

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING Held on Wednesday 12TH APRIL 2017, commencing at 7.30pm At the Village Hall, Four Marks

Hosted by: Cllr Janet Foster, Chairman

The Annual Parish Meeting was called by the Chairman and was held in the Village Hall on Wednesday 12th April 2017 commencing at 7.30pm.

Cllr Janet Foster opened the meeting and thanked the scouts for teas and coffees served beforehand.

Introduction of the Panel – Simon Jenkins – Head of Planning EHDC; Sean Baldock – Compliance EHDC; Cllr Ingrid Thomas – District Councillor and Sarah Goudie – Clerk Four Marks Parish Council.

Apologies from Deborah Brooks-Jackson. Unable to attend due to running a meeting at Medstead Parish council. Cllr Foster read answers on her behalf.

Guidelines for evening – a question and answer time format – Name read of person submitting question to be directed to the member of panel. The questioner can then respond to the answer if present. No more questions would be taken unless agreed by Chairman.

Question and Answer Session

During the session it was identified that Sean Baldock had returned from holiday to be present and had therefore not seen the questions in advance to be able to check details / paperwork needed to give answers. However Sean offered to action with follow up answers where appropriate.

Question by Anne Tomlinson

Application of planning policy does not always appear consistent. How does planning ensure internally, across districts and counties that Policy interpretation is consistently applied?

Answer – Simon Jenkins, Head of Planning EHDC

There are a range of issues raised by this question. I would like to respond by commenting on local plans and decision making process. Local plans show a consistent policy approach across the district. Neighbourhood plans are supposed to be in general conformity with local plans and form part of the documents that influence decisions.

Each planning application is scrutinised by the officers and members and part of their brief is to try ensure consistency across the district. The planning committee is made up of members across district who try to ensure consistency in decision making. Not that long ago we used to have Regional plans and Structure plans, but these have now been abolished. Therefore there is no longer a consistent policy across the district. The planning committee are now obliged to and have a duty to co-operate and speak to other authorities on our boundaries, but no duty to agree. Dialog takes place but not necessary agreement. Local planning examiners also have a role to play to ensure consistency with national planning policy.

Mrs Tomlinson responded by asking how it is controlled once planning has been given and check back retrospectively. Where there are not consistencies are there other ways to check and inform if things are wrong and learn from them.

Sean Baldock advised that occasionally when the members think that we haven't followed policy consistently and can then overturn recommendations made to them. If when looking at an application members feel I have got it wrong they tell me very clearly. There are a range of checks in place for balance. However there are occasions perhaps when we get it wrong. These checks are in place to make sure decisions are made sensibly and consistently.

Question by Susan Styles

Having lived in Four Marks for 30 years I have been aware of increased traffic on A31. Am very concerned about speed from Alton direction causing hazards and several fatal accidents. Could either improved signage or car calming procedure be put in place?

Answer - Ingrid Thomas, District Councillor

There has been lots of extra development in The Shrave and the Council and Mark Kemp Gee have been working together to improve the approaches coming from the dual carriage way. The 40 mph speed limit signs are to be moved closer to the carriage way to alert people earlier as they approach a built up area. The service road signs are to be changed to alert there are houses there and the lines on the road are being re-laid so there is a better turning angle to get into the service roads. Hampshire Highways safety team have looked at the area and are putting these extra things in place within next few months. Personally I feel more needs to be done as still an extremely dangerous area and will continue to push for more improvements.

Question by Anne Tomlinson

Compliance: This is perceived as a black art, with those who do not comply looking like they are able to negotiate a favourable outcome. How do you currently keep residents up to date with compliance investigations and outcomes and how can transparency be improved?

Answer – Sean Baldock, EHDC Compliance

Firstly I'd like to say that if you complain about a planning application to the compliance team, they will return to that person confidentially with a response giving the investigation result. The general public are not advised of that investigation as it is between the person who complained and is fully confidential. It is very difficult to advise others due to data protection and confidentiality. Transparency has improved with a professional team and procedures in place if complainant is not happy with investigation to take complaint further. All this is done directly with the person who made the enquiry. This is not extended to the local area.

Mrs Tomlinson replied that she understands but unsure how issues are taken seriously and how public know that action was taken. She understands the confidentiality and compromise.

Mr Baldock stated that this was difficult but officers do take a view at the early stage to the application and to go back directly to complainant with the results. If they then disagree there are procedures in place to take it further.

Mrs Tomlinson - How do public know anything has been done?

Mr Robert Hughes (member of public) then gave two examples of where permissions given with paragraphs in the compliance i.e tyres must be hosed down in muddy conditions before going onto the public highway, or do not attend site before 6am - however the residents feel that compliance was not followed after permissions granted.

Mr Baldock – advised that each case is different. But hoped he had answered the question.

Question from Diane White:

What is being done to reclaim those areas of the plot of woodland called Storey's Sanctuary, (which I understand was given to the village for wildlife and for the benefit of all village residents to use), which have has been wrongfully acquired through 'land grabbing' by some of those residents backing onto this land? In an area and era of seemingly constant development, every patch of greenspace is vitally important, not only for wildlife, but for the benefit of all, not only those who seek to add value to their own land through pushing others off a public area.

