

## **Four Marks Parish Council**

### **Minutes of the Open Space Committee Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2017 commencing at 8.45pm At Four Marks Village Hall**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cllr Anne Tomlinson (Chair), Cllrs John Davis, Janet Foster and Dave Mills  
**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs Sarah Goudie (Clerk), 2 members of the public  
**APOLOGIES:** Cllr Davie Edgar

---

#### **17.65 OS OPEN SESSION**

Mr Hatcher and Mr Dicker were in attendance to speak about the concerns of plot holders over the footballs coming over the hedge into the Allotments, and the broken fence where the children are entering to retrieve them. There has been several incidences of abusive behaviour by the children, and asked the Parish Council to do what they can to resolve the situation. Cllr Tomlinson that this issue was to be discussed as an Agenda item.

The Clerk had several issues to raise, not on the Agenda, as follows:

- She had approached the Medstead Parish Council clerk as to whether they would be agreeable to going 50/50 on a replacement notice board at Oak Green. He would advise after their next meeting.
- Reported on the outcome of the investigation with the clash of charity collections in May between the RNLI and Christian Aid. She confirmed that anyone who wishes to carry out a street collection needs a licence from the local authority, whether the land is privately owned or not if there is public access. There is no cost for the permit. The Clerk agreed to let both regular charities know that collect at Oak Green, permission from the Parish Council should also be sought out of courtesy.
- A meeting had been held with Cllr Mills at the play area following the RoSPA inspection. Following the recommendations, the Clerk asked for an amount to be budgeted to replace the grass matting next year. It was also agreed that it was not cost effect to repair the carousel, and a replacement piece of equipment should be purchased. A quote was awaited for a slightly different piece of apparatus.
- COGS had sent a permission request to the Parish Council for them to hold weekly meet ups at the play park, and whether they could erect a gazebo for shade. There were no issues with this request.
- Tesco's/Groundworks UK were sending the Parish Council a plaque to put on the equipment purchased with the grant money awarded.
- There was now funding available for extra parishes to join the Parish Lengthsman Scheme, and confirmed that she had approached a cluster for membership.

**There were no further items to be raised under the Open Session, and the formal meeting then commenced at 9.00pm. Standing Orders were applied.**

#### **17.66 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received Cllr Davie Edgar. It was RESOLVED to approve Cllr Edgar's absence.

#### **17.67 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

## 17.68 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES

- The Minutes of the Open Space Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017, previously circulated, were proposed as an accurate record, by Cllr Davis, seconded by Cllr Mills, approved and were duly signed by the Chairman.
- Matters arising:
  - Update on finger post restoration now circulated.
  - Contractor contacted with various snagging issues, meeting 1<sup>st</sup> August to discuss.
  - Badger Close – confirmation received from EHDC with reference to the un-authorized hedge cutting; 'you have no right to light or a view, and the heights quoted are for evergreen, and calculated on various ratios. The Parish Council is correct in its stance, in that they can cut back to the boundary, but any pruning or trimming our side of the boundary is classed as trespass and criminal damage'. Clerk to respond to the email, with final notice warning.

## 17.69 OS AREA UPDATE

- **Allotments** Agenda item for discussion
- **Badger Close** Agenda item for discussion.
- **Benian's Committee/Pavilion.**  
Tomorrow night's meeting cancelled, for a second time. Agreement to be signed separately.
- **Cemetery** Nothing to report.
- **Footpaths** Now mostly cut back. A few subsequent issues reported.
- **Kingswood Copse** Nothing to report.
- **Lymington Bottom Green.**  
Awaiting decision on planning permission for sign, all pathway encroachment now cut back.
- **Oak Green** Agenda item to discuss opening event.
- **Recreation Ground.**
  - **Play park/teenager activity area.** New multi play equipment now installed and table tennis table moved. To be refurbished.
  - **Cricket pitch.** Nothing to report
  - **Goal posts.** Awaiting maintenance. Broxap have agreed to place, *at cost*.
  - **Tennis Courts/MUGA.** Agenda item.
  - **Uplands Lane.** Nothing to report.
- **Station Approach/Windmill Fields open space.** Nothing to report.
- **Storeys Sanctuary.** Nothing to report.
- **Swelling Hill Pond** New picnic bench ordered.

## 17.70 OS NEW ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

- **MUGA**  
The issue of footballs going over the hedge into the Allotments has become untenable. The Clerk and Cllr Mills, together with a local contractor, had looked at various options.

