



Medstead Annual Parish Assembly Minutes

Wiltshire Room, Medstead Village Hall

21^s May 2025, 7.00pm

Present from the Council: Cllr. Mike Smith, Cllr. Mark Brayford, Cllr, Ken Kercher, Cllr. Frank Maloney, Cllr. Gordon Mitchell, Cllr. Phil Quinlan

Also present: Julie Russell (Parish Clerk), District Councillor Neal Day, two members of the public

1. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the Medstead Annual Parish Meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from: Cllr Jez Hood, District Councillors Roland Richardson and Ilena Allsopp, County Councillor Mark Kemp-Gee, Footpath Warden , the Pond Maintenance Representative and represents of other Clubs who had provided reports.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY HELD ON 17th APRIL 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th April 2024 were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. MEDSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman gave a report which is in Appendix 1.

5. HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

Cllr Kemp-Gee sent his apologies and his report is in Appendix 1

6. DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT

Cllr Neal Day gave a report, which is in Appendix 1.

7. FOOTPATH OFFICER'S REPORT

The Footpath Officer sent her apologies and a report from the Medstead Footpath Warden is in Appendix 1.

8. MEDSTEAD AND FOURMARKS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr. Maloney gave an update on plans to revise the Neighbourhood Plan and he gave feedback on a recent public consultation event. These are in Appendices 2 and 3.

9. MEDSTEAD SPORTS CLUB

There was no report received from the Sports Club but the new Chairman of Medstead Sports Club attended and outlined changes to the Committee.

10.REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Reports from Medstead Village Hall Committee, Medstead Gardening Club, Speedwatch, Medstead Allotments Association, Pond Volunteers and Neighbourhood Policing are in Appendix 1. None of the representatives were present so they were available at the meeting as printed reports for attendees to take and read.

12. QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

13. VISIT TO THE PARISH OFFICE

Members of the public were invited to look at the new Parish Office and enjoy refreshments.

Appendix 1

1. Medstead Parish Council's Chairman's Annual Report, May 2025

The work on the sports pavilion and new parish office is now finished. The Medstead Village Fete shed has now been handed over to the Fete Committee so shortly the container will be removed from the Village Hall car park.

There was a good turnout for VE day, despite the weather, and we plan to do the same on VJ day, Friday 15th August, so please bring a picnic and look out for further information.

As a council we are having to spend time and money with Four Marks on a new Neighbourhood plan to give us the best chance of influencing the level of location of new housing.

We have had to increase our precept this year to cover additional costs of the Neighbourhood Plan, additional employment costs and to increase reserves, as the previous level was too low.

We had a request to look into a Judicial Review for a planning application decision. which we have done by consulting the Hampshire Association of Local Councils and using their recommended Planning Advisor to look into the issues for us.

New flashing lights have been installed on both sides of school for when children are coming and leaving School. We have had a footpath at the entrance to the village hall installed by HCC, together with a crossing point to the School. The long-awaited footpath in front of the bowls club will be started shortly, which will mean that when parents are dropping off or collecting their children they can get out on to a footpath and not the road.

2. Hampshire County Councillor Report – Cllr Mark Kemp-Gee

Thanks for asking me to attend the Medstead APM this evening and I am sorry not to attend in person but am on leave. Here is my report.

There are major changes planned for local government in wider Hampshire with the creation of a mayoral strategic combined authority in May 2026 with an elected mayor. This authority will cover the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton and the Hampshire County Council area. The powers transferred to it will include strategic planning including housing, transport, strategic road and rail networks and economic growth and industrial and commercial development, the police and rescue services including fire. It gives you a clue that our existing PCC, Donna Jones, is likely to be a candidate for the new mayoralty!

All the admin required to create this meant that this May's County Council elections were postponed until 2026 so you have got me for a further year - apologies for that!

Perhaps even more cataclysmic is that the new Labour Government wishes to also totally reorganise local government in England including Hampshire.

The 11 district councils and the historic County Council are to be abolished probably in about 2/3 years' time and replaced by 3/4 unitary councils with all the powers of the existing councils less those removed to the strategic authority.

