

Four Marks Parish Council

Minutes of the Open Space Committee Wednesday 4th January 2017 commencing at 8.30pm At Four Marks Village Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllr Anne Tomlinson (Chairman), Cllrs John Davis, Dave Mills and Janet Foster
IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Sarah Goudie (Clerk)
APOLOGIES: Cllr Tim Brake

17.01 OS OPEN SESSION

There were no items to be raised under the Open Session, the meeting commenced at 8.50 pm. Standing Orders were applied.

17.02 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Tim Brake had send belated apologies for personal reasons, Cllr Brake's late apology was formally accepted by all members present.

17.03 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

17.04 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES

- The Minutes of the Open Space Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd November 2016, previously circulated were proposed as an accurate record by Cllr Foster, seconded by Cllr Tomlinson, and were signed by the Chairman.
- Matters arising:
 - Cllr Tomlinson had raised an issue of concern with the gym equipment, the Clerk confirmed it had been checked and was as it should be, the equipment is not supposed to offer resistance.
 - The bench and notice board at Telegraph Lane/A31 junction have finally been returned to their original location.
 - **Finger post restoration.** A Contractor has now been appointed to carry out the maintenance work in the Spring.

17.05 OS AREA UPDATE

1. **Badger Close.** Wildlife area maintenance work was started prior to the Christmas break and will continued in the New Year.
Further Update; only one blockage behind No. 35 Badger Close of garden waste, and will be written to accordingly. Problems had been notified with 5 trees in the dell, and the clerk is currently awaiting a quote for their removal. There were no issues in the Sett, nor the Ash Tree in the Southern badger run. There is evidence of a new badger sett in the Dell, now that it has complete bramble cover and is longer accessed by children and there is clear evidence that both runs are being well used.
2. **Benians Committee/Pavilion.** A consultant has now appointed to look at the best way forward for running the Pavilion. The Committee have been advised over the Parish Council's concerns over the various issues raised at the previous open space committee meeting.

3. **Cemetery.** Agenda item to discuss complaints over mole hills, and other maintenance issues.
4. **Kingswood Copse.** Maintenance work still to be carried out, will commence early in the New Year.
5. **Lymington Bottom Green.** Maintenance works now complete, and removed horse chestnut replaced. No further maintenance works required. Application for Village Green Status has been approved is now out to a six week consultation. No further news on land transfer.
6. **Oak Green.** Only one tender received to date, hopefully more will come in for discussion and award of tender before the Full Council meeting on 18th January 2017. Concerns over the cost of the Christmas Tree have given reason to discuss sourcing the Christmas Tree direct for 2017, agenda item to discuss.

Further Update; a second quote has now been received. This will be discussed in further detail at the Finance & GP Committee meeting.

7. **Recreation Ground.**

- **Hedgerow.** Agenda item to discuss legal action and status to date, and proposals for full maintenance and replanting.
- **Play park/teenager activity area.** New bin has been installed in the Skate Park area; quotes have been received for junior multi-play unit and additional swings, although no decision made but, developers contributions to be applied for. Table tennis table has still yet to be moved but following advice a local company are to be approached on costs to hire a suitable piece of equipment.

Further Update; Cllr Kemp Gee has a amount of £1,000 left in his devolved budget and would like to contribute to the purchase of the new swings, which was extremely gratefully acknowledged.

- **Cricket pitch.** No news to date.
- **Goal posts.** Vita Play are renewing their case against Broxap with reference to the rusting goal posts as, following recent photographic evidence, it is now obvious that the rust is not being caused by misuse.

8. **Storeys Sanctuary.** Agenda item. Following the recent emergence of the true land owner and the blocking off of the area, committee needs to discuss whether to proceed with the application for public right of way.

17.06 OS TENNIS CLUB AND FENCING PROPOSAL

Tennis Club. An Extraordinary General Meeting has been called for 17th February by James Coles, as interim chairman of the sports and social club, to discuss the future of the club.