Answer - Sarah Goudie – Clerk Four Marks Parish Council

To correct the statement – this area was not given to the Parish. Storey's Sanctuary is an area of land just across the road from the Village Hall and was left as a green space by the developer of Vectis Close and Gloucester Close and has been used by many generations and as a through route by wildlife and play area for children. The owner died back in the 60s and the relatives were unaware of its existence until very recently. The Parish Council became involved when there were reports that some neighbouring properties were fencing portions of the open space and incorporating them into their own gardens. The owner has managed to reclaim most of the land taken by neighbouring properties, but had to close the area to the general public temporarily to do so. The Rights of Way team at HCC in conjunction with the Parish council were in the process of establishing a formal right of way but have put this on hold until such time as all the land has been reclaimed. We understand that the owner is keen to preserve it as a wildlife haven and hope that in time they will re-open it and the area can once again be enjoyed by all. The area is outside the settlement policy boundary so cannot be developed.

Comment by Eveline Cooper – regarding the "Land grabbing" – Mrs Goudie advised that this was being dealt with by owner and nothing to do with the Parish Council.

Question by John Hammond

There has been an exceptional level of housing development in Four Marks and South Medstead over recent years and residents believe that Four Marks has been unfairly treated and has been subjected to proportionally higher levels of housing increase than other settlements in East Hampshire. What decisions have been taken, or what policies exist, within Hampshire, and East Hampshire Councils that will have given rise to this and why?

Given the significant numbers by which Four Marks and South Medstead has exceeded its new housing requirement, what assurances can you give that ongoing development will now cease?

Does Four Marks status as a Small Service Centre mean that it will continue to be subjected to higher levels of future development than other East Hampshire villages?

Answer – Simon Jenkins, Head of Planning EHDC

a) Exceptional Level of development – what we experienced in Four Marks and across East Hants was the way planning policy is considered by Government. We have a joint core strategy plan which was agreed with the national park in May 2014. This strategy sets out where new housing will go and levels of development - the minimum level of developments in various parts of the district including Four Marks and South Medstead. What happened was we didn't have a 5 year housing land supply – which is where it gets aggravating because until you have a 5 year it effectively becomes a first come first served basis, and we suffered because of this. The role of the planning team was to get us to

where we now have this so we can protect areas outside of settlement area. The work done on the Neighbourhood Plan assisted with this protection.

b) We now have 7 year housing land supply policies in place which are reasonably effective. We can't however, stop planning applications being submitted. These have to be determined in accordance with the development plans. What is coming up in the future is of concern to councillor's colleagues and those putting in neighbourhood plans. The Government white paper suggests that although you have plans that work, these will have to be reviewed every 5 years in accordance with Government methodology. This may mean we have to provide more homes – we are therefore raising this issue as being inappropriate and may not be lawful.

c). Status as a Small service centre – Core Strategy identified a 5 levels hierarchy – Four Marks and South Medstead have been given level 3 settlement designation.

Mr Hammond had asked what decisions and policy positions were taken behind closed doors and that Four Marks might be a quick win for the Council based on the number of houses required in the area because of its better facilities. With regard to the Small service centre – he noted the response and understands but is not confident.

Mr Jenkins responded that the decision on where development was going to take place was in the public domain. A series of workshops with communities and member meetings were all minuted – no closed door meetings. Any suggestion that Four Marks was a quick win is not the case. Any future reviews are to be as transparent as we can be and have more workshops and meetings moving forward to ensure plan making process is more transparent than ever. This will by necessity include the Neighbourhood Plan colleagues as part of the development plans.

Mr Hammond said he attended an Alton meeting last week and didn't feel decisions would be open to consultation in the way we are led to believe.

Mr Jenkins clarified that this meeting last week was in advance of any formal consultation process. There are at least 3 formal consultations of development plans before they are adopted. Therefore there will be considerable local consultation which will involve parishes and communities as we are obliged to by statute.

Mr Hammond thanked Simon Jenkins for his answers.

Question from Chris King Smith

Is there a policy for use of the 'general' notice board in Oak Green, alongside the PC notice boards? If not could it please be:

- a. only events in Four Marks and Medstead to be advertised,
- b. no commercial advertising of any sort, ie where payment is required for the service offered,
- c. no permanent adverts, such as the 'Jubilee Church' one.

Answer - Sarah Goudie – Clerk Four Marks Parish Council

The Notice Board is a shared board with both Four Marks and Medstead PC's and is for anyone to post details of events, there has never been any criteria as far as I am aware. However this may be something we could raise, the noticeboard is communally looked after and tidied as appropriate. Can be discussed with Medstead PC.

Question by Mr Michael Chinn

Over many months, in the local media, both District Councillors have expressed difficulty and

frustration when attempting to motivate the developers, Miller Homes and Beechcroft, to adhere or comply with the provision and use of Vehicle wheel cleaning facilities at their developments in Lymington Bottom Road, which I understand was a condition of the Planning Consent granted.

I live on Winchester Road, Four Marks, and the mud and slurry dropping off the countless lorry movements is both unnecessary and aggravating to the residents. When the weather is dry this squalor deposits itself as a soil dust over everything. When it is raining the water just runs towards Lymington Bottom because the drains are clogged with mud and grit. The footpaths are soiled and squalid.