We don't know at this stage which unitary East Hampshire will join. Possibly one based on Basingstoke or Winchester - we simply don't know but it is unlikely to be one based on Portsmouth

or Southampton. And we don't know, as I say, even how many new unitaries there will be but probably 4 would be my guess. But the County Council is fighting hard for 3 with the rump of the existing county being one and enlarged Portsmouth and enlarged Southampton being the other 2 - the Isle of Wight will remain as is.

There are real dangers of disruption to all existing services provided by local government in Hampshire if this is done badly. And the funding positions remain a key unanswered area at present.

We don't know either precisely what will happen to parish councils but they are very likely to continue, possibly with enhanced powers.

Lots going on!

On Medstead matters:

During the past year I have been one of the local potholes/flytipping reporters - well done to all who report these issues. The more reports the quicker the remedial actions!

Hampshire Highways have made some progress on developer funded initiatives around the primary school. A safer crossing point has been established at the bell mouth of the village hall carpark opposite the school.

I am now increasingly hopeful that the footway extension on the west side of Roe Downs Road, down from the school past the Bowling Club, will be constructed during this summer's school holidays but it's not in the bag yet! This will help parents dropping children off at the school especially when wet muddy conditions prevail and should again add to the children's safety - this has been a long term parish council initiative.

In South Medstead we are still battling with Highways Development Planners to point out the pressure on road junctions and the Boyneswood Road bridge from the current rash of housing applications. It's only a matter of time before these junctions onto the A31 will be at or near peak time capacity.

A major project we should address with the Parish Council going forward is the knotty problem of the 'pond' that always floods' at the Five Ash/Soldridge/South Town Roads junction. I look forward to working with your Parish Council on this troublesome issue during the coming year.

3. East Hants District Councillors Annual Report 2024/25

Your Councillors

A reminder of our contact details and current committee appointments:

Neal Day - Licensing, Assistant Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Audit reserve, Human Resources reserve, Overview & Scrutiny reserve

Attendance record in role to date - 92%

Email: neal.day@easthants.gov.uk

Mobile: 07596 539249

Ilena Allsopp - Standards, Licensing reserve, Overview & Scrutiny reserve and Planning reserve

Attendance record in role to date - 81%

Email: ilena.allsopp@easthants.gov.uk

Mobile 079181 85314

Roland Richardson - Licensing, Planning, Planning Policy

Attendance record in role to date - 100%

Email roland.richardson@easthants.gov.uk

Mobile 07739 917438

Annual Report

Working as a team, we have established ourselves within the community.

We meet every two weeks (online or in person) to discuss case work, current issues and division of responsibilities within our district.

Devolution and local government reorganisation (LGR)

We receive regular updates from Richard Millard, leader of the council. To date there have been a series of meetings between council Leaders and Chief Executives of the 14 other councils in the county. However, there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure the future of local government in Hampshire is stable and financially viable.

Please see the following links for up-to-date information:

<https://www.easthants.gov.uk/devolution>

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/governmentinhampshire/devolution>

East Hampshire Norse crews have cleared litter from the verges of the A31 while Hampshire County Council's Highways team carried out grass cutting. The clear-up along the A31, which started in early April was completed on Tuesday 15 April, ahead of the Easter weekend.

Crews covered over 15 miles in five days and collected more than 800 black bags of litter, weighing more than 2060kgs.

The work was co-ordinated to be carried out on four separate occasions, between the county council's grass cutting teams and our street care provider, East Hampshire Norse to ensure that they could safely pick-up the litter on the busy stretch of East Hampshire road.

Despite this great news the councillors are aware that the lay-by on the A31 at Chawton remains a particular issue. We have taken photographs and reported it to the officers along with our thanks for the much-improved state of the main carriageway.

The Councillor Community Grant Scheme

This year's budget is £7,000 (increased from last year) and is allocated to each District Councillor to support local voluntary/not for profit organisations within, or that benefit, their ward. Grants could be used to help kick start community projects which support local residents, improve the local environment or improve the provision of services and facilities.

Please discuss your applications with us before you visit the EHDC website.

