

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Spaces Committee
Held on 6th November 2024 commencing at 7.30pm at Benians Pavilion**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Cllrs Gebbett, Coulson, Medhurst, Rymer, R Pullen and M Pullen
IN ATTENDANCE:	Victoria Ursulean Assistant Clerk
MEMBERS OF PUBLIC:	Eight
APOLOGIES:	None

24.94 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

24.95 OS OPEN SESSION – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Resident one spoke about the bus stops being badly lit and because of this, had experienced the bus passing without stopping. He said that this would also have an adverse effect on those who are more vulnerable. He suggested a feasibility study going forward. Cllr Medhurst brought up the dark skies policy and that the lights would need to be kept to a minimum. Cllr Coulson added that she had witnessed a bus bypassing a bus stop during the day.

Resident two introduced himself as a Senior Aviation Consultant and was looking for the PC to update their Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Policy. He stated that sub 250g air systems are very small, and it would be of very minimal risk to people's safety for them to be used at the recreation ground due to the weight and velocity being so low. The drones are equipped with cameras which are of a lower standard than that of a smart phone and are limited to line-of-sight capabilities. Cllr Medhurst said that his biggest concern was that of privacy and level of access. The resident said that the systems were not good enough to see into people's gardens. He suggested that the PC could allow enthusiasts to fly legally and give a limited time for use of the cricket pitch each week.

Resident three was from Kingsley Tennis Club who had sent a proposal to the PC to take over the management of the tennis courts. They welcomed any questions.

There had been correspondence from the Archery Club requesting the grass is not cut as often or as low due to their markers disappearing. The markers denote their shooting line and are at set distances. Councillors suggested that the grass would not be cut until March now, and that we could talk to SEMRAH in relation to the level of the cut and the frequency.

Cllr M Pullen asked if there was a policy concerning the pond and it's use. Cllr Gebbett suggested that this be added to the next Agenda.

With no further items raised, the Open Session ended at 7.44pm.

24.96 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

24.97 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES

On the proposal of Cllr Medhurst which was seconded by Cllr Coulson, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on the 2nd October 2024.

24.98 OS SWELLING HILL POND

24.98.1 To consider and approve the cost of wildflowers.

Cllr M Pullen suggested that it would be a good idea to enhance the area around the pond. It was unanimously agreed to spend up to £300 in plants subject to the Clerk confirming it is within the budget.

24.98.2 To consider and approve quotations for works at the pond. To include steps, revetments and path and furniture.

Cllr Gebbett mentioned that the jetty at the pond had been damaged and an urgent repair had been made. It was noted that the contractor had noticed a support was rotten and would need replacing in the future. Councillors questioned the cost of the repair and how much use it had. Cllr Coulson said that it was used a lot by local residents.

On looking at the quotations for works to complete the pond project, Cllr R Pullen noted that funds were not available for all of the tasks. Cllr Gebbett said that the revetments should be done as a priority and a separate price obtained for each task. It was suggested to mark off the steps with stakes and a sign. Cllr Coulson said that a handrail would be the best option or removing the steps completely.

It was agreed by all Councillors in principle, to move ahead with filling the revetments and steps, subject to cost.

24.99 OS RECREATION GROUND

24.99.1 To update and discuss the LED lighting project.

It was noted that the FA have a preference to portable lights rather than fixed lights. Cllr R Pullen asked if the current lights are adequate as it might be possible to get a grant from the FA. Cllr Gebbett suggested replacing the lights we have with LEDs, and to also look at funding available for portable lights. Cllr M Pullen questioned storage of the lights, Cllr R Pullen said that they could be placed in the football container.

A fact sheet from the FA regarding portable lights was requested to be distributed to Councillors.

24.99.2 To review accessibility to tennis courts and MUGA along with any associated costs.

Cllr Medhurst suggested deferring this item to February 2025 as the tennis courts are used less during the winter.

24.99.3 To consider removing lower limbs from trees surrounding football pitch (resident request).

Cllr Gebbett requested clarity on which trees were in question. Cllr Medhurst noted that the Oak Tree has a TPO. Once understood, a quote could be obtained.

It had been noticed that there was an overhang of Laurel in the skate park that Councillors would like a quote for.

24.99.4 To review quotations for repainting the skate park ramps.

Cllr Rymer questioned the amount of use the skate ramps get. Cllr Gebbett said that they are well used by local children and teenagers. Councillors requested asking the contractors how long the paint would last once completed. It was suggested to defer this item until January 2025 when the skate park will be used more, as it was thought the dark evenings would discourage use currently.