My questions therefore are:-

1. WAS THE PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED WITH EXPRESS CONDITIONS FOR ALL VEHICLES, MOVING SOIL AND DEBRIS EXITING THE SITES, TO CLEAN THE WHEELS OF THE VEHICLES PRIOR TO USING THE VILLAGE ROADS?
2. IF THE ABOVE MENTIONED CONDITIONS WERE APPLIED TO THE PLANNING PERMISSIONS, WHY HAVE THOSE CONDITIONS NOT BEEN ENFORCED BY EHDC PLANNING DEPARTMENT?
3. WHY HAS IT BEEN LEFT TO DISTRICT COUNCILLORS TO INTERCEDE ON BEHALF OF THE RESIDENTS AND NOT DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICERS, THE LATTER PRESUMABLY HAVING "THE CLOUT" TO ENFORCE COMPLIANCE?
4. WHAT CAN THE RESIDENTS EXPECT IN THE FUTURE BY WAY OF RESOLUTION?

Answer – Sean Baldock, EHDC Compliance

With regard to the conditions for vehicles wheels to be cleaned – unfortunately I don't have the construction methods statement conditions in front of me - apologies - therefore it is difficult to answer and can't confirm the wording. The conditions would sit within a construction method statements within the planning approval. Any condition must be precise to enable to an enforcement action or breach of condition notice. We have identified problems and now have 1 officer dedicated to the sites dealing with issues and she is doing a wonderful job. There will be a review to look at the issues, identify problems to enable the council to pick up and deal with. We are visiting regularly and looking at road conditions and there have been significant improvements from when we were notified.

We are now dealing with problems and our dedicated officer is in regular contact with the sites and actively working to ensure the issues are being dealt with.

Cllr Foster asked who actually checks these conditions by developers to make sure they are reasonable for the residents.

Mr Baldock responded that these are checked by council and during this process the problems we have been having are now being looked at, all the method statements and conditions and a review is taking place to ensure these can be actively enforced in the future. So there is real progress coming about from this and we are fully committed to make sure we have the power to take action.

Mr Jenkins commented that as we know there has been unprecedented development levels over the area and that there have been relatively standard conditions in the past – 35 page statements. His colleagues are now looking at the number of conditions and looking to simplify and reduce the number to make them more workable and word our conditions as robustly as possible so nothing can fall through between the method statement and the condition. Lessons have been learnt in terms of the clarity and the forcibility of the conditions.

Cllr Foster replied that it was unfortunate that we have suffered for these lessons learned but at least the lessons had been learnt and asked when will they be in place for other new developments going forward?

Mr Baldock responded – Firstly I appreciate what you are saying, however these lorry's come from all over the place, from all directions and not necessarily all down to one site. We are actively looking at these and there is real progress. One condition picked up last week, as an example on a construction method statement was that “No worker must be on site without a t-shirt and must wear sun cream when sunny!! As this was stated it would be a breach of condition if not wearing a t shirt depending on how it is worded! We have read through this one and obviously asked that this be changed!

Mr Robert Hughes (member of the Public) – commented that the council wouldn't know what he has observed as he lives not far from the site and that in these rainy conditions the frequency of vehicles that are moving some 1000 square meters of soil, 4 per hour sometimes queuing up with just 1 man hosing the tyres obviously can't keep up with this. While however wonderful the method statements are, it is absolutely the responsibility of the site to adhere to the conditions and we are just asking council to shout a bit louder to ensure this happens.

Mrs Evelyn Cooper (member of the Public) raised that she was not sure lessons were being learnt as we are hearing the same concerns and complaints again and again.

Mr Baldock replied that he appreciates what is being raised but thinks that real progress has been made.

Mr Jenkins re-iterated that they have a dedicated officer on site for a number of months now and are taking very seriously the proper enforcement of conditions and reviewing conditions to make sure they are more robust in the future. The area is getting a significant investment of officer time.

Cllr Foster concluded that they are learning lessons. And that we deserve the work that is taking place.

Question from Derek Seaton

What is the Council's opinion on restoring the boundary between Four Marks and Medstead to where it used to be i.e Five Ash Road, Boyneswood Road and Lymington Bottom Road?

Medstead Parish Council have made it clear that they want separation by including a 'Green Belt between their village and 'South Medstead' in the Neighbourhood Plan. Such a move would presumably justify two full-time District Councillors for Four Marks, and Medstead could link up with Wild and Bentworth who are both rural in character - we have to admit that Four Marks is now urban

Answer – Deborah Brooks-Jackson

The first part of this question is directed to the Parish Council and it would be inappropriate to guess their response.

The correct term for the “green belt” referred to by the questioner is a “strategic gap”. The Neighbourhood Plan shows a number of these strategic gaps, particularly within the parish of Medstead, giving rise to distinct hamlets such as Soldridge and Hattingley, as well as the aforementioned gap at Five Ash Road.

Whilst potential revisions to ward boundaries are being considered, there is currently no intention to

change the parish boundaries. It is also worth pointing out that such a change would also require the support of the affected residents.

Whilst EHDC is going through an exercise of review, the current quota of 44 Councillors will be retained. With increasing housing numbers and population this no doubt means that the average number of residents per Councillor will also go up.

The suggestion of separating Medstead village and the other hamlets north of Five Ash Road, and adding them to Wield and Bentworth is an interesting one, but one that I could not support. Wield and Bentworth, together with Beech, Chawton and Farringdon form the Downland Ward, geographically one of the largest wards of EHDC, but covered by only one ward Councillor. The current workload – physically manning just the existing area is extremely difficult and would be made no easier by adding half of the parish of Medstead. In such a scenario, with no increase in the total number of Councillors, there would be strong justification for Downland to become a two-Councillor ward and for the more condensed Four Marks to have only the one Councillor. As I have said before, be careful what you wish for!

