

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Spaces Committee
Held on Wednesday 3rd January 2024 commencing at 6.00pm at Benians Pavilion**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Speed (Acting Chairman), Medhurst, Black, Pullen and Coulson
IN ATTENDANCE: Jo Tsigarides Clerk
APOLOGIES: Cllr Gebbett

24.01 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Gebbett sent apologies (medical) which were duly accepted. Cllr Speed volunteered to act as Chairman for the meeting.

24.02 OS OPEN SESSION/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Cllr Coulson made reference to the Laurel bush opposite the Bowls Club and noted that whilst it had had a hard cut previously, that a resident had reported that it was growing again rapidly. They were advised to write to the Clerk.

Cllr Pullen (M) raised several points: graffiti still present at the skate park on the flat bank, grass cutting still an ongoing issue at the football pitch and a request that Councillor volunteer works are quantified for budgeting purposes in order to address any issues that Councillors may not be able to help with. The Clerk had purchased more paint for the skate park with the lengthsmen booked to complete the works on the 11th January 2024, Cllr Speed would investigate the removal of the grass cuttings and the Clerk will discuss the budgeting issue with the F&GP Committee.

24.03 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

24.04 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES

Cllr Pullen (M) reminded the Clerk to distinguish between the two Cllr Pullens in the Minutes. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Open Space Committee Meeting, previously circulated, held on Wednesday 6th December 2023 following a proposal by Cllr Coulson, seconded by Cllr Medhurst, and agreed by all Councillors as a true reflection of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

24.05 OS ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

24.05.1 To discuss badger orchard progress and organise next steps.

The initial clearance of the badger orchard had taken place, and a meeting was arranged with the BPA representatives for the 17th January 2024. After this meeting, a plan would be formulated for presentation to the Committee who would make recommendations to the Full Council.

24.06 OS ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

24.06.1 Dog fouling at Recreation Ground – update report from Cllr Pullen (M)

Cllr Pullen (M) had not been able to gather information from the dog walking community in terms of ideas, just agreement that there is an issue which is being caused by a small number of dog owners.

There was a discussion about a Recreation Ground Liaison Representative, with a suggestion that alongside being present at the Rec, they could help identify people who regularly do not clear up after their dogs with a view to reporting them to EHDC and enforcing the Public Spaces Protection Order.

There was further debate about dogs on leads and whether Councillors should abide by the rules in place. It was agreed to follow the general issue up at the next meeting when the Clerk would also provide the Committee with some signage options, specifically a sign which includes a warning about dangers to children of encountering dog faeces.

24.06.2 To discuss signage at skate park

Cllr Smith had approached the Clerk regarding signage at the skate park and suggested as per the RoSPA recommendations, that dogs should not be allowed at the skate park as it is classified as a children's play area. The Committee discussed the practicalities of enforcing this along with the potential reaction from the community and dog walkers. It was agreed that for the time being, the sign requesting that dogs should be kept on leads would be replaced as it had been torn down.

24.06.3 Tennis court resurfacing project and future facility management for recommendation to Full Council.

The Clerk advised the Committee that the tennis club intended to hold an EGM after the 24th January 2024 where they intended to dissolve. Various meetings had taken place with the Club, the LTA and EHDC where the resurfacing project was discussed. The Chairperson of the Council had agreed in principle that the Council could take on the project as it involves minimal financial contribution from the Council. It had been proposed that the club transfer the funds it had raised prior to the Committee dissolution to prevent the clause in the constitution that on winding up, funds should be paid to the LTA. The LTA were in agreement that the objective of resurfacing the courts was crucial and so agreed to allow the funds to be paid to the Parish Council.

The tennis club had also applied for a Supporting Communities match funded grant and there has been an indication that the grant administrator would be happy to transfer this to the Parish Council if it as to take on the project. The breakdown of the project would be as follows:

Tennis club funds	£10 000
Ear marked reserves held for tennis courts	£3000
Possible shortfall	£1000
Supporting communities match funding grant	£14 000
Total	£28 000

Depending on whether the Council decide to accept the recommendation of the tennis club in terms of the Contractor who was selected following due diligence, there may be a surplus for additional works such as upgrading the nets and the token system.

In terms of the future management of the club, the Committee would recommend to the Full Council that it continue with the Club Spark membership which is administered by the LTA. This would incur an annual fee of £75 per court but would give access to an online booking system. Cllr Coulson had had experience with the system and was satisfied that it would be appropriate and would involve minimal staff resource to manage.

