



FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 24TH APRIL 2024

7.00PM, FOUR MARKS VILLAGE HALL, LYMINGTON BOTTOM, FOUR MARKS

**IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors: Briggs, M Pullen, R Pullen, Black, Speed, Smith
Cllr Apologies: Gebbett, Coulson, Medhurst, McAllister
District Councillors: Allsopp and Richardson
County Councillor: Kemp-Gee
Officers: Jo Tsigarides, Clerk, Victoria Ursulean, Assistant Clerk
Speakers and members of the public: forty-three.**

The Chairperson opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees, explaining that due to resident feedback, the current Police and Crime Commissioner, Donna Jones had been asked not to attend. Complainants had considered it to be unfair during the pre-election period. Donna Jones had offered to come to a future meeting should she be re-elected.

Stuart Mills – Energy Alton

A presentation was given on the operation of Energy Alton and how funding is received. Information was given about Energy Champions, influencing policy decisions and some data shared about Four Marks' carbon profile.

R 1 – Asked questions about solar farms and SM gave examples of successful community projects such as the Froxfield Community Solar Farm.

R 2 – Stated that they were prevented from putting too many solar panels on their roof due to grid constraints. SM replied that as an organisation, Energy Alton was too small to have a direct impact on Government policy and shared the frustration.

R 3 – Enquired about whether climate change is measured just by temperature or whether rainfall was also a consideration. SM stated that it was easier to record and measure the rise in temperature than rainfall and discussed the Munich Study.

R 4 – Asked whether it was possible to put solar panels on roofs in conservation areas. SM replied that it was possible depending on the angle they were facing.

R 5 – Expressed frustration and apathy at putting in effort regarding climate change when it is really a 'one world' problem and used the example of China. SM explained that China does have an extended Net Zero target and that there was a decarbonisation plan.

R6 – said that SM had mentioned solar farms but asked about wind turbines. SM explained that the legislation was currently in review. Political pressure had prompted some change.

Doctor Arthur Barlow, Fight 4 Four Marks

Dr Barlow delivered a presentation about planning in the local area and included details about the housing land supply figures and recent appeal decision.

R 7 – Raised issues that they had noticed on new developments regarding access for emergency vehicles and local amenities. They considered that the design of the newer estates was not satisfactory.

R 8 – Asked whether there would be any further opportunities to comment on the draft local plan. AB responded that he thought that there would be further consultation in July 2024.

Cllr Reg Pullen asked if there was anything further that could be done about the recent decision re Mount Royal and how could the community and Parish Council ensure that the various conditions were enforced.

Jane Thomson advised that there should be a liaison Committee which would include local/District Councillors and the site managers. This was something that she had had previous experience of and said that it was an effective way for local residents to keep on top of the build.

R9 – Asked about the sewer and when this would be upgraded.

AB said that the sewer was installed in 1987 and that there could be scope for another sewer in the future.

There was then a discussion amongst the audience about the sewer and footage that Cllr Black had captured of it overflowing.

R10 – Considered that Hampshire Highways were doing nothing about the road conditions and have been aware for some time about the flooding.

There was a discussion about whether there was a lack of resource or general apathy within Hampshire Highways.

The amount of work that was put in by the Parish Council, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and F4FM was emphasised.

R11 – made some observations about utility companies not being able to keep up with the build rate in light of the new land supply directive.

R12 – Asked for an explanation regarding the land supply principles and what they considered to be the failings of EHDC in the Mount Royal appeal.

AB explained.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were noted from Cllrs Gebbett, Coulson, McAllister and Medhurst.

2 Adoption of Minutes from previous Annual Parish Meeting.

On the proposal of Frank Maloney, which was seconded by Bryan Timms, the Minutes of the Annual Parish meeting held on the 23rd May 2023 were adopted.

3 Parish Council Chairperson's report.

Cllr Briggs reflected on the past year and the learning curve that the newly elected Councillors faced. There were tasks that surprised him and he thanked both his fellow Councillors and the Clerk for their efforts. The amount of day-to-day tasks and the wide ranging responsibilities of the Parish Council had surprised him along with the amount of time and process involved in completing some tasks.

Planning has been high on the Council priorities and had taken up a great deal of time. This had meant that other projects, whilst being important to the Council had to wait. An example of this was the Vision Planning Project, where members of the community had come together to think about short, medium and long terms goals for the village. This information was still in the process of being pulled together and would be presented when time allowed.

Cllr Briggs then highlighted some of the Council projects which had taken place over the year including the book share which would soon be launched at Oak green parade, the resurfacing of the tennis courts, the dredging works at Swelling Hill Pond and the Litterpick which had had a record turnout. The Council is looking forward to the Village picnic on the 23rd June 2024 and hopes to work with Four Marks School to host a fireworks display in November 2024.

4 District Councillor report.

Cllrs Allsopp gave an oral report (attached) and Cllr Richardson noted that Cllr Day is working to get a review into the Mount Royal application.