Cllr Foster stated that Four Marks Parish Council have often talked about revision of boundaries previously but we are not considering to change it in the near future.

There was no response from Mr Seaton.

Question by Chris Simons

If we accept that an element of new housing is needed then why can't the developers' contributions be used to upgrade the infrastructure in the rest of the village?

The older parts of the village still largely run on old water mains, overhead electric power and telephone cables etc. so suffer from frequent leaks, power cuts in windy weather and poor/noisy phone and broadband. Whereas new developments tend to have these run underground etc. we are in danger of having a two tier village in terms of infrastructure.

OK all of these utilities are provided by private companies, but I am sure they would do the work for a fee. And if coordinated by one body then maybe they could do it in a manner to only dig a road up once to lay the services underground.

Answer – Simon Jenkins, Head of Planning EHDC

This question is in 3 parts. With regard to upgrading infrastructure, developers contributions from development sites must meet 3 tests set by government - that they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, they are directly related to a development and they are fairly and reasonably related in scale and time. What that suggests is that rather than funding existing infrastructure it should in fact be used to mitigate the impact of new development.

We have a new system coming into play which is called the Community Infrastructure Levy to allow us a slightly wider investment in the future and we will be able to fund more of a wider set of infrastructure like waste water treatment, gas supplies and telecommunications – a wider shopping list of investment in infrastructure going forward.

We are working on our spending protocol within EHDC and have had meetings with Parish and Town councils. More of these will be taking place and we will be talking more about how we can invest in infrastructure through that process.

With regard to potential of a 2 tier village – is a difficult one to answer. As stated the investments developer’s contributions have to relate to new development. Rather than existing infrastructure.

We take the point regarding roads only being dug up once – yes that would be great. Our colleagues at Highways do try to ensure works are done in a co-ordinated way but there are occasions where errors are made. Efforts are being made to try and co-ordinate roadworks.

Question by Mr Michael Burton, Baytree Lodge, Brislands Lane

1) Now that Brislands Lane is no longer used for access to the Charles Church site when might we expect it and the pavement to be re-surfaced? Also when doing so, the problem of the drainage needs to be considered given that rainwater puddles heavily on the northern junction with Lymington Bottom whilst the drain itself is located on the southern side!

2) It seems that Charles Church have encroached on the 5m "no man’s land" between 'Pilgrims Way' & the Charles Church site & erected a fence thereon. If so, this is a clear breach of the planning consent & we would like to know what steps are being taken to enforce same. Furthermore, the last planting plan I had sight of indicated that trees & a hedge were to be planted in this area - there appears to be no evidence of same.

Answer – Sean Baldock, EHDC Compliance

I will answer the 2nd question first. There is an ongoing investigation into the removal of the fence. I have looked at the plans and there is a fencing plan on the system on file which shows a line of the fence. Within that plan Charles Church advised us that the fence was in the wrong place and moved it. This was the moved. We investigated and the officer concluded the fence appeared to be moved into the place as per the approved plan. This is still ongoing and not concluded but it appears that this is in the position as per the planning permission.

With regard to the protection of trees and hedges that have been cut, these are with our officer and we are still looking to see if there is any breach of planning control and if anything can be done about it.

Cllr Foster asked about the condition of the road surface and pavement on Brislands lane. Mr Baldock advised he will need to take back to the office as not sure for full answer. He was unsure if it was put into a 106 agreement or if he needed to contact County. **Action – to be followed up.**

A member of the Public commented that he understood that the road had been planned to be resurfaced approx. 18 months ago, but as construction work was not finished it was being postponed until the work ended. However, we are still waiting for this to be done and the condition of the road is appalling. Promises are made but never fulfilled.

Mr Baldock replied that if there is anything in the agreement or planning he will investigate and reply back.

Cllr Foster asked if Mr Michael Burton wished to respond.

Mr Burton questioned the location of the Charles Church fence. Mr Baldock advised the officer who did the investigation reported that it was in the correct position. He had looked at plan and gap and it appears to be as is on the plan. This is still an ongoing investigation so is unable to comment fully until this has been completed.

Mr Burton said there was also a planting plan to plant trees and rebuild hedge along the fence. Mr Baldock advised he had not seen this plan and would go back to the office to check the plans and with

colleagues involved in the investigation and respond back. He will therefore respond back on the planting and road surface.

Mrs Evelyn Cooper (member of the Public) raised a general point about road surface deterioration in Lymington Bottom Road due to the amount of lorries. Cllr Foster directed that this was for Highways as EHDC are not involved in roads.

Question from Naomi Aylott

I would like to know what is being done about a pathway to connect the centre of Four Marks to the centre of Medstead on foot. The reason for my question is that I regularly walk my children to and from school along Stoney Lane to Medstead and would prefer to walk a safe route with the children that didn't involve walking along the road where cars are driving at top speed. I understood there was provision for a pathway in the joint neighbourhood plan and wondered how this was progressing.

Answer – Deborah Brooks-Jackson

For clarification, the Medstead and Four Marks Neighbourhood Plan was drawn up by a volunteer steering group and based on the comments and observations of local residents. The Neighbourhood Plan was submitted in January 2016, approved by referendum on 5 May 2016 and adopted by EHDC at their meeting on 12 May. As an adopted Plan it sits alongside EHDC's Joint Core Strategy and carries legal weight in the determination of planning matters.