For the 2023/24 year District Councillors each had a £4500 grant budget. Grants were allocated as follows:

| Ilana Allsopp | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| | Medstead Parish Council | Towards the installation of a water supply extension in Medstead Cemetery | £1,000.00 |
| | Broadlands Riding for the Disabled | Purchase of a solar powered energiser | £375.00 |
| | Chawton Pre-School | Towards purchase of 2 Kindle tablets and a photo printer | £420.00 |
| | Medstead Primary School | Towards Adventure Playground Equipment | £1,000.00 |
| | Homestead Road Residents Group | Bridleway surface regrade | £800.00 |
| | Four Marks Parish Council | Village Picnic 2024 | £500.00 |
| | A31 Primary Network | Initial room hire for Andy's Man Club | £285.00 |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------|
| | Chawton Pre School | Further payment for high chair | £120.00 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------|

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Joanna Nelson/Roland Richardson | | | |
| | Medstead Parish Council | Towards the installation of a water supply extension in Medstead Cemetery | £1,000.00 |
| | Medstead Parish Council | Towards the cost of a community board | £1,000.00 |
| | Broadlands Riding for the Disabled | Purchase of a solar powered energiser | £375.00 |
| | Alton Arts Festival | Mental health theatre workshops during Alton Arts Festival | £500.00 |
| | Four Marks Parish Council | Village Picnic 2024 | £940.00 |
| | Four Marks Parish Council | Badger Orchard restoration | £685.00 |

| | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Neal Day | | | |
| | Four Marks Parish Council | Bench for the cemetery | £985.83 |
| | Medstead Parish Council | Towards the installation of a water supply extension in Medstead Cemetery | £1,000.00 |
| | Broadlands Riding for the Disabled | Towards purchase of Stihl battery chainsaw | £650.00 |
| | Medstead Primary School | Towards Adventure Playground Equipment | £1,000.00 |
| | Chawton Parish Council | Replacing a bench facing Jane Austins house | £864.17 |

Planning Applications

This is a quick summary of some of the major applications, please use the EHDC planning portal (<https://publicaccess.easthants.gov.uk/planning/index.html>) for an accurate record. But please also let us know if there are any applications that are not on our list that you think should be.

| Date | Closes | Ref | Loc | Decision level | Number of Additional Dwellings | Area | Village |
|----------|-----------|--------------------|--|----------------|--------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Date | | 39009 | Lymington Bottom road - Pig Farm. | | 0 | | Medstead |
| Date | | 52254 | Lymington Bottom | | 79 | | Medstead |
| Date | | 55358/001 | S of Winchester Road (Barn Lane) | | 120 | | Four Marks |
| Date | | 56936 | Lymington Barns | | 7 | | Medstead |
| Date | | 20253/026 | Station Approach | | 6 | | Medstead |
| Date | | 25256/050 | Holland Drive | | 45 | | Medstead |
| Date | | 56082/004 | 46 Lymington Bottom | | 60 | | Four Marks |
| Date | | 58788/002 | Longbourn Way | | 95 LB | | Medstead |
| Date | | 59143/001 | Holland Drive | | 9 | | Medstead |
| Date | | 20252/004 | 103 Blackberry Lane | | 35 | | Four Marks |
| Date | 6/1/2025 | 23291/031 | Lymington Barns | | | Sports | Medstead |
| Date | | 27000/005 | 61 LBR | Delegated | | 53 LB | Medstead |
| Date | 5/1/2025 | 29550/037 | Bedford House | Delegated | | Care Home | Four Marks |
| Date | 4/11/2025 | 30800/013 | 131 Winchester Road | Delegated | | 22 | Four Marks |
| Date | | 50216/003. | West of Millfield, Alton Lane | Delegated | | 100 | Four Marks |
| Date | | 55318/001 | Beechlands | Committee | | 62 Red Hill | Medstead |
| Date | | 60040 60040/001 | Telegraph Lane | | | 10 | Four Marks |
| Date | | 60425/001 | Semaphore Farm, | Delegated | | 2 Telegraph Lane | Four Marks |
| Date | | 60662/001 | Land between Conway & Millfield, Alton Lane, Four Marks, Alton | | | 0 | Four Marks |
| 5/5/2025 | | EHDC-25-0055-OUT | Barn Lane | | | 115 | Four Marks |
| 5/8/2025 | | EHDC-25-0160-OUT 5 | Boyneswood Close | Delegated | | 2 Boyneswood | Four Marks |
| 2/3/2025 | | EHDC-25-0143-FUL | Melrose Alton Lane | Delegated | | 0 | Four Marks |

4. Medstead Parish Council Footpath Report

The parish of Medstead contains 35 Rights of Way (ROW); 26 footpaths, 8 Bridleways and 1 Byway open to all traffic (BOAT). These paths are very well used by both villagers and walkers from outside the area and provide a wonderful resource for exercise, mental wellbeing and recreation. All the landowners I have met have been very supportive of the ROW network. The main concern I hear from landowners is people, and more so their dogs, not keeping to the ROW.

