

STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Caroline Robinson

CLERK: Mrs. Jenny Hollington

Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 6th January 2014 at Steep Village Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Present:

Cllrs. Caroline Robinson (in the Chair)	Terry Cook
Charles Gibson	Simon Bridger
Jenny Martin	Nick Hurst
Jim MacDonald	Peter Thackrey
Peter Cruttenden	

In Attendance:

County Councillor, Vaughan Clarke
District Councillor, Nick Drew
Clerk, Jenny Hollington

There were no members of the public present.

APOLOGIES: None

- 14/01 **MINUTES** – The Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 4th November 2013 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed.
- 14/02 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - The Chairman reminded Councillors of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary interest in any matter on the Agenda.
- 14/03 **PUBLIC COMMENT** – None
- 14/04 **COUNTY COUNCILLOR COMMENT** – County Councillor, Vaughan Clarke, spoke about the recent bad weather which has hit the whole district – the Environment Agency had terrible problems sorting out all the issues and this was exacerbated by the fact that many of the decision makers were away for the Christmas and New Year holidays. He said that he would be writing to the Environment Agency recommending that they up-date their Emergency Plan. A full copy of the County Councillor Report is attached to these Minutes.
- 14/05 **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT** – District Councillor, Nick Drew, reported on the EHDC Joint Core Strategy which has now been approved by the Examiner and is in the final stages of consultation on the recommended modifications. He explained that the 100 new homes to be built in outlying villages in the next 17-18 years, will be a mix of affordable and market houses and that there has been a slight change in the regulations for affordable housing, which now enables building outside settlement boundaries where there are valid reasons.
- 14/06 **FINANCE**
- (a) The following cheques were approved:
- | | | | |
|--------|---------------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| 100278 | J. Street | £60.00 | Website |
| 100279 | DNE Services | £54.00 | Installation of noticeboard |
| 100280 | J. Hollington | £1071.58 | Clerk (2 months' salary & expenses) |
- (b) The bank reconciliation was circulated and approved.
- (c) Correspondence received from the Editor of the Village Newsletter containing up-dated budget information was discussed. The request for a donation of £600 for 2014 was unanimously agreed.

- (d) A report from the Finance Sub Committee set up to look at the budget and precept for 2014 in more detail, had been circulated and was discussed. The paper set out recommendations for a set of principles to be adopted in reviewing future budgets in order to deliver excellent value for money for the community.

The group had recommended an increase to the Parish Precept to £14,000 which would represent an annual charge for a Band D property of approximately £27.80. Amongst other considerations, is the need to build a reserve to fund future elections – the next one is due in 2015. Although a material increase on the current year, Steep will continue as one of the lowest precept parishes in the area and significantly lower than any parish of similar size in the East Hampshire district.

The report and recommendations of the Sub-Committee were approved.

- (e) It was unanimously agreed that the precept for 2014/15 should be set at £14,000 for the financial year 2014/15.

14/07 RESPONSE TO MAIN MODIFICATIONS OF EHDC JOINT CORE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

The proposed modifications to the EHDC Joint Core Strategy had been circulated prior to the meeting and these were discussed: It was agreed that Steep Parish Council would respond in support of the modifications but noting that with regard to page 58, Para 6.50 which had been amended to read “ A robust affordable housing policy is required in order to ensure the development of balanced and integrated communities and to deliver good quality, affordable housing for local people for present and future generations. The SHMA identifies a high level of affordable housing need” – support would be given providing that there is sufficient infrastructure in place– e.g. transport.

14/08 ROADS AND TRAFFIC

- (a) The Roads and Traffic Working Party is awaiting details of a meeting date with Ian Janes and Richard Peach of Highways Maintenance and Traffic Management to decide on the locations of “gates”, passing places and possible signage in Steep Marsh. This will entail a walk-through of proposed solutions for each specific location. The Stoner Hill group are also awaiting a meeting date to review the possibility of a reduction in speed limit further up Stoner Hill towards Froxfield. An extension of the pavement up the hill (but not as far as Island) has also been requested. It was agreed that the Chairman would contact Mrs. Openshaw to request Parish Council representation at the walk through and at the next meeting of the Working Party.
- (b) Junction of Mill Lane and Ashford Lane – a site meeting will be requested with Richard Peach as the new kerbing on the corner installed just before Christmas means that the dustcart and farm traffic can no longer access the lane without mounting the kerbs or damaging the opposite bank/hedge. This will also undoubtedly cause problems for the snow plough in getting out. It was agreed that both the County Councillor and the Parish Council should write to Richard Peach, copied to County Councillor Shaun Woodward, with regard to the shocking lack of communication on this issue.
- (c) Speed restrictions on A272 – The response from HCC to the Parish Council’s letter regarding the proposed speed restriction was discussed and was agreed to be inadequate. It does appear that a serious accident has to happen before HCC take action. The Chairman will write again to Martin Wiltshire.
- (d) The Chairman reported that she had met with Camilla Bushill of Network Rail and Gary Hedges, HCC to discuss proposals for the crossing. Although nothing has been decided, the crossing has to be up-graded by 2015. If new gates are installed they would be similar to the ones at Petersfield and waiting times at Sheet will be longer than currently. The alternative is to close the crossing and provide a footbridge. The Chairman pointed out the damage this would do to small businesses such as The Harrow, and to residents in Steep Marsh who use the route to get to Church and the Schools causing a further divide to the parish. The County Councillor said that planned maintenance is to be carried out at the crossing in the coming months and Network Rail intend to install cameras to record the route of the traffic flow and this may have some influence over decisions. There is to be a full