Policy 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan describes a proposal for the establishment of a Green Infrastructure Network around and within Four Marks and Medstead, using the existing network of public foot paths, bridleways etc. as a starting point, rather than creating additional new pavements and the like.

The route taken by the questioner is one of two identified routes linking Four Marks and central Medstead. The first route connecting the two villages takes you along the existing pavements along Lymington Bottom Road, via a series of foot paths through the fields. The second, less established route (the one used by Mrs Aylott), is via Stoney Lane and Roe Downs Road.

Since the roadside verge is not suitable for the provision of a safe pedestrian footpath, the preferred route along Roe Downs Road is along the inside boundary hedge of the adjacent field, over what is privately owned land.

The Neighbourhood Plan is just that, a plan, and although a legal planning document, in some parts it represents a "wish list" of the residents of the combined parishes. The Neighbourhood Plan has no specific funding directly connected to it for the implementation of its recommendations, but can be used as a basis for accessing funding.

For the 2017/18 financial year, Medstead Parish Council have allocated a budget of £7.5k towards the Green Infrastructure project, but at this time I am not able to say which part or parts of this project they will be focusing on.

Cllr Foster asked if Mrs Aylott was present. No response.

Question by Mr David Mills

There has been a very large increase in houses in Four Marks over recent years – what % or number of properties, are available for young local families to rent as a prospect of buying properties in this area is negligible due to extremely high costs? Is this actively managed?

The population of our small town settlement has as we know increased greatly. What provisions have EHDC made available in terms of family support / children's centres for new families coming into the village and who are not eligible to access those of Alton?

Developers have had an extremely profitable time at our expense recently. Everything is in the developers favour. What are EHDC proposing to do about developers who flagrantly flout planning restrictions and rules as it seems "compliance" is just not happening?

Answer – Simon Jenkins, Head of Planning EHDC

Since we adopted the core strategy in May 2014 any developments that have received planning since that time have had to comply with CP13, which means 40% of the dwellings have to be affordable housing. The allocation in the part 2 plan provided 40% of all housing in addition to those that were granted on appeal. We are achieving 40% on new sites and the allocation of the homes is undertaken through the Hampshire Home Choice system, which is managed by a number of local authorities, including East Hants, so there is active management to ensure these homes go to people in need in particularly in this area.

With regard to the population and family support children's centres – those sorts of services described are actually provided by Hampshire County Council Social Services and funded through the Hampshire County Council portion of the Council tax. Effectively the County Council Children services are the responsible authority. However, in East Hampshire we run a supporting families programme in house – which serves those families in need of support and provides access to a support worker if required through a single family plan and so whilst the responsibility lies with Hampshire County Council we do actually provide a service from East Hampshire even though it is not a statutory requirement to do so.

In terms of compliance generally, we on average receive 600-900 complaints about activities going on every year in the district, which is 2-3 a day, and we currently have 3-4 officers dealing with these. Cllr Thomas, has taken with the portfolio holder, a particular interest in enforcement of compliance matters and has led the production of first enforcement policy that the council has put in place and adopted. As a result of that there is a review to increase resources so that we can get more people involved in more effective compliance. This means there is a more positive action in terms of enforcement than previously, where we were very much a reactive service. Cllr Thomas is also leading on to a plan to publicise the fact that if developers are not in accordance with their approved plans and trying to push through amendments we will look at them very carefully, and if they are not policy compliant, we will come down on them like a "ton of bricks"! A stricter control on developers will be being taken on the compliance side and when permission is granted.

Mr Mills responded by asking what the definition of affordable housing was and how to he could access the supporting families contact details.

Mr Jenkins stated that affordable housing is defined by Government and is predominately affordable housing for rent that is set at an affordable rate which is less than market. There are also forms of shared ownership, effectively subsidised to make them less than market price. The principle is that it is provided at either a rent or purchase below the market value.

The Housing associations are active in East Hampshire and are managing and dealing with nearly all the affordable housing in the district. What we are able to do in terms of the 40% of new developments is to request the developers to build at a rate that makes them affordable so there is a subsidy to those affordable homes that makes the rents more affordable and they can be sold for shared ownership.

The supporting family details can be accessed via the Hampshire County Council website housing page, then follow the Hampshire Home Choice link. You can either go direct to the website or talk to a housing officer who can show you the access route into affordable housing. Contact through the Community Service team at East Hampshire - Ryan Gulliver.

Question from Anne Tomlinson

Your role invariably is mainly dealing with issues. How do you keep motivated and positive?

Answer - Sarah Goudie – Clerk Four Marks Parish Council

I just go down to the Recreation Ground, driving past Lymington Bottom green and see how lovely this looks or visiting the pond and look at what has been achieved over my 5 years and that is enough to keep me going.

Cllr Janet Foster thanked the Panel, the audience (40 approx) for attending and for the questions. This is the first time using this format and would appreciate feedback.