HCC have responsibility for the ROW network but with very limited funding they rely on volunteers, such as Alton Ramblers, to carry out most of the maintenance work. The only ongoing significant issue on the HCC Report a Problem website is the surface (Mud!) along FPs 155/18 and 155/19 which is a link route between north and south Medstead and used by children to walk to Medstead School from South Medstead. The surface is made worse by horses using the footpath under historic permission from Medstead PC as riding on the roads is unsafe. The issue is on hold by HCC awaiting resources.

Work carried out over the past 12 months includes:

- FP 155/2 Vegetation clearance Alton Ramblers
- FP 155/12 New handrails crossing Common Hill HCC and Alton Ramblers
- FP 155/14 Vegetation clearance Alton Ramblers
- FP 155/14 Removal of broken stile HCC
- FP 155/16 Vegetation clearance behind cemetery Medstead PC
- FP 155/28 Vegetation clearance Alton Ramblers
- BOAT 155/34 Vegetation clearance HCC
- Various signage repairs/replacement HCC
- Various small vegetation clearance Medstead Footpath Warden

I walk all the parish paths every 3 months and have no current issues. However, the vegetation is starting to grow and many of our narrower paths will soon require vegetation clearance.

Louise Fletcher

Medstead Footpath Warden, Alton Ramblers

5. Medstead Neighbourhood Policing Officer – PC Alex Rount

PC Alex Routt sends his apologies due to other work commitments, but here is a link to the webpage for the neighbourhood policing:

<https://www.hampshirealert.co.uk/Content/LocalArea/33058/Four%20Marks%20And%20Medstead>

6. Annual report of Medstead Village Hall for the Annual Parish Assembly

Objectives

Medstead Village Hall as a charity, has two defined objectives, which cover a range of aims which remain unchanged, which are to

- A. The primary objective is to use the building (or any other assets) improve the conditions of life for the residents of the Parish of Medstead, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, race or political, religious or other opinions
- B. And enable the property to be used, for other uses subject to payment, as long as it doesn't interfere with the primary objective

Progress this year

The Committee can be rightly proud this year and of all that has been achieved – it has been a real year of change and progress in meeting our objectives.

Improvements

The Committee took some major steps and improvements this year, building on the strategic visioning work which we began in autumn 2023. These works included the following:-

- We have improved our climate change mitigation and reduced costs and reliance on the grid by installing solar panels. So far this year, the solar panels have produced almost 72% of our electricity requirements (with almost 20% of solar power also being exported to the grid) making a saving of 8231kg of CO₂
- We've gained grant funding for upgrading LED lighting to increase flexibility of the hall by installing dimmable lights (for pilates, cinema or other activities). We anticipate these works being completed during the summer.
- We've also gained partial grant funding to improve the sound quality and speech intelligibility in both halls. We await the outcome of two further grant applications, ahead of these works being carried out, which we hope will be later in the year.

To continue to deliver the best service to our residents, we know that we need to continue to engage with our community. Over and above the activities above, we have created new opportunities to do this, including;

- Our Warm Places initiative, which sees the village hall opening when it is not due to be above 5 degrees, giving people a place to drop in, chat, socialise and keep warm. We have also been able to harness the power of volunteering with a great new group of volunteers for this initiative.
- Re-vamping our website, which is now more vibrant and now features
 - An events diary for venues right across our community (including village hall, church hall, church, sports venues, pub, café and craft venues (pottery pantry and snowdrop studio)
 - A clubs and classes diary, for all venues across the village.
 - Online booking for events e.g. Medstead Movies and sewing classes, in addition to room hire.
- We have created a new 'subscription' to our website, where residents can get automated emails direct to their inbox, letting them know what events are happening in the village. We

hope to be able to develop this subscription service, potentially to use for online consultations and/or making an electronic 'Medstead Times' magazine available, in time.

