

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Spaces Committee
Held on Wednesday 7th February 2024 commencing at 6.00pm at Benians Pavilion**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Cllrs Speed (Acting Chairman), Medhurst (arrived at 6.30pm), Black, Pullen (M) and Coulson
IN ATTENDANCE:	Jo Tsigarides Clerk, Victoria Ursulean, Assistant Clerk.
APOLOGIES:	Two members of the public. Cllr Gebbett

24.10 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

24.11 OS OPEN SESSION/PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

MOP 1 thanked the Committee for arranging for the overgrowth on Uplands Lane to be trimmed.

MOP 2 made reference to a detailed report that they had sent to Committee members regarding Kingswood Copse. They had made some suggestions for the future management of the area, and it was agreed that a site meeting would take place so that they can explain their proposals in detail to the Committee. The Clerk will arrange this.

Cllr Coulson reported that there was graffiti on the bus stops throughout the village. The Clerk advised that there would be a clean in April 2024 but in the interim, Cllr Coulson offered to collect the graffiti wipes from the Parish office and try and clean what she could.

A resident had contacted the Parish office and requested permission to investigate tree throws at Swelling Hill Pond. It was agreed that providing that they did not cause any damage or dig into the tree throws, that they could inspect them and report on any findings to the Committee.

A local resident had requested permission to organise an easter egg hunt at the Recreation Ground over the Easter weekend and the Committee agreed to this providing that the relevant risk assessment and plan of the event was submitted beforehand.

Cllr M Pullen asked when the graffiti would be removed from the skate park and was informed that several handymen had been contacted, but there had been an issue with them attending. It was then queried as to why the lengthsman did not do this as planned, and the Councillor was informed that they had run out of time due to prioritising the cleaning of the tennis courts which posed a health and safety issue. Cllr M Pullen volunteered to complete the task if it is not done by the end of February 2024.

Cllr M Pullen expressed dissatisfaction at the clearance of the debris on the banks of the football pitch and was reminded that another Councillor had completed these works voluntarily. No suggestions were made to improve the situation.

The grass cuttings from the football pitch were also discussed, with Cllr M Pullen having heard rumours that the allotment association did not want further cuttings. Cllr Speed, as the allotment representative, stated that they did and that the individual that cuts the grass would continue to transport them there.

With no further items to add, the Open Session ended at 6.30pm.

24.12 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr M Pullen declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda item 7.3.

24.13 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES .

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Open Space Committee Meeting, previously circulated, held on Wednesday 3rd January 2024 following a proposal by Cllr Black, seconded by Cllr Medhurst, and agreed by all Councillors as a true reflection of the meeting and were duly signed by the Chairman.

24.14 OS ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

24.14.1 Badger Orchard

A meeting had taken place at the badger orchard on the 17th January 2024 with the representatives from the badger protection agency, Cllr M Pullen, and the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. A plan was suggested of planting, coppicing and hedge works. Following on from this, various companies had been contacted to provide a report on health of the existing trees along with a plan for planting and any works. Although funds have been set aside in the next financial year for works in this area, it is likely that this work will need to be completed during the Spring.

24.15 OS ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

24.15.1 Bench donation at Lymington Bottom Green.

The Four Marks Care group will celebrate its golden anniversary in 2025 and have asked for permission to install a bench at Lymington Bottom Green. The Committee had been asked to consider this and agreed that a hardwood bench in keeping with those already in situ would be most suitable. This bench would need to be placed with grass pins and the Council would be responsible for the future maintenance which was considered to be minimal. The Clerk will respond to the group and bring any bench suggestions before the Committee.

24.15.2 Dog fouling posters and prevention.

Following on from the January 2024 meeting, the Committee were provided with some poster options from Keep Britain Tidy and agreed to the purchase of one pack of five signs.

District Councillor Day had emailed the district dog warden in order to gain advice on how to combat the problem and had also suggested that residents should be incentivised to report on individuals that were allowing their dogs to foul. The Committee were not comfortable with this.

24.15.3 Scope of sweeping and litterpicking at Oak Green parade.

Cllr Speed had asked that the contractor responsible for sweeping at Oak Green parade extends their sweeping down to the bottle bank which was previously included. Cllr M Pullen noted that the parking demarcations had faded and requested that new ones are painted. The Clerk would source quotations and put this on the next Agenda along with information on sizing and the possibility of making the spaces bigger.

