

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Space Committee Held on Wednesday 2nd December 2015, commencing at 8.45pm At the Benian's Pavilion, Four Marks

Members Present: Cllr Anne Tomlinson (Chair), Cllr Mick Budd, Cllr Janet Foster, Cllr Kellie Knight, and Cllr D Seaton
Attending: S Goudie (Clerk), 3 members of the public
Apologies: Cllr Dave Mills

OPEN SESSION:

Mr Martin Carruthers, who had submitted proposals for new locations of the Skate Park spoke over his concerns with reference to the former skate park and its replacement, all of which confirming the Parish Council's decision that the skate park was not fit for purpose, and that replacement equipment should not be wood. For information, the former equipment was new in 2007, repaired in 2011, and has subsequently been patched up, which suggests that wooden surfaces were not the appropriate option.

Mr John Cook, a local resident but currently development manager with Hampshire Cricket, spoke to the members offering assistance in advising the Parish Council on how to encourage the resurgence of cricket in Four Marks. Following some research, it appears that Alton Cricket Club have over 40 members (colts and adults) that live in Four Marks. He suggested that the Parish Council liaise with Hampshire Cricket and suggested making contact with Richard Meyers at Alton. Other points to note were that Ropley Cricket Club had a successful women's team, and that there were different areas that could be looked at.

It was agreed that this should be an Agenda item at the next Open Space meeting and that the old cricket club should be asked not to sell off their equipment for the time being, as there may be a possibility that the Parish Council may wish to purchase it.

Ms Frauke Golding was in attendance at the request of Cllr Seaton on behalf of the Tennis Club. She gave the members some background on the history of the tennis club. She had concerns over replacing the fencing with chain link as it was likely to be vandalised and also did not want to open the third court to the public as this opens them up to all sorts of public liability issues. Cllr Tomlinson agreed to meet with Ms Golding, at the Tennis Courts in daylight, to look at all the options prior to any decision on which fencing to apply for a grant for.

The meeting commenced at 9.00pm. Standing Orders were applied.

15.35 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Dave Mills.

15.36 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

15.37 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES

- The Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 7th October 2015, were proposed as a true record by Cllr Tomlinson, seconded by Cllr Knight, agreed and signed.

- **Matters Arising:**

- Benian's Pavilion. The Clerk has now received confirmation from EHDC that there has been no breach of licence and James Coles has confirmed that all the required licences are now in place. It was suggested that if clubs are using the facility, and do not want to admit non-members, a notice is placed on the door stating that the facility is closed due to a private function. This is a matter that should be discussed and resolved between Clubs.
- No further information on the footpath alongside football pitch, however a rubber mulch surface, as opposed to tarmac, has been recommended and the Clerk has agreed to get quotes.
- The New goal posts have arrived and will be installed to the left of the cricket table as agreed at Full Council, they will be removed during the Summer (or cricket season if applicable).
- Outdoor multi gym is now installed, the hedge has been removed and it is now open for use. A new basketball net and back board has been erected, the post has been painted, the tarmac area cleaned and back practice wall painted. The chain link fence needs replacing and this will be done in conjunction with the tennis courts when approved.
- Toddler Multiplay unit has now been refurbished, and one gateway has been reinforced with a geo grid system to prevent mud and puddles (second one was missed in error, should be done soon), and other equipment repaired where specified in the ROSPA report.
- All remedial tree works have been carried out at the Cemetery and Recreation Ground, and the Skate Park area is completely cleared.
- Developers Contributions and Grant applications have been submitted for the new aerial runway and goal posts, and a teen assault course.
- Village signs, no further action on this, the gated village signs have been put on hold by the Festival Committee.
- No further action has taken place on the Charles Church boundary hedge proposal due to the undertaking that they will be making good any damage by replanting the hedgerow and erecting a protective boundary fence. As agreed at Full Council, confirmation letters will be sent to ensure that these actions are carried out as promised.
- Windmill Fields has been flagged up by the police as a regular area to check. No response yet from EHDC on the increase in lifts to empty the bin.

15.38PC OPEN SPACE – NEW ISSUES

- **Badger Close;** a request from a resident had been received to reduce the canopy of the Ash Tree in the South Badger run, due to loss of light in their garden as the tree has grown. The Clerk reported that the tree had had a full inspection and was found to be healthy, therefore no remedial work is required. Whilst no-one has a right to light, the request does need to be considered as a matter of courtesy to the resident. However to reduce the canopy as sympathetically as possible and, as the tree overhangs three gardens and access is difficult, the cost to do this work would be in the region of £1,000 (£850 +VAT). The Parish Council do hold a fund for maintenance but as this is not maintenance, the Clerk was of the opinion that it would be difficult to justify spending this amount for cosmetic work. The Clerk did suggest that if the Parish Council were in agreement to the works being done that the resident should be asked for a contribution towards it, however the Committee were all of the opinion that the tree should remain as it is and did not feel that a healthy tree, which is of communal benefit, should be reduced, particularly as the tree was there years before the houses. Therefore it was

RESOLVED not to reduce the canopy at this time and the Clerk should notify the resident accordingly.