Should the Council agree to the future management through the Club Spark system, the Clerk would ensure that the relevant policies were in place and the Committee would organise the fee structure in order to ensure that the recommended sinking fund of £1800 per court could be achieved.

In conclusion, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Full Council that it manages the funds and resurfacing of the tennis courts (in conjunction with the resurfacing of the MUGA's) and that the future management of the facility is through the Club Spark membership programme from the LTA.

24.06.4 Tennis court cleaning

On a recent visit, a representative from the LTA requested that the courts are cleaned as they considered them to be unplayable due to the moss build up. Quotations were sought, with the lowest cost being £600 for cleaning but in light of the short period of time before they are potentially resurfaced, the Committee decided not to proceed with this. The tennis club were made aware that they may not be cleaned and were supportive of not spending the funds on this.

The lengthsman would be asked to try and clear the moss on their visit on the 11th January 2024.

24.07 OS AREA UPDATES AND REPORT

24.07.1 To note area update/review of recent works.

Location	Action Required	Status	Notes
Allotments	Hedgerow improvement	Agenda Item	Completed.
Badger Close	Boundary Encroachment	In progress	Clerk to research further
	Pine Road Area	In progress	Cllr Gebbett
Cemetery	Replacement gate stops.	Pending	January 8 th 2024
	Replacement bench	Ordered	
	Works to oak tree	In progress	
Lymington Bottom Green	Wildflower area and sign	In progress	Signs delivered – to agree 2023 installation.
	Village sign remedial works	In progress	
	Works to Sycamore tree	In progress	
Oak Green parade	Flower bed maintenance	In progress	Further works approved.
	Phone box/book share	In progress	Alresford Mens shed constructing for donation.
Recreation Ground	Cricket equipment	Pending	Clerk to organise.
	Containers	Pending	Grass mats to be installed – 11/1/24
	Skate Park	In progress	Remainder of graffiti to be painted – 11/1/24
	Tennis courts	In progress	Nature camera to be installed. Handyman
			Resurfacing project – to follow up after FC on 24/1/24
			Clean – Lengthsman 11/1/24
	Hedgerow on access Rd		Agenda item Feb 2024
	Football pitch/club	Ongoing	Ongoing Liaison with Club regarding use.

	Footway along football pitch	In progress	Measurements and preference on finish have been sent to landscape architect. S106 app – awaiting construction quotes
	Water refill point		Service completed July 2023. – contract expires October 2024; notice must be given July 2024 if contract is to be terminated.
	Uplands Lane	In progress	Debris to be removed – clerk to contact contractor.
Climate change mitigation	Solar Panels at Benians Pavilion	Pending	Awaiting information from Benians Committee Chairman following site visit
	Nature boxes	Pending	Boxes produced – awaiting installation.
	Parish Trees	Completed	All trees in the report dealt with except for the tree at Cemetery – awaiting it to be in leaf to assess damage.
	Footpaths	Ongoing	Enquiries have been made re a kissing gate at FP17a
	Bus stop maintenance	In progress	
Swelling Hill Pond	Silt removal project	In progress	Commencing 8 th Jan 2024
	South of pond/car park area.	In progress	Adverse possession claims in progress
	Fencing replacement and small pond fencing.	In progress	Quotations being sought
Station Gardens	General		Newly planted pear tree doing well.
Kingswood Copse	Ongoing maintenance for nature and wildlife.	In progress	Resident complaint – have responded and awaiting meeting date.
		In progress	Letter to be sent to residents regarding activity in Copse and reminder regarding access.

The Clerk noted the report and highlighted the recent groundworks that had taken place on Uplands Lane and around the Recreation Ground. Cllr Pullen (M) complained about the debris that had been left and there was a discussion about the finish of the works at the entrance and at the Scout hut car park. The Clerk was asked to complain to the contractor and request that they return and tidy the site.

There had been three applicants for the contract gardener position and interviews had been scheduled for the 29th January 2024.

24.07.2 Update on Swelling Hill Pond desilting works schedule.

The pond works were schedule in for the 8th January 2024 and letters had been sent to all neighbouring residents and the school to advise of any potential disruption. The contractor had offered to meet with anyone that had concerns but to date, the Clerk had received no responses.

24.08 OS Meeting Closed at 6.59pm

24.09 OS Next meeting 7th February 2024