The Clerk has been liaising with the Treasurer to try and move the re-fencing project forward, however the Treasurer was still awaiting a signature on the cabinet grant paperwork but hoped that the nominated chairman of the tennis club committee would do this by the end of the week. The Treasurer had expressed concern over having too much to do, and it was agreed to offer the services of the Parish Clerk to project manage the re-fencing scheme. Concern was expressed over the very low fee structure, but it was agreed that the Parish Council cannot intervene with this aspect, however the tennis club should be reminded that they would still need to pay a substantial annual rental and perhaps this should be reflected within their new membership charges, particularly as the area was to be greatly enhanced.

The Clerk also proposed for approval that the third court offered a multi-sport facility as the fence would be suitable for various sports, such as netball, basketball, 5 a side football as well as tennis. The additional costs for this project would be funded by a Benians Trust grant, to be agreed at Full Council.

It was agreed that the goal recesses should be enclosed and the area gated, however to start with the area would be open to all, but should the area be subjected to any vandalism, then this would be reviewed. There would be no access to the other two tennis courts.

17.07 OS PLAYSAFETY ROSPA INSPECTION COURSE

Cllr Mills had recently attended a RoSPA inspection course and although they offer guidance that the areas should be regularly inspected, apparently it is not legally binding. However for insurance purposes it is recommended that this is carried out regularly and documented. The Clerk had provided Cllr Mills with blank inspection sheets, however Cllr Mills had some sample templates that were more appropriate and would pass these to the Clerk for her to adapt for use for the recreation ground facilities.

Following the course, Cllr Mills identified the following issues that needed addressing.

- The pedestrian entrance gate opposite the tennis courts, it was noted that this gate should be self-closing, and it was agreed to order a new gate.
- Cllr Mills offered to do small maintenance works, such as screw tightening, and it was agreed that the Parish Council should purchase some small tools for him to carry out minor works as appropriate.
- Cllr Mills was also advised that we should have more safety advice signage, but it was agreed that what was currently on display was adequate, however the wooden goal mouth still didn't have appropriate signage, and the Clerk agreed to chase Vita Play as they had lost the originals.
- It had also been noted that there were no details anywhere on the Recreation Ground of the address and postcode for the emergency services and it was agreed that the Clerk should prepare something for the outdoor notice board at the Pavilion.

17.08 OS CHARLES CHURCH/RECREATION GROUND BOUNDARY

The Clerk confirmed that a letter had been sent by the Council's Solicitors to Charles Church, it had been responded to and the Parish Council had been asked to detail on the landscape map where the hedgerow needed to be replaced and where fencing was required. No further correspondence had been received to date. The Police had also been notified of the criminal damage and they had communicated directly with Charles Church, however it appears that Charles Church had not allegedly been altogether honest with the investigating officer, and the Clerk had responded to the officer to advise them accordingly.

The Clerk confirmed that she was awaiting a formal quotation for the wildlife hedgerow project and once received would apply for developers contributions to fund this project. The fencing quotation had been received. It was agreed to fence from the hedgerow breach up to the man-made entrance, but with an option to continue the fencing further up if required.

Due to the extremely high footfall from the estate onto the Recreation Ground, the 'man-made' access point had become very muddy and it was agreed that this would need to be addressed to avoid further access points being made to avoid the mud. A designated footpath, with a surface of bark or wood chippings as opposed to 'scalpings', should be constructed, recreation side only as Charles Church had previously reprimanded the Council for their contractors working on the Medstead Farm side of the boundary. The Clerk agreed to action this as soon as possible.

Separately, as discussed in the Planning Meeting earlier that evening, Cllr Thomas had taken several photographs of the developers non-compliance with several wildlife issues and it had been agreed that the Clerk write a strong letter to the Local Authority.

17.09 OS STOREYS SANCTUARY

The Clerk advised the members of the events leading up to the actual owner being traced of the land known as Storey's Sanctuary. The owner was with the residents of 20 Lymington Bottom and Cllrs Ingrid and Simon Thomas were able to view the absolute title document from Land Registry.