24.99.5 To receive update on planting around Oak tree at playing field.

Cllr M Pullen thought that Holly would be the better, more cost-efficient option and we would need up to five plants. Cllr Rymer agreed to consult with a local garden centre on pricing. All Councillors were in agreement to spend up to £100.

24.99.6 To receive and approve fencing quotes for Bowls Club.

Cllr R Pullen stated that the Bowls Club has approximately 20 members and is low in funds. It was agreed that the price of the fencing was too high considering the low numbers of people who will benefit from it. Cllr Gebbett suggested replacing just one length of fencing along Jubilee Green as this was deemed too low and makes access easier.

Councillors asked if the Bowls Club would be able to apply for a grant. Failing that, Cllr Gebbett asked Cllr R Pullen if CIL money could be made available for this project. Cllr R Pullen said he thought it would. It was agreed to arrange a meeting with the Bowls Club within the next two weeks to discuss their vision for the future.

24.99.7 Review of general security at recreation Ground.

Cllr Coulson had seen that there was a huge amount of interest in ladies running in the news at the moment. This stated that women feel more vulnerable when there is hedging to restrict view and make them feel hidden. Cllr Gebbett suggested canvassing ideas around the village. Cllr Medhurst was keen to make the recreation ground as impregnable as possible and would like to raise the bank surrounding the football ground. Cllr R Pullen said that this was already in hand with the Community Facilities Committee. Cllr Gebbett felt that the cost of raising the bank and installing new dragons teeth was marginable in comparison to a new building, however ideas could be modified around the new building. A hedge running the length of the bank would not need to be high but would be a further deterrent. Councillors asked for quotations to refurbish the existing bank and replace the dragon's teeth.

24.100 OS POLICY REVIEW

24.100.1 Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan

Cllr Coulson suggested that there were some items in the policy that could be removed or reworded as they couldn't be controlled, i.e. 3. Lobbying local authorities, 5. Promote, 12a. single use plastic.

Cllr Medhurst felt that the single use plastic statement could be addressed on our website. He questioned defining the mowing regime applicable areas, and also if we do plant two trees to replace one Ash tree that is removed due to ash dieback. He also raised point 11d Electric charge point. Cllr Coulson said this would happen with the Community building. Cllr R Pullen advised to remove the point as we don't currently have one.

24.100.2 Recreation Ground Rules of Use

Cllr Gebbett stated that the document was still current and to continue it's use for another year.

24.100.3 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Policy

Cllr Coulson said that it would be a good idea to allow residents use of the grounds at certain times. Cllr Gebbett recommended creating a club.

The meeting was closed at 8.51pm to allow resident two to clarify some questions Councillors had.

Cllrs raised concerns over privacy and policing but concluded that they would meet with residents who had offered to assist with bringing this policy up to date and review the policy fully at the next meeting.

The meeting reopened at 9.03pm.

24.100.4 Use of Public Open Spaces

Cllr M Pullen advised that other than the drone excerpt being updated, this policy was fine to continue with for another year.

24.101 OS FOR CONSIDERATION

24.101.1 To discuss installing lights at bus stops following resident request.

Councillors suggested talking to Stagecoach in the first instance to address the issue of buses not stopping. It was also recommended to contact HCC and enquire into funding available or ways in which they have helped other Parishes with the same problem. All Councillors were in agreement to provide better lighting in bus shelters within reasonable hours.

24.101.2 Request from Youth Team regarding use of former football pitch.

Cllr R Pullen said that Alton FC (youth) have around 40 teams and finding enough locations is hard. He mentioned that the pitch is dual purpose, and that the team would not need to use permanent goals. The FA offers a grant to provide portable goals. Cllr Medhurst questioned if having a football team on the pitch would ruin the field. He also noted that as the Archery Club uses it on a Sunday and there is football on the other pitch on Saturdays, dog walkers would have limited availability to walk their dogs off leads.

Cllr R Pullen said that the users would be 14 and under and the field would not have the same amount of use as an adult team. Cllr Gebbett stated that there was a lot of pressure on land, we are trying to encourage people to use the pitch for walking dogs off leads. Cllr Coulson said that Alton and Diggers are at capacity with football teams using their land, but that Diggers was just mud by the end of the season, and asked if it would be possible to Verti drain the cricket pitch. Cllr R Pullen stated that the FA is coming to assess the recreation ground, and they can possibly provide funding for Verti draining and an agenda to keep the ground in good condition. He stated the use would only be once a week and can be specified by the Council.