consultation process later in the year and it was agreed to wait until these take place before making any formal comment.

14/09 RECREATION GROUP WORKING PARTY

A response has been received from one of the land owners written to by the Parish Council, with regard to footpath improvements and a meeting is to be arranged to discuss possibilities. Two village walks have been drafted – one (focussed on historic buildings) includes Bedales School, and will require permission from Keith Budge – Cllr. Thackrey offered to follow this up. Grant funding will be looked into for publishing costs, and the walks will also be advertised via the website. Car parking could potentially be offered at the Village Hall.

It was reported that the recently up-graded path at Ashford Chase has been washed away in the heavy rain – Cllr. MacDonald will contact Chris Budd and see if more work is needed.

14/10 REVIEW OF PARISH COUNCIL ACTIONS ON THE PARISH PLAN

This was discussed in conjunction with a report circulated prior to the meeting. The following items were discussed in more detail:

- **More opportunities for involving Steep Marsh in Village Life** - The current status of the recommendation to review the possibility of transferring Steep Marsh into the catchment area of Steep Primary School was queried – Cllr. Martin said she had spoken to the Head of Steep School and the Governors and it is something Steep School would welcome. However, she didn't feel it was appropriate to take this further without consulting residents of Steep Marsh to get a proper consensus – this was agreed and any proposed action will be discussed further.

Following the success of last year's Parish Council Meeting in the Marsh, another meeting will be arranged for the summer months (suggested date - Monday, 16th June). A suitable venue will be sought and the Agenda will, once again, be focussed on Marsh issues. Cllrs. Hurst and Robinson will liaise with regard to finding a venue.

- **The community website and social media providing active sources of information and lively forum for debate, in support of a healthy newsletter** - Cllr. Hurst agreed to look into support for a Communications Working Party.
- **A more effective centre for Steep around the Village Hall** – plans for the outside area at the Village Hall had been deferred whilst the Trustees of the charitable land became established – it was agreed that this item should now be followed up by the proposed new Planning and Development Working Party under the leadership of Cllr. MacDonald (supported by Cllr. Cruttenden)
- **An increase in well-publicised, voluntary, neighbour-support activities** – The Chairman agreed to organise a meeting of Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators to ensure that there is good coverage of the parish and information is being shared. Cllr. Drew offered to look into the support offered by Community First, whose office has now moved to Havant.
- **Additional business development limited to sites with minimal traffic impact** – this item will also be included within the remit of the Planning and Development Working Party.

14/11 STEEP COMMON

Overhanging trees and branches mean that the bonfire area is in need of attention and it was agreed that Cllr. MacDonald should meet with Paul Garstin (Bonfire Committee) and Drake Hocking (Tree Warden) at the Common to identify problems. A letter to EHDC regarding the protected Oak will be necessary for permission to even out the crown – Cllr. MacDonald will liaise with Drake Hocking about this. Since this

work will need to be carried out before March and the next P.C. Meeting - it was agreed that up to £500 would be allocated to this project.

14/12 CORRESPONDENCE

- E-mail from HCC re. footpaths cutting list – no Steep footpaths are shown (there used to be 5 footpaths on the list) – Cllr. Martin agreed to query this and take it forward.
- E-mail response from Governors of Bedales' School – the Governors had responded to the Chairman's request for a meeting by saying that they felt the current level of communication between the Parish Council and the School was appropriate.

14/13 FEEDBACK ON COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CAROLS AT THE VILLAGE HALL

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Thackrey for leading the singing on the evening and doing such a great job. Once again, the event had been very well attended (despite the weather) and the children with their hand bells from Steep School had stolen the show. It was suggested that next year the poster should state that the event would be held indoors if the weather is bad so that no-one is put off attending.

14/14 PLANS FOR ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY AND ANNUAL MEETING

Last year it had been very disappointing that there had been no members of the public present at the Annual Parish Assembly, despite the very interesting planning presentation. Cllrs. were asked to give some thought to plans to encourage participation for this year's meeting.

14/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, 3rd March 2014 at 7.30 p.m. at Steep Village Hall

The meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.