A break of 5 minutes was held where the panel and most of the public left.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were recorded for: Gordon Pirie, Kellie Knight, Davie Edgar

PRESENT:

Chairman: Cllr Janet Foster

Parish Councillors: David Mills, John Davis, Simon Thomas, John Hammond, Tim Brake, Anne Tomlinson, Karen Black

District Councillors: Ingrid Thomas

County Councillor: Mark Kemp Gee

Clerks: Mrs Sarah Goudie, Mrs Lesley Chandler

Members of the public: (8)

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, HELD ON 13TH APRIL 2016:

The Minutes were circulated to all Parish Councillors following the meeting and it was agreed at the Council meeting held on 18th May 2016 to accept them in principle and concluded that they were a true reflection of the meeting.

3. ADOPTION OF THE ABOVE MINUTES:

The minutes of the above meeting were proposed by Cllr Thomas and seconded by Cllr Davis.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ABOVE MINUTES:

Cllr Hammond raised a query with Page 7 of the minutes relating to County Councillors report by which summarised a Hampshire Road Maintenance report on the roads in the area. Cllr Hammond asked what experience was had by those completing the survey. Mark Kemp Gee responded that it was a MORI survey and in his opinion was an accurate report.

5. PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMANS REPORT – CLLR JANET FOSTER

This is my second year as chairman and has again been busy and interesting and occasionally challenging, working for the best interests of our community. We have a full complement of councillors and I would like to thank them all for their contributions in helping to make Four Marks a better place. I would also like to thank Sarah Goudie our Parish Clerk and

Responsible Finance Officer who continues to work diligently and patiently, along with Lesley Chandler her assistant. They both deal with issues and demands from the public, official authorities and councillors.

If you are wondering where your parish precept goes, then here are some examples over the past year:

- Grounds maintenance contracts for all our open spaces including the recreation ground, cemetery and Swelling Hill pond with grass cutting, bin emptying, and tidying.
- Carried out major tree maintenance at Lymington Green, the recreation ground and wildlife corridors.
- Supported the various clubs at Benians Pavilion and currently working with them towards a new agreement with the Parish Council.
- Kept our rights of way network free of obstructions and replaced fingerposts.
- Continued to sponsor the Speed Watch and Street Watch teams and their volunteers who help create a safer community.
- Supported a variety of local charities and services.

Yes we increased our Parish Precept to 23.8%. For Band D the total for a year is less than £1 a week per household.

This is so we can continue to do all these things and more. We considered carefully and worked out that the increase was necessary and yet still very reasonable to keep our community to the standards that we believe you the residents want and expect. Again I emphasise, this is less than £1 per week.

In planning and new developments we:

- Made comments on all planning applications using the Joint Core Strategy, Medstead and Four Marks Neighbourhood Plan and Village Design Statement in our parish and in the next door parishes when applicable. Working closely with Medstead Parish Council, to ensure that we have a greater voice regarding planning issues that challenge our communities. Also attending and speaking at appeals.
- Supported the Charles Church liaison meeting which ended in September.
- Are now supporting the two liaison meetings in Medstead that have recently started. Sharing some of the lessons we learnt with Charles Church

From the developer contributions we have carried out the following.

- Erecting new fencing along the east side of the recreation ground and created a pedestrian access point.
- Selecting a contractor for the refurbishment at Oak Green Parade to replace the planting areas, seating and street furniture and enlarging the carpark before resurfacing it. This work we hope will start in May so there will be disruption.
- Refurbishing the Teenage Activity area with many different pieces of equipment.

With grants from our County councillor and District Councillor putting in older children's swings in the children's play area.

A reminder to all residents, that at the beginning of all our meetings there is an "open session" for you to speak. The dates of all our meetings are published on our website, notice boards & social media. Our contact details can also be found in the Four Marks Village News.

Finally, we are looking to introduce a Parish Community Person of the Year Award for someone who stands out and goes the extra mile giving service in our community. Nominations would be requested from Dec – Feb for giving the award at the APM. Please let us know if you think we should proceed with this idea?

Community Award – question raised whether this was a good idea. Indication from the room was that this was a good idea.

6. PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL REPORT – CLERK/RFO, SARAH GOUDIE

Chawton Parish boundary query raised by Robert Hughes regarding The Shrave and contributions to Chawton Parish. He feels that the confusion over Parish boundaries needs to be urgently sorted. He asked where exactly the Parish boundary was.

Sarah Goudie responded that half of The Shrave is Four Marks and half is Chawton and that according to the boundary map the boundary is where the 30 mile hour sign is. She also pointed out that the residents use Four Marks shops and traders. Cllr Thomas commented that the boundary is a historical legacy and is therefore subject to legal control by EHDC. This is an issue that has been raised by the Parish Council to EHDC and will be followed up.

Developers Contributions – Cllr Thomas raised the point that this year FMPC received over £65,000 in developers' contributions which has allowed improvements to be made within the village. That without the developments these improvements would not have been possible.

**7. DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – DIST. CLLR INGRID THOMAS
TPO Trees. Stronger penalties.**

This year has been very varied, early in the civic year we had the wonderful Queens 90th birthday celebrations. The huge effort by the whole village to make the weekend truly special was a superb example of what can be achieved by working together and involving the whole community.

One of the highlights of every year is being able to help groups and organisations around the villages with small grants. This year both Deborah and myself were given £4500 to use for projects of community benefit. My grant fund this year was spent and helped towards - The Queen's birthday celebrations which so many enjoyed, the older persons holiday club, adding a name to the war memorial, a new gate for the children play area, a new picnic bench, an information board for Medstead pond, and a donation towards the new cooker for the village hall kitchen.

