

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Wednesday 23rd March 2016, commencing at 7.30pm
At the Unit 32, Lymington Barns, Medstead**

Members Present: Cllr Janet Foster (Chair), Cllrs Kellie Knight, Simon Thomas and Anne Tomlinson
Attending: S Goudie (Clerk)
Apologies: None

16.08 FGP OPEN SESSION

- Hugo Fox website workshop. The Clerk reported back on the workshop attended the previous day, commenting that it was very worthwhile. The website was easy to build and use, and that she would have no hesitation in recommending the Parish Council take this forward. Hugo Fox would assist with the changeover and proof read and check the finished article before going live. Members felt that this was the best option and would support the Clerk's formal motion to take this forward at the Full Council Meeting on 20th April 2016. The Clerk agreed to work with Hugo Fox in the interim to prepare the website prior to formal approval.
- Bus stop advertising. Following an email with reference to bus stop advertising it was agreed that the Four Marks Bus Stops were not suitable and no further action would be taken.
- The Clerk raised a proposal to move forward the time of the Planning Meeting, due to the late finishing time of the Open Space Committee, however it was agreed to leave the meeting times as they are.
- The Clerk, following agreement at Full Council to stay with the Landscape Group at the agreed price of £6 per lift, a quote had been received for an alternative company, which would save up to £50 per quarter, and the Clerk questioned should the decision be reversed? There was concern over the new company and their credentials, but agreed that the Clerk should ask the Landscape Group to reduce their revised price by 50p a lift to secure the contract. Whilst the agreement had been reached it was agreed that the Parish Council has the responsibility to the Community to employ the most cost effective proposition.
- Tourism opportunities. An initiative being promoted by Damian Hinds to promote tourism in Hampshire was discussed and it was agreed to put together a tourism style document highlighting Four Marks and its historical connections and activities, which should include the Watercress Line, telegraph triangulation point, Triple fff Brewery, the Golf Club, tennis, youth facilities, Swelling Hill Pond. Village walks, including St Swithins Way and the Wrighters Way and the Chawton Park Woods cycle route, Garden centre and coffee shops, several additional eating establishments.
- The Clerk raised a query by Chris Lake with reference to the value of land that the Scout Hut sits on, wish to use the Parish Council's lease of the land as their contribution to the new building, however it should be stressed that rent will be charged, but would also be able to support with small grants if requested.

The Open Session concluded at 8.00pm, Standing Orders were applied.

16.09 FGP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

16.10 FGP MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 13th January 2016 were proposed as accurate by Cllr Tomlinson, seconded by Cllr Foster, and were duly signed by the Chairman.
- Matters arising:
 - Land Transfers. The Allotments transfer and registration with Land Registry was now complete. Antler Homes, with reference to the Badger Run transfer, the Clerk confirmed that contact had now been re-established and the transfer moving ahead. However nothing further has been heard on Lymington Bottom Green.
 - Storage of documents. Following the Clerk investigating other parishes, they all seem to have their deeds and documents in archive at Hampshire County Council and it was agreed that this would be a sensible way to go, and the archiving process should begin.

16.11 FGP FINANCIAL DOCUMENTATION UPDATE

- **Fixed Assets.** The Clerk showed the Committee the current progress on the excel database with the various amendments, there was still a few additions to make but confirmed it should be complete by the Internal Audit.
- **Procedural Document.** The Clerk circulated the draft document for perusal and comments, to be submitted ready to present to the Internal Auditor.
- **Financial Regulations.** The Clerk highlighted proposed amendments to 1.15, confirmation that 2.2 needs to be actioned, and it was agreed a Councillor would be appointed at the AGM in May. Changes to 5.6 and 5.7 would be made by the Clerk to suit this Parish Council's best practices and 11.1(h) amended to reflect correct standing order Number 18. The Clerk would circulate the proposed amendments to 5.6/5.7 to the Committee, and once agreed the Financial Regulations would be circulated for approval at the next Full Council meeting.
- **Cemetery Regulations.** The Clerk was concerned that certain Burial Ground rules were being breached as they were not clear in the regulations and felt that some of the rules needed to be expanded and made clearer. The Clerk referred to EHDC's Rights of Burial leaflet and was of the opinion that we should produce a similar document for Undertakers to give to relatives when booking the funeral, so they are aware of the rules and regulations from the start.
There is currently a delicate situation that the Clerk is going to liaise with Rev Howard Wright to attempt to resolve.

16.12 FGP RECRUITMENT OF ASSISTANT

It was agreed that an Assistant should be recruited for a temporary period (three months) with the option to extend if required. An advertisement would be prepared containing requirements, would be placed on notice boards and in the Four Marks News initially. It was agreed that the suggested salary would be £7.50 an hour in accordance the SLCC recommended pay scale, 5 hours per week, 20 per month. Ideally one day per week but could be flexible if required. A letter containing terms and conditions would be prepared, rather than a full contract.

16.13 FGP BENIAN'S PAVILION

Following the previous Full Council meeting, a subsequent meeting with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Recreation Committee was had with Cllrs Foster and Tomlinson. Both sides raised various points and discussed in a productive manner and there was a keenness to continue an amicable relationship.

The Clerk confirmed that as per the agreement between the Committee and the Parish Council they do need to submit their signed accounts, which should be presented at their AGM, to the Parish Council, and to comply these accounts needed to be signed by someone with no connection to the Recreation Committee. Cllr Foster offered to confirm the authority and name of the signatory.

The issue was raised regarding the use of the cricket mower and roller, which would be discussed at the Open Space Committee meeting next month.

Cllr Foster had been given draft proposed plans which were being prepared for presentation at their AGM on 28th April 2016.

16.14 FGP NALC CONSULTATION OF GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

- Future of External Audit for Smaller Authorities. It was agreed that there was no reason to opt out and agreed to the newly formed organisation the 'Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd' (SAAA) to take over the role of the now defunct Audit Commission and appoint External Auditors on the Parish Council's behalf, having more experience and guidance on this than the Parish Council.
- The Clerk confirmed the 2015/2016 audit paperwork had now been received in readiness for this year's audit.
- Update to Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements (March 2016). The consultation has already ended however the Clerk confirmed that it was much condensed and was briefer, easier to read, and would not have had any further comment to make.

16.15 FGP NEXT MEETING

The Clerk proposed a schedule of 4 meetings for the coming year as follows; Wednesday 27th July, to discuss any actions as a result of the Internal/External Audit, Wednesday 26th October, which would be the budget meeting, Wednesday 11th January 2017 and Wednesday 29th March 2017, to cover any changes to standard documentation. All dates would be subject to change if required and will be held at the Parish Office. The next meeting therefore would be Wednesday 27th July 2016) 7.30pm at the Parish Office.

16.16 FGP The Chairman closed the meeting at 20.52 pm.

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Chairman