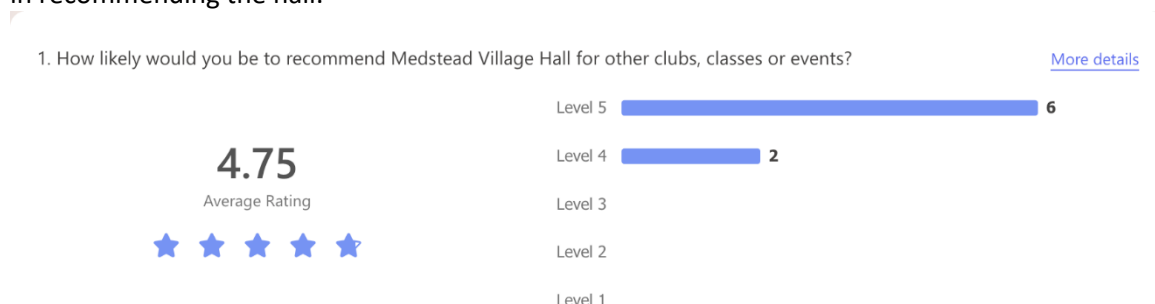
- Our 'Connect the connectors' event, which the Village Hall hosted again this month, bringing together all those groups and organisations, which themselves 'activate' our community such as the Parish Council, Sports Clubs, Fete and Ball Committee's
- We are creating other events, to continue to engage a wider range of our residents and offer new opportunities to come together, be social, learn or have new experiences e.g. our regular coffee mornings, Medstead Movies, Bingo!, Beginners Sewing Classes as well as taking part in the Let's Dance National Event, and the recent VE Day celebrations.
- We're pleased that we've created the conditions which encourages other opportunities to learn, such as the new 'Smokin' Needles' classes.
- In addition to providing details of all events via our website, and publishing these to our Facebook and new Instagram pages – we also ensure that the 'digitally excluded' can find out what is going on through posters via A1 and A2 noticeboards throughout the village – so even those without the internet can see what is going on.

Feedback

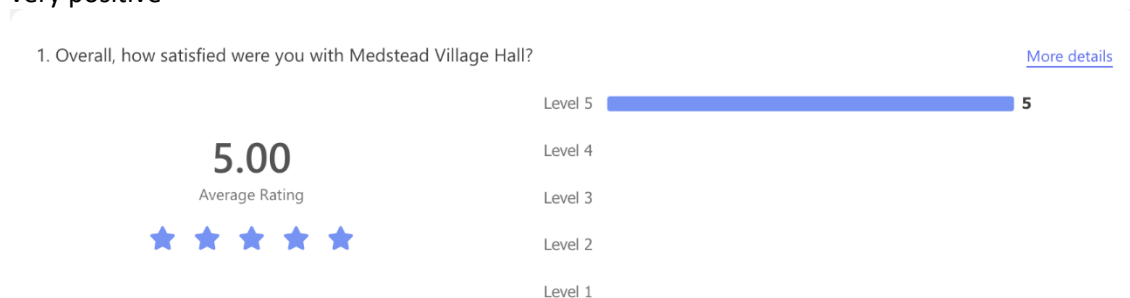
Clearly our main asset is the hall itself, and we aim to provide high quality services. To ensure the ongoing quality of our offer, we carry out two surveys on an annual basis

- The first was a survey of our regular users including all the clubs and classes
- The second was a survey of people who may have hired the hall for an individual event, often for the first time

Of those who responded, from amongst our regular users, it was clear most would be very positive in recommending the hall.



We had a smaller number of people who responded from those who had hired the hall for a one off event – 60% had hired for the first time, 40% had hired before. However, those who responded were very positive



The Future

The Committee has had a busy year, with plenty of activities underway at the time of writing. There are a significant number of projects which will need further focus to see successful delivery including;

- a. Considering the structure of the charity – with appraisal of the benefits of moving to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which is akin to a limited company and

- b. Applying for Planning Permission for the air conditioning system, ahead of procuring and installing the equipment
- c. An area of potential focus could be associated with mental health issues, the single largest area of concern highlighted at a meeting of the village hall, Parish Council, School, Church and GP's surgery.