The Clerk wrote to the Solicitor who is acting on behalf of the land owner to assist with the notices to remove all the internal fencing, and took the opportunity to advise the Solicitor of the Parish Council's actions to date, and the current undertaking to designate the area as a formal public right of way, and the hope that the land owner would be supportive and offered assistance with their challenge against the possessory title.

However unfortunately the new owner confirmed that they did not wish for the public to have any further access but would be pleased to receive help with their challenge if required.

Hampshire County Council Rights of Way confirmed that, as the general public had had access to this area for over forty years, the land owner could not prevent future access, but the Clerk wished to know whether it would be of wider community benefit to pursue the current course of action.

It was agreed to write to the Solicitor expressing the value of this area of open space and disappointment that they were not allowing further access, but gently reminding them of Rights of Way's advice and ask again for their support in return for assistance with their possessory title challenge, perhaps even offering to name the right of way after the owner.

17.10 OS DOG FOULING LITTER PATROLS & DOGS IN THE CHILDREN'S PLAY PARK AREA

The Clerk advised the members of the recent visits by EHDC's litter patrol squad, at the request of the District Councillor, who did identify that there is a problem at the Recreation Ground.

They have proposed revisiting on odd occasions and spraying offending piles with purple spray, this not only highlights the problem but hopefully will encourage people to 'pick up their poo' now it is obvious the area is being regularly monitored.

The Clerk proposed two additional dog waste only bins, and it was agreed to compromise and add one additional receptacle at the Medstead Farm entrance.

Following further discussion it was agreed that perhaps regularly visiting parish councillors could also carry out a patrol service, wearing hi viz to make people aware that the area is constantly monitored, it was also agreed to continue the practice of spraying the dog waste with paint. The Clerk agreed to purchase some appropriate hi-viz jackets.

The provision of additional signage, however, was not agreed as members were keen not to urbanise the recreation ground.

Another concern had been raised in that dogs had been encountered in the fenced off children's play area, despite no dogs signs clearly displayed at each entrance. When approached there appeared to be a certain amount of ignorance as to why dogs are not allowed. It was agreed to highlight the health and safety aspects of dog waste in children's play areas in the Clerks article in the next Four Marks News report.

It was also agreed that as many parents combine dog walking with taking their children to the play area that there was not apparent places to tie dogs up outside the park and it was agreed to purchase a couple of rings on posts to tether dogs to while children were playing in the park itself.

It was also noted that several good Samaritans were actively picking litter up after other people and it was agreed that these people should be publicly thanked for their good turn, this would also be included in the next magazine article.

17.11 OS CEMETERY COMPLAINTS

The Clerk advised members of the recent complaints with reference to the maintenance of the Cemetery. It was agreed that it was adequately maintained for a rural cemetery, but that it may be of benefit to get someone to carry out any necessary clearance works of the general area a couple of times over the winter period. The Clerk agreed to ask Eddie Hodkin if he would take this on in addition to Oak Green.

It was also agreed that the burial ground rules should be abided by, with no exceptions, and it was correct to continue with this firmer stance.

The Clerk did raise concerns over the current molehill problem and there was a mixed reception on whether to leave alone or get them removed and the Clerk agreed to take advice.

It was also suggested that a small discreet notice containing contact details of the Parish Council as owners of the Cemetery should be on display. The Clerk agreed to source a suitable sign.

17.12 OS CHRISTMAS TREE

The cost of this year's Christmas tree had caused some consternation and it was agreed that the community's funds would be better spent finding a more cost effective supplier. It was also agreed that increasing the decorations at Oak Green would add to the festive feel. Lights in the Oak Tree and maybe shop displays were suggested, although it was agreed that lights on lampposts would be problematical and expensive. The refurbishment of Oak Green tender had included the provision of a second electrical source by the flag pole, which would be useful for additional lighting features. It was agreed that this should be an Agenda item at a later date.

17.13 OS DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 1ST February 2017, 8.30pm, to follow planning at the Village Hall

17.14 OS The Chairman closed the Meeting at 10.30pm.

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Chairman