

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Spaces Committee Held on 6th August 2025 at Benians Pavilion, at 7.10pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Cllrs Gebbett, Medhurst and M Pullen
IN ATTENDANCE:	Victoria Ursulean Assistant Clerk
	Three members of the public
APOLOGIES:	Two

25.56 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs Davies and Coulson sent their apologies.

25.57 OS OPEN SESSION – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Resident One requested clarification on the installation of fencing around the Oak tree on the football pitch. He mentioned that it is currently used as a lavatory. In a committee meeting held last August, the committee had suggested using a sharp leaved shrub to place around the tree, and previously to this, high nets to stop the footballs going into gardens were also investigated. However, both of these options presented the issue of damaging the root systems of the trees. A discussion was had regarding a suspended fence which could be placed around the tree and would not affect the roots.

Resident One also noted that the floodlights are frequently on when they shouldn't be. Cllrs said this would be looked into.

Resident Two asked for details when the goal posts for the training pitch would be moved. The Assistant Clerk stated that the pitches would be marked out by the end of August and then the goals could be moved. Cllrs asked for information from the FA to be on the next agenda.

The open session ended at 7.29pm.

25.58 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25.59 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES

On the proposal of Cllr M Pullen which was seconded by Cllr Gebbett, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Open Spaces Committee meeting held on the **2nd July 2025** (with one amendment which was made by hand to 25.46).

25.60 OS POLICY REVIEW

25.60.1 To review The Use of Public Open Space policy

Cllrs had reviewed the policy and were happy to present it to Full Council for readoption with the inclusion of some subheadings.

25.60.1.1 To consider including food trucks and benches within The Use of Public Open Space policy.

The committee agreed to have a food truck attend the recreation ground every other week on a three-month trial basis. Cllrs established that once the trial period is complete, it has not had a negative impact on the surrounding community and has been successful, a policy should be drawn up to be adopted by Full Council. A discussion was had regarding how often and when a food truck would be permitted to use the recreation ground. It was suggested to create a subheading in the Public Open Space policy to make reference to it, but that it should have it's own policy.

Cllrs were also in agreement that there should be a further subheading for benches within the Parish, that a draft policy should be drawn up and discussed over email.

25.60.2 To review the Recreation Ground Rules of Use policy

Cllrs requested some small changes to the policy which the Assistant Clerk agreed to amend.

25.60.3 To review the Climate & Nature Emergency policy

This item was deferred to the next committee meeting so that all members of the committee could have an input.

25.60.4 To review Unmanned Aerial vehicles policy

Cllrs would like to add this as a subheading within the Open Space policy. Otherwise, Cllrs agreed that this policy could be amended if a 'club' is formed and holds adequate insurance.

Cllrs agreed to ask Full Council for readoption of this policy as it stands.

25.61 OS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

25.61.1 To discuss introduction of a Swelling Hill Pond policy

In the committee meeting of November 2024, it was suggested by a Cllr to introduce a policy related to Swelling Hill Pond. Cllrs agreed to create a draft policy with the involvement of the Angling club.

Cllr Gebbett agreed to aid the Assistant Clerk in creating a draft policy.

25.61.2 To discuss depth to flail hedges on the perimeter of the recreation ground

The Open Spaces contractor had suggested flailing the hedges surrounding the recreation ground and had asked to what depth we would like this to be done. Cllrs discussed the overall visual effect of the hedges after flailing and decided that they would rather not have this carried out. However, they recognised that they do need to be cut back and would like this to be done by hand.

25.61.3 To discuss cutting back of vegetation at Badger Orchard

A contractor had suggested that it would be best to cut back heavy weed and bramble growth at the badger orchard as this will impede the growth of the fruit trees.

Cllrs suggested asking the Lengthsman to carry out this task in their August visit.

Cllr M Pullen requested that the badger orchard be a permanent item on the agenda, with a report every quarter.

25.61.4 To discuss installation of hard standing around dog waste bins – resident request

A resident who had carried out some voluntary cleaning of the dog bins in the recreation ground, had suggested installing paving slabs at the base of the bins to inhibit weed growth, making it easier to use the bins. An email had been shared with the committee within the supporting documents.

A lengthy discussion was had regarding the necessity of carrying out this work. In the end, Cllrs decided that this could be readdressed in the winter.

25.62 OS ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

25.62.1 To approve quotations for works required following the ROSPA report.

Three quotations had been submitted to the committee for maintenance works to the playground equipment following the annual safety report.

On the proposal of Cllr M Pullen which was seconded by Cllr Medhurst, and with all Cllrs in agreement it was **RESOLVED** to approve contractor One to carry out the maintenance work to the play area with the amendment of fixing the basketball nets and not removing them.

25.62.2 To approve noticeboard

The Men's Shed had been approached to create a new noticeboard for the cricket field which would display a timetable of activities held at the recreation ground and would also have space for residents to post any notices.

The Men's Shed had sent a photograph of a noticeboard previously made and a quotation for £300 which would cover materials. The Council would need to install two 4x4 posts prior to erecting the noticeboard. Cllrs asked for confirmation that Perspex and not glass would be used and felt that more than one noticeboard was required.

On the proposal of Cllr Gebbett which was seconded by Cllr Medhurst and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to ask The Men's Shed to make two noticeboards at a cost of approximately £600.

25.62.3 To approve quotations for works required following tree report

Three quotations had been sought for the tree works listed in the tree safety report. Councillors discussed the quotations received and agreed that Contractor One should just carry out works to priority one trees, they would relook at the quotations for priority two trees in October. Cllrs requested works to TO433 to be included with priority one trees as this was seen as a danger to the resident who resides next to it.

On the proposal of Cllr Medhurst which was seconded by Cllr M Pullen, and with all Councillors in agreement, it was **RESOLVED** to appoint Contractor One to carry out the priority one tree works plus work to TO433.

25.62.4 To approve installation of an earth bund between the Pavilion and tennis courts

At the meeting of the Full Council, it was decided to install an earth bund between the Pavilion and tennis courts. The Assistant Clerk was awaiting a quotation to carry this out.

25.63 OS AREA UPDATE AND REPORTS

25.63.1 To note area update.

The Assistant Clerk said that the bench installation on the cricket field had been postponed due to hard ground, however the bench in the cemetery had been installed on the 5th August.

The gate technology for the tennis courts had been installed which would mean that a new code would be generated for each booking made, and floodlights would be triggered at the appropriate time. The engineer suggested that the old gate be sold, and the Assistant Clerk requested permission to do this.

A resident had been in touch to say that he assumed Japanese knotweed was present in the Oakgreen car park. This was assessed to be Green Ash and Black Bindweed and a weed treatment was used.

An email was sent to a District Councillor regarding a grant for the vandalised Tulip tree on Jubilee Green. He had asked for further details.

25.63.2 To receive an update from the Playground working party.

The working party had not met since the last committee meeting, but another meeting had taken place with a playground designer and details regarding the size of the new play area had been sent to each designer to start the process. It was mentioned that a requirement for funding was to have a plan for the playground by September.

25.64 OS EVENTS

25.64.1 Fireworks

Four Marks school's PTA had said that tickets will go on sale in September.

25.65 Meeting closed at 8.57pm

25.66 NEXT MEETING 3rd September 2024