

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Open Space Committee
Held on Wednesday 2nd January 2019 commencing at 8.30pm
At Four Marks Village Hall, Lymington Bottom, Four Marks**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Cllr Anne Tomlinson (Chairman), Cllrs Neil Bonter, John Davis, Dave Mills and Janet Foster
IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Goudie (Clerk/RFO) Cllr John Hammond
APOLOGIES:	None
ABSENCE:	Cllr Davie Edgar

19.01 OS OPEN SESSION

Cllr Tomlinson opened the meeting and invited items for the open session.

Cllr Hammond was in attendance and wished to raise some issues with reference to footpaths, encountered over the Christmas period.

- Were the Parish Council still operating a rolling replacement programme for kissing gates? The answer to this question was no, but it was suggested that should there be a stile identified where a kissing gate may be more appropriate then to let the Committee know and funds could be sourced to replace. This would be subject to land owner's consent and the stile being within the Parish of Four Marks.
- Is there a programme for cutting back footpaths? The Clerk responded that HCC offer a priority cutting programme and cut 5 footpaths in the Parish, once a year in July (currently 2,3,5,6 and 17a), however any separate issues identified can be dealt with the Lengthsman and/or our open space contractor. Two issues were noted, FP18, which is already on the list for a hard prune, and FP2 from Blackberry Lane to Winchester Road, Badger Close to Fairfield Green, two laurel bushes need cutting back.
- Finger post footpath signs. The clerk confirmed this is an ongoing project where all signs were to be replaced and standardised, but that this was a work in progress. HCC Rights of Way will only replace signs when broken, so some will need to be purchased. Cllr Mills reminded everyone with Footpath responsibilities to report issues to either himself or the Clerk, so an updated report can be kept.

The Clerk reported an infestation of rats on the ground adjacent to the Pavilion, and it was agreed that due to the vast number, EHDC environmental health should be contacted for advice.

The Clerk reported that the telephone line and broadband was now working at the new office, but had discovered a bench in the boiler room, which needs to be removed. It appears to be a memorial bench and it was suggested that it could be permanently fixed to the veranda area. The Clerk agreed to speak to James Coles to decide what to do with the bench.

There being no further items in the Open Session, the formal meeting commenced at 8.50pm. Standing Orders were applied.

19.02 OS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

19.03 OS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no Declarations of Interest.

19.04 OS COMMITTEE MINUTES

- The Minutes of the Open Space Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 5th December 2018, previously circulated, were proposed as an accurate record of the meeting, by Cllr Davis, seconded by Cllr Mills, approved and signed by the Chairman

There were no additional matters arising.

19.05 OS AREA UPDATE

Allotments

- Land sale to the rear of 33 Chaffinch Road. **Action ongoing**

Badger Close

- Maintenance work completed. No further reported issues.

Cemetery

- Cemetery spoil, remove and bolster banks at Recreation Ground. **Action pending.**
- Tree pruning works. **Action pending**
- New hedge/tree planting. **Awaiting quotation.**

Footpaths

- Clerk to prepare submission to Rights of Way for new/replacement posts. **Action pending**
- Complete footpath report and submit priority cutting list. **Action pending**
See *Open Session notes for further comments on footpath issues.*

Kingswood Copse

- No reported issues.

Lymington Bottom Green

- Tree pruning works on the green and woodland. **On hold until later in the year.**

Oak Green

- CCTV. **Action ongoing**
- Grit bin now installed.
- Clerk to contact bus shelter provider to see if roof struts can be adjusted for access. **Action pending**
- Oak Tree pruning works. **Action pending**

Recreation Ground

- Recreation Ground sign, awaiting planning permission advice. **Action pending**
- Proposed purchase of Land between Skate Park and Pavilion. Agreed to postpone meeting with EHDC until January and completion of LAA site review. **Action on hold**
- Ash Tree behind scout hut, planning application submitted for removal of one limb and dead wood. **Action pending**
- Removal of dead trees, deadwood from Ash by Cemetery and pruning works. **Action pending**
- CCTV. **Action ongoing**

Station Gardens

- No reported issues

Swelling Hill Pond

- Site visit now taken place, quotations being sought for dredging and shoring. **Action ongoing.**
- Land ownership query. Land surveyor now approached, quotation pending. **Action ongoing**
 - *The land surveyor had now provided a quotation to survey the land, £675-£775 and subsequent visit to mark the boundary if required, £325-500. It was agreed to contact the adjacent land owner and see if 50% of this cost would be acceptable.*
- Beech tree to be removed. **Action pending**
- All deadwood, removal of Ash tree, laurel trimmed back now carried out.
 - *Cllr Davis raised concern over the Ash Tree on the public right of way, and whether this should be removed at the same time as the Beech tree. Currently the tree was not situated on Parish Council land, and it was agreed that until such time as the boundary issues are resolved, as the tree is not substantial and poses minimal risk, it would be reviewed again at a later date, as appropriate.*

General items

- Dog fouling improvement scheme in conjunction with the primary school. **Action pending**

19.06 OS NEW ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

19.06.1 Maintenance and Ground Works Contract

Following the recent resignation of the maintenance man, a discussion took place on whether to replace or outsource the work to sub-contractors.