The new year's funding is now available so if you have a project which will benefit our community please download an application form from East Hampshire District Ward Councillor for Four Marks and Medstead website and hand it to me or Deborah for signature.

I have as ever spent the largest % of my time dealing with planning issues. Looking to the future, Officers are working hard on part 3 of the local plan which involves allocating land for affordable homes, older person's homes, gypsies and traveller sites and updating the SPB. There will also be a call for sites - possible SHLAA sites - but just because a site is listed as a SHLAA it does not mean it would get planning permission. The recent Government white paper means changes may have to be made to local plans and East Hampshire's will certainly need to be updated on a regular basis to ensure we do not have a period with no current plan as we had a few years ago.

We have seen the building begin on two of our large sites and a third about to start, we got the mud we expected! Things seem to have calmed down along Lymington Bottom Rd but Friars Oak will begin in the next month or so, not being built by WLG but by Bellway Homes who have just bought the site, attending their first residents liaison meeting on Monday evening. I feel these meetings are very important because they offer the opportunity for residents to talk directly to the developers. Sadly both Cala and Miller Homes are missing this opportunity by insisting that their meetings are held in the mornings.

Recently we have seen the Neighbourhood Plan policies used to good effect to prevent the overdevelopment of a site in Lymington Bottom which did not respect the character of the street scene.

We have also seen permissions given for four gypsy pitches in Willis Lane which many people feel is too many in one place. Once the five year housing land supply for such pitches is secured and part 3 of the local plan is made we will be able to have proper planning for such sites in future.

Both Parish Councillors and myself have spent many hours dealing with amendments to plans once a site has commenced - one particular site even managed to change the numbers of rooms in each house. This trend has been noted by the planning officers and letters sent to developers pointing out that they should build what they applied for, let us hope for better next year.

TPO trees have been inspected by the tree officer Stewart Garside who has surveyed the trees in the villages. The penalties can be very large if permission is not given for works needing to be done. For example if a TPO tree is removed to enable access to a site the fine can be the whole amount of the profit that would be made.

During this year I have become a member of East Hampshire cabinet with responsibility for Welfare and Healthier Lifestyles. One of the projects being undertaken will be Festiwell to be held on Sunday July 9th at Four Marks recreation ground. Festiwell will offer ideas on how small changes to lifestyle can bring big health benefits, there will be a run, walks, demos and have a go sessions for many sports. Not all of us want to partake of vigorous exercise but most gentle activity can be very beneficial so gardening and hobby clubs will be showing what they have to offer. There is also an area for mindful activity. Of course food is always a big issue so we hope to have new options and ideas on show. Health providers are coming to offer help and ideas too so something to inspire us all, please put the date in your diary.

A health issue that I have spent time recently working on is the stroke service provided by Royal Surrey County Hospital. At the moment we are in a consultation period but it seems very likely that the stroke unit will close. Most people who have need of expert stroke services in Four Marks and Medstead will be taken by ambulance to Winchester or Basingstoke. From what I have learned whilst investigating this subject it is essential that an ambulance is called rather than taking the person by car to the hospital, this is because ambulances take patients directly to the stroke units whereas patients taken by car are admitted through A&E which will take far longer.

Since Mark Kemp Gee and his highways team have finally dug new drainage areas flooding has been far less in Lymington Bottom. They are still working on the flooding by the school.

Parking at the schools remains a serious problem but it has been included on the work plan for this year and I have been checking regularly to ensure the problems are looked at as soon as possible. In the meantime I would urge all parents to just take a little longer to think about

where they park and how their actions affect others. Never easy to leave enough time for the school run but better to be late than cause danger to others.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – DIST. CLLR DEBORAH JACKSON

The year started well, with the successful referendum result and subsequent adoption by EHDC of the Medstead and Four Marks Neighbourhood Plan. For a while it seemed that a local landowner might put in a legal challenge, but nothing materialised, so we now our community's own legal document sitting alongside the District Councils Local Plan. My heartfelt thanks go out once again to all those involved in producing this outstanding document.

Whilst work at Charles Church comes to a close we have seen development commence with a vengeance at the Miller/ Beechcroft/ Carla sites. Despite the experience and lessons learned at the sites in Four Marks it has proved incredibly difficult to get these new developers to not only meet with residents but actually comply with the conditions of their planning permissions. As many of you know, trying to get something as simple as a wheel wash facility installed, let alone actually being used, has been an uphill struggle.

Just imagine the frustration to be told; at the first liaison meeting in December, that there was no way that such equipment could be installed on the Miller site before the end of January, as there was no space for it on site! Whilst I fully support the hard work of the District Council's stretched Enforcement team, it was extremely disappointing that they appeared a totally unable to help us by enforcing this simple requirement. And so we had to wait. After six months of mud (and all the rest) on Lymington Bottom Road, filth that extended over the pavements under the railway bridge and even on to the A31, we are now seeing improvements in this respect, including weekly sweeping of the pavements.

The next battle is on my agenda will be the unauthorised early starts, lack of consideration in parking, and the state of the roads (that one is close to my heart, having lost a tyre to a giant pothole). The next Miller/ Beechcroft/ Carla resident liaison meeting is on Friday 28 April at 11:45 in Medstead Village Hall, all are welcome.