Cllr Gebbett proposed that an agreement is made after the FA meeting.

At 9.30pm it was agreed to extend the meeting.

24.101.3 Tennis Club proposal

It was questioned whether Kingsley Tennis Club would want use of the facility all of the time and whether this would impact local residents.

The meeting was closed at 9.34pm.

The proposal from KTC is for managing the courts. They would like to form an active club with coaching within the community and increase utilisation of the courts, pay and play would still be an option for local residents. KTC felt that the availability of coaching would increase member numbers who would then go on to form teams. Cllr Gebbett was hesitant to hand over the responsibility of the courts to a club who are not local to Four Marks

Cllr Coulson asked about membership fees. KTC commented that they would like tennis to be available to all, and had thought about introducing 'sports vouchers' which would act in the same way as food vouchers. Their vision is to work alongside the PC and to eventually turn them into indoor courts.

The meeting was reopened at 9.41pm.

Cllrs M Pullen and Rymer were happy to meet with the tennis club to discuss the details in more depth. Cllrs Medhurst and R Pullen did not want to restrict usage of the courts for local residents and did not support the proposal. Cllrs Gebbett and Coulson abstained from the vote. However, as Chairman of the committee, Cllr Gebbett had the deciding vote and did not want to move forwards with the proposal.

24.102 OS AREA UPDATE

24.102.1 To receive report.

Verti draining was successfully carried out. The FA will conduct a Pitch Power Assessment on the 15th November to determine the current level of the pitches and from that any funding streams available will be advised on.

Fish are being delivered to the pond on 14th Nov 9.30/10, Crucians and Tench.

Location	Action Required	Status	Notes
Badger Close	Boundary Encroachment Badger Orchard Badger Run upkeep	In progress In progress In progress	Clerk to research further. Water bags removed – to agree bramble treatment. Fence completed. Hedge cut 25/09/2024.
Cemetery	Cemetery inspection		Completed.
Lymington Bottom Green	New bench – FM Care.	Complete	Installed 04/10/2024
Oak Green parade	Flower bed maintenance	Ongoing	Awaiting signage.

	Repainting of car parking spaces.	To do.	To review spacing and repainting – future meeting.
Recreation Ground	Containers	In progress	Site meeting to be arranged.
	Skate Park	Pending	Area to be repainted.
	Tennis courts	Completed	
	Football pitch/club	Ongoing	Ongoing Liaison with Club regarding use.
	Footway along football pitch	Pending	Awaiting quotes.
	Water refill point	In progress	Awaiting future costs following request to reduce or replace.
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	Interim inspection 12 th July 2024.
	Bus stop maintenance	In progress	New panels for Gospel Hall installed w/c 23/9/2024. Clean booked 10/24.
Swelling Hill Pond	Silt removal project	Completed.	
	South of pond/car park area.	In progress	Adverse possession claims in progress
	Fencing replacement and small pond fencing.	Completed	
	Car park remedial works.	In progress	Completed
Kingswood Copse	Ongoing maintenance for nature and wildlife.	In progress	Plan decided at meeting – Clerk to follow up.

24.102.2 Update on Kingswood Copse – Cllr M Pullen

Cllr M Pullen said that he had met with a resident who had expressed concern over a Laurel hedge that was overgrown. Although the Councillors recognised the issue from the photographs provided, they considered that there are areas used by more residents where funds could be better used.

Earlier in the year The Council decided to restrict access to the Copse from the A31 because of health and safety concerns. In conjunction with volunteer residents, this work is ongoing. A hedge pack from the Wildlife Trust is expected to arrive soon which will provide new coverage along the fence.

24.103 OS EVENTS

24.103.1 To receive update on fireworks display.

Cllr Coulson said that the event was sold out, and that the road will be closed at 4.30pm on the night. Everything was in hand by the PTA.

24.103.2 Christmas Carol event planning.

It was decided to do the Carol event on the 14th December 2024, and to provide mulled wine and mince pies again. A further meeting with Cllrs Coulson and Gebbett would be held with the Assistant Clerk to discuss additional details.

24.104 Meeting closed 10.03pm.

24.105 Next meeting: 4th December 2024