It was agreed to;

- Contact Eddie Hodkin, who currently looked after Oak Green to see if he would be prepared to take on any additional jobs.
- Contact Semrah Landscape Management to see if they could offer any additional services within their current contract that Eddie did not wish to take on.
- Source an ad-hoc maintenance person, by social media post and advertisements in the Four Marks News, on a task by task basis.
- Compile a directory of preferred suppliers currently being used and build up as new and approved tradesman are found.

It was unanimously agreed not to employ a new member of staff and any work required, from now on, whether maintenance or additional office staff would be on a sub-contract basis.

Any contractor appointed would have to provide copies of public liability insurance and qualifications as appropriate.

19.06.2 CCTV:

Cllr Bonter circulated a timeline report on his work to date sourcing appropriate CCTV systems for both Oak Green and the Recreation Ground.

He confirmed that he had received a communication from the company he had approached to quote and assist identifying the Parish Council needs, requesting payment of a consultancy fee following their site visit and preparation of subsequent recommendations. Cllr Bonter advised that he had approached this company, as had failed to have any success getting local companies to quote and, as he was acquainted with the contact, had been

rather surprised to receive the request for payment. There had been no initial indication that there would be a consultancy fee and believed the site visit had been carried out in conjunction with a visit to family locally.

The issue of paying a consultancy fee without prior approval or knowledge raised considerable concern amongst members and several questions were asked with reference to the service that was provided, and whether the company in question had provided a quotation for consideration. Members agreed it was unusual for service providers to charge a separate consultancy fee as this was usually part of the quoting process, and it was suggested that perhaps the request had been submitted upon the realisation that the Parish Council would not be able to purchase a system of this specification.

Following considerable debate, it was agreed to offer a contribution of £400 towards the suggested fee of £715.50, as Cllr Bonter had been put into a difficult position, but in future all members must ensure that any expenditure of this nature needed Council approval in advance.

Returning to the actual provision of CCTV, following a detailed discussion it was RESOLVED to pursue the following action with Full Council approval:

- A fully operational camera on a pole covering the skate park area, with an underground electric cable linked to the pavilion.
- Provision of up to six domestic specification cameras to cover the other areas at the Recreation Ground, and installation costs
- Refurbishment of the existing cameras at Oak Green and provision of a new cabinet to house recording equipment, and removal from the current location of the fish and chip shop.;

Cllr Bonter was asked to approach the aforementioned company and ask them to quote to provide a substantially reduced specification as detailed above. If the company declined to quote, then the contribution towards the consultancy fee would be paid, upon receipt of a formal invoice, as agreed, separately. If they agree to quote and the costs are acceptable, the consultancy fee will be paid as part of the costs for installation.

If the company decline to quote for the works, alternative providers will need to be sought, and in the interim Cllr Tomlinson agreed to check out the distance on the system she currently has, and Cllr Mills agreed to get further information on the system he had seen in operation.

19.06.3 Christmas Tree Lights

It was agreed, following discussion, that the Christmas lights at Oak Green needed to be upgraded but needed advice and ideas on what could be achieved cost effectively and also look at the option and costs of hiring lights rather than purchasing them. The Clerk agreed to contact Blachere illumination and request a site visit to progress this further.

The Chairman advised that the lights would be disconnected at the weekend, prior to the removal of the tree early the following week.

19.06.4 Dog Fouling – 2019 initiative

Cllr Bonter confirmed that he had not heard back from the school with reference to the suggestion of a poster competition for the children in an attempt to combat dog fouling. Whilst this was still an ongoing problem with potentially 5% of the dog owners not picking up after their dogs, in relation to the high numbers of dogs walked daily at the Recreation Ground, it was an issue that was unlikely to be resolved easily, but could be a lot worse. Having a daily presence at the Recreation Ground will be of benefit, and the installation of CCTV may also have a small effect on this issue as well.

Dogs had been seen in the MUGA on several occasions although it was agreed that this was more likely due to the gates being left open, it was suggested that no dog signs should be put on the gates to remind users that dogs should not be in the area.

It was agreed that this should be monitored, with regular reminders in the Four Marks News, and revisited again in the future or if the situation worsens.

19.07 OS DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Wednesday 6th February 2019, **8.30pm.**

19.08 OS The Chairman closed the Meeting at 10.00pm.

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Chairman