district councils and East Hants District Council cannot be praised highly enough for the efficiency with which these grants have been distributed.

As I write, we await details of a possible gradual relaxation of the current lockdown status; local government, parish, district and county, working together, stands ready to continue to serve Four Marks going forward.

**Mark Kemp Gee**  
**Councillor, Alton Rural Division, Hampshire County Council**

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