Netting over the top of the MUGA was discounted due to potential health and safety issues this may cause, eg. climbing of, hanging from and becoming an additional challenge.

Another option of erecting poles and a netting system was also discussed, and was being quoted for, however this would need to be at least as tall as the floodlights and would need to go half way down the first tennis court, and could well be of considerable cost.

A third option of actually supplying a stock of spare balls, to try and prevent people losing their own, seemed to be the most popular as a short term resolution, with advisory notes asking people to use them rather than lose their own balls, which would not be retrievable once the fence was fixed.

It was agreed, being the cheapest option in the interim, to trial the spare balls option, which would be kept in a container or net on the court itself.

- **ALLOTMENTS**

It was agreed to replace the damaged area of chain link fencing, approximately 10 metres rather than the whole length, as a matter of urgency, to try and stop the children breaking it down in a bid to retrieve footballs from the Allotments, with additional posts, and not to mow up to the fence line to encourage weed and bramble growth to make it less accessible.

Request for purchase of land. It was agreed that the small area of land between 31 and 33 Chaffinch Road and the pumping station, which was transferred to the Parish Council, was of no real use to the Allotments or Parish Council, and that a proposal should be given to the Parish Council for its purchase, with a condition that it can only ever be open space or garden curtilage and no structure to be erected upon it.

The land the other side of the fence is the Allotments, and would not be for sale. There is no gap between the boundary of the properties or the Allotments at this point. This was confirmed subsequent to the meeting by Cllr Davis, and he was going to approach the allotment committee to get the area cleared which had been left to overgrow since the beehives had been removed.

- **RECREATION GROUND**

- The clerk advised she was seeking to purchase advisory and warning signs as suggested in the RoSPA report, this was proving expensive so was going to look for cheaper options.
- The relocation of the gate and soil bunding ground protection by the Scout hut had proved harder to source, due to issues with ground waste and lack of availability of people to carry out the task, it was agreed to revert back to the original option of replacing all the dragons teeth and concrete in for better stability.
- The provision of shade in the children's play area was discussed in detail. New trees, approx. 10-12 feet to replace the failed saplings, would be a long term solution, however in the short term, the sail and posts idea was discounted due to concerns over vandalism, and it was agreed to get prices for two corner shelters for the pavilion end, although it was noted that this would not be completed this Summer but in readiness for next year.

- **OAK GREEN**

It was agreed to organise an 'opening event' at Oak Green, and invite all shops to participate in some way to promote their services, maybe design a montage for presentation or offer freebies, and invite the Alton Herald and Four Marks news for publicity.

The date of 19<sup>th</sup> August, at 12.00pm, was decided, and the Clerk agreed to send an invitation to all shops, and invited the District Councillor to cut the ribbon.

The Clerk advised that vehicles were going over the grass bank to access the car park and it was agreed that the installation of some dragons' teeth may dissuade motorists from doing this.

- **BADGER CLOSE**

A further request had been made to reduce the Ash Tree in the wildlife corridor, however after discussion it was agreed, as the tree was healthy, and regularly inspected, the work not essential, and any pruning work could well result in increased growth, not to carry out any works at this time. The proximity of the tree to the houses is noted, but it is not a threat at this time, and any overhanging branches can be pruned back to the boundary.

- **BUS SHELTER**

A timely approach had been made by a bus stop cleaning company and, following the lack of action by the developers to clean the muddied bus shelter, it was subsequently agreed to organise a deep clean of all the parish bus stops. It was felt that due to health and safety regulations and proximity to the road, this action should be carried out by a professional contractor, and done annually.

The Clerk confirmed that the new sheet of Perspex had arrived at the office to replace the broken pane of the bus stop at Telegraph Lane, only to discover that the original bus stop had been replaced by HCC to one with glass, it was agreed to change the pane to Perspex and not replace like for like to prevent this happening again.

- **FOOTPATH 7 – GATE AT GARTHOWEN**

The Parish Council had been advised of the erection of a fence beside the gate across the above footpath. There was concern raised that this was not an easy gate to open and to those not knowing the area may not even realise that this is the footpath. Two issues were raised, could a small walkers gate be incorporated into the fence, as an option to help those who would struggle to open the large gate, and could there be a distinct footpath sign designating that the path is through the gate?

**17.71 OS DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017, 8.30pm, to follow planning at the Village Hall.

**17.72 OS The Chairman closed the Meeting at 10.20pm.**

.....  
**Chairman**