In my life at Penns Place, I have made representation on the behalf of the ward against applications at four meetings of EHDCs Planning Committee, with mixed success. These were for "Highfield" in Lymington Bottom, Station Approach Medstead, reserved matters for the land north of Boyneswood Lane and the extended traveller site in Willis Lane. The one appeal I attended, against the proposed housing at Mansfield Business Park was a particularly unpleasant experience but part and parcel of the job.

Joint environmental services with Winchester City Council have seen improvements in the services provided by Biffa. Uptake of green waste licences remains good and is almost at capacity. The committee has agreed to fund additional litter picking on the major roads in the district, together with a campaign to discourage motorists and major trunk road users from littering.

Following the introduction of charges for certain types of waste, fly tipping has inevitably increased increased-it would be interesting to see whether the additional income balances the cost of clearance.

There has been some recent concern amongst residents about a rumour to close the waste site in Alton. Despite pressure to sign online petitions and the like, I can confirm that it is just a rumour, and although opening times have been reduced, there are currently no plans to close the facility.

The District Councillor Community Grants scheme once again proved popular, with the majority of my money benefiting the area south of the railway line. Projects supported this year have included:

- Upgraded cooking facilities in Four Marks village hall
- Clothing and equipment for the Medstead speed watch team, who are now active in the lower part of Lymington Bottom Road
- The Rotary Club, to support the Christmas Lunch event
- The Mansfield Park patient group, to help them kick start their new programme of health awareness talks.

I am pleased to be able to advise that the scheme is running again for 2017, with Ingrid and I each having £4500 of funding available.

Finally I would just like to add that, as ever, I am only too happy to make myself available to discuss further any District Council related matters with residents of the parish.

8. COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – CLLR MARK KEMP-GEE

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, and thank you Chairman and Councillors for inviting me to your meeting.

A lot in the press recently about Adult Social Care (ASC) – by 2024 25% of population will be of pensionable age. HCC has 1.2million population. 20,000 ASC Clients.

£1billion spent last year by HCC (excluding education). £460m of this on adult social care, (with £60m recharged to users). National Living Wage (NLW) will add £10million p.a. to our ASC cost.

Council Tax 2017/2018 up 4.99%, 3% of this ASC levy, 1% increase in Council Tax is £5million, so ASC levy work £15million this year but can only be £30million over 3 years – Hants needs £60million. Hence, importance of Central Government in Budget giving us £37 million over the next 3 years which will help greatly but only a short term fix!

However, the bad news, Rate Support Grant (RSG) cut by £128million over the next 3 years! With our major challenges being pay and price inflation of £80 million and extra ASC cost of £60million.

All this, means is that HCC has to find an extra £221 million over the next 3 years to maintain services at the same level as today. We can only increase Council Tax by 2% a year without a referendum and the addition of 3 years Council Tax hike of 2% pa and 3%pa. ASC levy and £37million Government ASC extra help comes to £124million which means that the County Council has to find savings and make cuts totalling £124million over the 3 years. By way of contrast, EHDC's budget is £12million in total and we have 78 Councillors and the 11 Hampshire Districts have some 450!

But, please note that people contribute to their own care if they have more than £23,000 of free assets but the value home is EXCLUDED if they continue to live at home.

Highways – 5,000 miles of roads, most of them rural – 10,000 pot holes a year repaired and road maintenance costs £60million. Capital programme of £220 million on new roads and bypasses.

£300 million School Building Programme – new housing needs.

800 Extra Care beds in Assisted Living Accommodation (own homes) + new programme coming to provide 600 cottage hospital type beds as a bridge between leaving hospital and being able to go home.

Cllr Kemp Gee stated that it has been a hard year and was impressed that we had all presented a united front. He saluted the residents especially due to the problems experienced in Brislands Lane. He confirmed that the re-surfacing of the road had been postponed until all the works had been completed and he had written asking when this would now take place. He commented on the new pelican crossing and there will soon be another one! Speed limits into The Shrave are being moved and new signage being organised. Other issues - School parking, A31/Brick Kiln Lane drainage/soakaway, Boyneswood Road Bridge/Pedestrian facilities – work in progress. Also noted that HWRC is not closing.

9. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (NP) REPORT – Nick Stenning

Chairman of NP group, not a planner but learned the jargon. A Medstead resident. NPs are now very popular with 280 nationally. Our NP was adopted May 2016, after 2 years hard work, 41% voted, (above national average), with 93% in favour. Thanks to all involved. Since the plan was 'made', the team, sponsored by both Parishes, stepped down. The follow up was taken over by the PCs who requested a modified group to continue with a reduced membership but to include both Chairs of planning committees. The new group would deal with NP impact and appeals when appropriate and continual vigilance. Noted, that Government inspectors have referenced the NP policies.

The recent Parliament Housing white paper refers to a neighbourhood planning bill with good bits and bad bits. Eg: 3 yrs land supply with a neighbourhood plan, 5 yr review. We all voted on a plan through to 2028. LP3 - now being development management or other clarifications. Concerns - possible impact on the neighbourhood plan, call for new sites. Which includes market housing, why? But have recognised they don't need the answer. Settlement Policy Boundary - no actual statement to say it will be respected. Encouraging note is that District council will engage with NP groups to minimise any potential conflicts. So optimistic and positive but will work hard to ensure all is respected.

10. QUESTIONS

Mick Budd – wanted to end on a positive note and commented on the new tennis courts and multi sports arena being fabulous. He said we should be proud and thanked the Parish Council.

Cllr Foster thanked those for staying.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.50 pm.