Alan Milne

Chairman of Medstead Village Hall Management Committee

7. Speedwatch

The 30mph speed sign south of the school now has a solar panel so will always be working. We would like to fit them to our other units but they are not cheap.

Speedwatch is currently having problems with being able to go out more than once a week as we only have six volunteers. We are looking for more volunteers who are able to give up one hour of their time per week, so if you are interested, please let us know.

8. Medstead Village Pond

This year the Medstead Village Pond has been restored by volunteers. with the materials funded by Medstead Parish Council using S106 grant money from EHDC.

The pond has been cleared, dug out, skimmed and an EPDM rubber liner has been installed. The plan was to allow the pond to retain water, whilst allowing flood/drainage to utilise the soakaway in the middle of the pond. The pond is open to road drainage and when we have heavy downpours this can at times overwhelm the pond and cause flooding local road drainage, as well as through direct rainfall, so it is important to maintain the balance, but so far everything is performing well. The soakaway looks to be working well, and manages any overflow efficiently.

The pond has been planted with marginal plants around one of the edges and aquatic plants have been added to the pond, to assist in oxygenating and wildlife. The edges have been dug and cleared of weeds and a top layer of soil has been added to allow new plants to be added, one side of the pond by Roe Downs road has not been dressed, as the plan was to intentionally leave this area as a wildlife area/natural, to allow less impact to wildlife in and around the pond, this will be managed as part of the maintenance. The gravel paths have been cleared, but again will be managed and redressed as part of the ongoing maintenance of the pond, where I intend to have the paths topped up with a new pea shingle. The original duck house has been restored and placed back into the centre of the pond, with floating device but secured to soakaway, which provides an attractive feature and for a short while this spring it was home to a family of ducklings, as both adult ducks seem to have made the pond their home.

The project work is almost completed, with just a bit of tidying up and remaining unwanted materials to remove. There are also plans to plant some perennial plants in the pond area, but again this will be managed as part of maintenance.

Medstead Parish Council has expressed its sincere gratitude to all those who have given up their time to restore this attractive village feature and to those also helping to maintain it. Often there are now people sitting on the benches by both locals, walkers and cyclists passing through, and it is good to see that it is appreciated.

Tom Page (Pond Maintenance Rep.)

9. Medstead Allotments Association

The Medstead Allotment Association manages the allotments at Nelson Drive on behalf of the Parish Council who are the landowners. There are 18 plots of 50m² each, one of which is subdivided in two half plots. The site opened in the autumn of 2019 and is a popular resource for the parish and has a constantly evolving waiting list of aspiring allotmenters.

The MAA Officers and Committee organise the day to day work of the association including regular working parties, social events and keeping an eye on the general condition of the plots.

Because of the relatively small number of plots on the site, our finances suffer from a lack of economies of scale and so fixed charges (rent to the PC, electricity standing charge, water charges etc) are a major drain on our limited income. As a result, rents to our plot holders are higher than on neighbouring sites.

The association holds an annual open day when members of the local community are invited to visit and see the produce being grown and we use this opportunity to 'talk up' the benefits of having an allotment. The association is a member of the National Allotment Society which provides advice on good allotment practice and management.

Mike James Smith

Treasurer, Medstead Allotment Association

10. Medstead Gardeners Club

This successful club in Medstead village is celebrating its 50th year this year!

We have 125 members who attend regularly and get involved in speaker evenings, plant sales, garden visits, flower and produce shows, social events and village events like the Summer Fete. We are also getting involved in the local church celebrating its anniversary and providing a display of 'Gardening through the Ages'.

Our plant sales are very popular providing the community with an array of plants to buy and grow. Some of the speakers have covered topics such as 'Growing Alstroemerias', 'Exhibiting in Flower shows', 'Plants for ground Cover' and a talk on the National Garden Scheme.

The club meets all year apart from January when the weather is challenging and our gardens are resting.

We have a committee which consists of a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and other members who take on an array of roles to ensure the club runs smoothly and is successful.

There is an article provided each month in The Four Marks News and Villager for people to read about our news and have information if they want to join as a member or come as a guest.

Some of our events have supported local charities.