- **Barry Seward Memorial Red Oak Tree;** unfortunately the tree has failed and sadly needs replacing. The Clerk suggested that to replace the tree would only cost around £30 for a really good replacement specimen, and referred to a letter from Pat Seward asking that should the tree die it should be replaced. The Clerk proposed, that as the current location was very exposed, that the new tree should be located to a more suitable location. The Clerk had sought advice and showed the members a proposed location on the edge of the Open Space area, shielded by the Allotments/Tennis Courts hedge, but far enough away not to cause shade or problems with leaf drop, there would also be enough room to leave for the circular seat that money is ring fenced for. It was noted that some of Barry Seward's ashes are buried under the tree and Reverend Howard Wright has suggested that as long as when the new tree is planted that some of the earth from the original tree is removed and planted with the new tree this would suffice. Committee members did query the species as it is not native to the UK and that maybe a normal Oak would be more appropriate. The Clerk agreed to investigate options and report back to the Committee in January.

15.39 OS OPEN SPACE – AREA UPDATES:

- **Badger Close.** The Ash tree was found to be healthy with no sign of disease, however one of the residents who has the tree overhanging their garden has asked for the Parish Council to consider crown lifting and reducing the canopy of the tree. See Agenda item above.
- **Footpaths.** It was agreed not to carry out the installation of the kissing gate for Kitwood Lane until the ground is less muddy. The Alton Ramblers have agreed to fund the installation of a kissing gate at the Telegraph Lane end of Footpath 4.
- **Lymington Bottom Green.** Legal teams have now been instructed to carry out the Transfer of the Freehold of the land. Once this has taken place, the process to register the area as a Village Green will be straight forward. Some additional planting has been budgeted for and the Clerk will be speaking to our Open Space Contractor to discuss.
- **Storey's Sanctuary.** Proof that the Parish Council has been maintaining the area as Informal Open Space since 2009 has been requested and is being compiled to send to EHDC to enable Enforcement to take action over the removal of a newly erected fence.
- **Kingswood Copse.** Winter maintenance is yet to be carried out.
- **Land at Telegraph Lane/A31 junction.** No further progress has been made on this, Clerk to chase Highways again.

15.40 OS OPEN SPACE – ONGOING PROJECTS

- **SKATE PARK**

The presentation sent by Mr Carruthers on proposals for the skate park were discussed in detail, and comments are as follows:

Alternative Site, Proposal 1. Open Space area adjacent to the Allotments. Whilst this is a good size, with good visibility, it is too close to residential dwellings and there is concern over potential noise levels. It was agreed that this area would not be viable.

Alternative Site, Proposal 2. Area adjacent to the Scout hut. This area is the football practice area, which is used and floodlit, if the practice area is to be moved then this would entail the provision of additional floodlighting elsewhere. The proposed new scout hut would also encroach onto this area. New dwellings, again, may be too close for the allowed decibel level. Again, this area has too many issues to overcome. The area the other end of the Football Pitch, next to the Cemetery, was considered, however it was agreed that this would be disrespectful.

Alternative Site, Proposal 3. The cricket pitch. Following the recent winding up of the existing cricket club, the Parish Council are keen to see cricket back at the Recreation Ground. See

earlier comments re plans to work with Hampshire Cricket. Other areas within this area were looked at previously but it was agreed that any location would encroach onto the pitch area. It was agreed again that this would not be suitable.

Alternative Site, Proposal 4. This is not, sadly, Council owned land, and despite numerous proposals put to the land owner including purchase and change of use, no progress has been made, therefore this area cannot even be considered.

Alternative Site, Proposal 5. Kingswood Copse. This is council owned land however it is a protected wildlife area with a woodland management plan in place. It only has a pedestrian access so no construction access would be available, and it is completely isolated and would defeat the object of opening the area up and encourage more not less unsociable behaviour, this area is discounted for all the above reasons.

All areas proposed would need additional groundworks as a skate park area needs to be tarmacked. A good quality (metal or concrete) skate park with two or three different items to use would be in excess of £50,000, nearer £100,000. The members had all done separate research with various areas of the youth community and the response was apathy, and it was agreed that the Parish Council could not justify spending this amount of money on such a small element of the village. However, now the existing skate park area has been cleared it has opened it up, and is much more visible, and as such is the most suitable location. It was decided that all teenagers should have something for them and it was agreed that efforts should be made to make this area an exciting place to 'hang out'. So it was proposed to ask the company that have recently installed the outdoor gym equipment to draft a plan of several items and cost them accordingly. Suggestions to put to them were; at least one skateboard/scooter/bike piece of equipment (not wood), teenage assault course, teen shelter, outdoor table tennis table, communal basket swing and the relocation of the wooden goal post/basketball net equipment from the Recreation Ground. Once the proposal is received it would be re-presented at the Open Space Committee for discussion.

- **OAK GREEN**

A tender is currently under preparation based on the original document, but it was agreed that for finance purposes each area would be presented in different phases. The flower beds and seating, replacement bollards, and car park resurfacing.

There were so many different designs and materials for the seating and flower beds, it was decided a sub-committee should be set up to go through various brochures and select a shortlist. Cllrs Foster, Tomlinson and Knight all volunteered to sit on this sub-committee and they agreed to meet up at their earliest convenience.

It was hoped that the tender and style shortlist would be available for discussion at the next meeting.

- **RECREATION GROUND**

- Tennis Courts; it was agreed that no decision would be made on the tennis court refurbishment until a meeting had been held with the Tennis Club, Cllr Tomlinson and Cllr Seaton. Once this had taken place and agreement on what could be amicably proposed, the final tenders would be presented and agreed at Open Space.
- Wooden Goal mouth; further to a proposal to reposition the equipment rather than relocate, it was agreed that the goal should be moved to the former skate park area as previously agreed.

15.41 OS DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 6th January 2016, 8.30pm, at the Benian's Pavilion, unless advised otherwise, to follow Planning.

15.42 OS The Chairman closed the Meeting at 10.10pm