24.15.4 Resident complaint regarding Kingswood Copse.

There had been a detailed discussion in the Open Session of this item. The Clerk advised that they had put a note on the mapping networks to advise that although this was an area of public open space, that there were not maintained footpaths. Advice would be changed according to Committee direction, and this had been put on as a placeholder.

24.15.5 Request for additional bin at Oak Green parade.

The Clerk had received a complaint about the black bin by the bottle bank not being emptied but this was not included in the emptying schedule of the Parish Council. EHDC had been contacted to find out how often the bin was being emptied and also with a request to swap this for a double bin.

24.16 ITEMS FOR APPROVAL.

24.16.1 Funding for Multi Use games area resurfacing

The Clerk gave a report detailing the cost of the multi-use games area resurfacing and noted that there is a shortfall for either the basic project of £1131.31 or of £5411.31 for the optional perimeter edging and the basic project. The Committee decided to recommend that the Council approves expenditure of £5411.31 at its next meeting to facilitate the full project being completed. This would come from the Open Spaces playground maintenance fund.

24.16.2 To consider moving item 7.3 into a closed session

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

RESOLVED to move Agenda item 7.3 into a closed session.

24.17 OS AREA UPDATES AND REPORT

24.17.1 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
	Badger Orchard	In progress	Awaiting quotations.
	Pine Road Area		Cllr Gebbett
Cemetery	Replacement gate stops.	Pending	
	Replacement bench	In progress	Awaiting installation.
	Works to oak tree	Completed.	January 8 th 2024
Lymington Bottom Green	Wildflower area and sign	In progress	Signs delivered – to agree 2024 installation.
	Village sign remedial works	On Hold.	
	Works to Sycamore tree	Completed.	
	New bench – FM Care.	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 – Handyman.
	Skate Park	In progress	Remainder of graffiti to be painted – Handyman
			Nature camera to be installed. Handyman
	Tennis courts	In progress	Resurfacing project to begin March 2024. Meeting with LTA 9 th February 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	Completed.	Basic remedial works undertaken.
Climate change mitigation	Solar Panels at Benians Pavilion	Pending	Awaiting information from Benians Committee Chairman following site visit
	Nature boxes	Pending	Placed – awaiting EHDC promotional video.
	Parish Trees	Completed	
	Footpaths	Ongoing	
	Bus stop maintenance	In progress	Cllr Coulson cleaning graffiti.
Swelling Hill Pond	Silt removal project	In progress	Cllrs to sign off.
	South of pond/car park area.	In progress	Adverse possession claims in progress
	Fencing replacement and small pond fencing.	In progress	Quotations being sought
Kingswood Copse	Ongoing maintenance for nature and wildlife.	In progress	Resident complaint – have responded and awaiting meeting date. Site visit to be arranged.

Book house specifications have been taken following meeting on the 3rd Feb 2023 and will be made asap.

24.17.2 Update on Swelling Hill Pond.

The project at Swelling Hill Pond was due to be completed on the 9th February. Cllr Speed had made various site visits during the project and taken photographs of the progress. The Clerk expressed concern that each time they had been to the pond, no one had been on site or that the site manager had not been there. It was recommended that the Committee appoints someone to sign the project off in accordance with the original quotation and discusses a future plan for tree and pond maintenance. It was hoped that Cllr Gebbett may be able to do this.

24.17.3 Update on tennis court resurfacing project.

The tennis club had held an EGM on the 31st January 2024 where they resolved to dissolve the Committee. This is in progress and a payment of £11500 is due imminently to the Council in order to fulfil the project.

24.18 EVENTS

24.18.1 Great British Spring clean

The Assistant Clerk had begun organising the Great British Spring Clean and it was decided that the 16th March 2024 would be the most suitable date.

24.19 Next meeting 6th March 2024

24.20 Meeting closed to public at 7.10pm

24.21 To review contract gardener interviews and recommendations.

The interviews that had taken place for a new contract gardener were discussed at length and it was

RESOLVED subject to a confirmation of salary expectations to appoint the chosen candidate.

24.22

Meeting closed at 7.20pm.