5 County Councillor report

Cllr Kemp-Gee gave a report (attached).

R12 – Made a comment about the number of potholes in the village.

R13 – Made observations about the amount of excess water on the roads, particularly at pinch points such as outside of the school.

Cllr Kemp-Gee noted that HCC do not have the time or resource to deal with some of the issues, and that the ditches causing a lot of the problems are the responsibility of the property owners.

Dr Barlow – Asked for further investigation into the role of Highways in the Gladman objection. Cllr Kemp-Gee stated that he would look into the matter.

6 Community Recognition Awards

Awards were given to the following people in recognition of their efforts.

Tina Ratcliffe

Anna Parratt

Frank Maloney

Nick Stenning

Dr Arthur Barlow

Jane Thomson

Trish Rhymer
Rod Rhymer
Speedwatch team

7 Community Building update

Claire Price, Smart Marketing.

An update was given on the groups and users survey that had taken place since December. Each question asked of the groups and users was discussed (slides attached).

R13 – Considering the number of houses that are being allocated in Four Marks, this project is really significant. CP agreed and stated that the building and its identity need to be defined.

Richard Wood – RW Sport

Delivered presentation, slides attached.

R13 – asked what co-operation there was between RW Sport and Smart Marketing. RW replied that he was in the early stages (Phase one) of his research currently and that there would be further cross over in the future, as required.

R14- Discussion on whether there was a link between the funding (from EHDC) and the objections from EHDC to the application.

RW replied that District Councils need to understand the need to understand that strategic need across the whole of the area and whether there is a deficit in the provision in place. A key document recently published on the Playing Pitch Strategy was referred to.

R15 – commented that most of the consultation was simply a wish list and that the apathy in responding reflects the communities desire for a new building.

The Sport England requirements along with the Fields in Trust conditions were also discussed.

R16 – enquired as to whether a developer provision for a new sports pitch could be used to offset the land needed for the building.

General Questions

R17 – A previous Parish Councillor appreciated Cllr Briggs' comment about how much is involved in Parish life and reflected on their lengthy service. They then stated that the upside to development in the area is that there will be a £200 000 CIL payment for the village.

R18 – Referring to the Minutes of the previous 2023 Annual Parish meeting asked what had happened regarding the transparency that was promised regarding the Fields in Trust Covenant.

Cllr Briggs responded that this would be included in a future update in the Four Marks News.

Meeting Closed at 9.40pm.

Report County Councillor Kemp-Gee

Potholes repaired by Hampshire Highways -

2018/19 41,000

2019/20 28,000

2020/21 57,000

2021/22 73,000

2022/23 120,000

Some temporary most permanent, we will return to the temporary repairs as soon as we can to make permanent. Or that's the intention!

We maintain 5500 miles of road and 1750 bridges and structures plus over 7000 acres of land for wildlife, heritage and amenity use not to mention some 3000 miles of footways and pathways

We wholesale manage the disposal of 600,000 tonnes of household waste and recycling.

We support 10,000 children in need of social care (of which 2300 are actually in care) and long term care for 18,000 adults, of which 2/3rds are older people and we partly do that that in are own nursing and dementia care homes as well as with our day care and meals on wheels services.

This is by no means a comprehensive list of the vital services and amenities that the county council provides every day.

Not surprisingly, out of our £1.6 billion non-educational budget some £700 million goes on adult social care and £400 million on childrens social care, a total of £1.1 billion.

That leaves £500 million for everything else, out of which Highways gets £200 million and that is clearly not enough.

Your council tax now provides £1.5 billion out of our £1.6 total spend thus demonstrating how little central government grants now provide to our local government expenditure, compared to say 14 years ago when it was some 30%.

This is at the very crux of local government finance as we provide these critical statutory services as a national requirement but get little or no support from central taxes to do so.

Inevitably there will have to be some significant changes in social care financing flows or more local authorities will be in financial difficulties, even so Hampshire has the second lowest council tax in England and Wales. But without a dedicated flow of central finance such as the NHS or the educational budget for these national requirements then the only alternate is something like a one off 18% hike in council tax with subsequent year increases above the rate of inflation.

Locally, its been a year of constant efforts to keep Four Marks roads safe and useable with much time spent on trying to push forward a number of highway and footways improvements and these are chronicled in my regular reports in the Four Marks News, a rattling good read if you want to keep abreast of events. One of our main focusses remains flooding, car parking and traffic calming around the School and we are seeking to spend the last Boyneswood Road development s106 monies on some improvements around the School before Christmas.

I have also been heavily engaged with Hampshire Highways Development Control, working with local pressure groups to bring common sense and practicality to any implications flowing from the District Councils Draft Local Plan. Never let it be forgotten that every day 450,000 people drive to work with only 4% going by train so we can all see what the challenge is and that is not to dwell on the tsunami of home deliveries and our position in the north east of Hampshire with everyone seeming to drive along our roads from elsewhere to get somewhere else!

Mark Kemp-Gee

Councillor, Alton Rural Division, Hampshire County Council

