

STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: Cllr. Jim MacDonald

CLERK: Mrs. Jenny Hollington

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 6th July 2015 at Steep Village Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Present:

Cllr. Jim MacDonald (in the Chair)	Terry Cook
Jenny Martin	Peter Cruttenden
Graeme Fairley	Luke Spurdle

In Attendance: District Councillor, Nick Drew
Clerk, Jenny Hollington

There were 8 members of the public in attendance throughout the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

- 15/96 **APOLOGIES** - Apologies had been received from Cllrs. Nick Hurst, Peter Thackrey and Simon Bridger, as well as the County Councillor, Vaughan Clarke.
- 15/97 **MINUTES** – The Minutes of Parish Council Meetings held on 18th May and 1st June were approved and signed.
- 15/98 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - The Chairman reminded Councillors of their responsibility to declare any interest in any matter on the Agenda.
- 15/99 **PUBLIC COMMENT** –
- Mill Lane - It was queried whether the Parish Council were aware of the spoil which has been left by the stream in Mill Lane. Cllr. Cook confirmed that work is still on-going. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation.
 - Kerbing in Steep Marsh – it was queried whether a response has been received from Highways with regard to the kerbing on the corner of Pratts Lane – The Chairman confirmed that nothing has been heard and the P.C. will continue to chase this.
- 15/100 **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The structure of the Parish Council was discussed and individual roles and responsibilities assigned.

Finance Committee - Peter Cruttenden, Jim MacDonald and Terry Cook

Responsibilities -

Steep Common	Luke Spurdle, Jim MacDonald, Terry Cook
Footpaths	Jenny Martin
Ashford Hangers	Terry Cook, Jim MacDonald
War Memorial	Simon Bridger
Village Hall	Simon Bridger, Peter Thackrey, Jenny Martin
I.T./Communication	Nick Hurst, Luke Spurdle
Roads & Traffic	Luke Spurdle

Working Parties

Planning & Development	Peter Cruttenden, Jim MacDonald and Jenny Martin
Resilience	Peter Thackrey, Graham Fairley

15/101 COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT – Vaughan Clarke was unable to be present but had sent a report which was read to the meeting and is attached.

15/102 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT – Nick Drew is now the Business Portfolio holder for EHDC. He reported on the following items.

- EHDC has secured £1.6 m for business premises and jobs through the Invest for Growth Scheme
- Leader funding of up to £35,000 is available to help create jobs in rural locations
- EHDC Apprenticeships Schemes continue in order to support young people into work
- EHDC have agreed to support the concept of taking local control of services devolved from central government. However, further information and clarity will be sought before making a commitment.
- A local newspaper had made contact with regard to the Ofsted Report for the Hive Nursery at Bedales which found the Nursery “inadequate”. The decision is to go to appeal.
- Support for the Steep Film Challenge was expressed.

15/103 FINANCE

(a) The following cheques were approved:

100044	£119.70	EHDC (non-contested election fee)
100045	£60.00	J. Street (website management – 3 months)
100046	£94.20	N.W. Adams (Annual Play Equipment Inspection)
100047	£1050.18	J. Hollington (Clerk’s salary May and June)

(b) The request for a grant towards the Steep Film Challenge was discussed. Phyllida Barnes explained that she wished to be able to offer cash prizes to attract entries. She envisaged that the films would form a visual record of Steep, and could be produced over the summer holidays. Following discussion, the Parish Council confirmed their support. However, it was felt that sponsorship for the event should be sought from Village businesses, and that the Alec Guinness money (held by the Trustees of the Village Hall) would be a more appropriate source of funding for this event. It was agreed to convene a meeting of the Trustees to discuss the request, and to respond, as soon as possible.

15/104 DARK SKIES

Following on from the very interesting and informative presentation at the AGM by Dan Oakley, Dark Skies Ranger, from the South Downs National Park, support for the campaign to protect and preserve the dark skies was discussed. Each year people see less of the dark skies because of light pollution which is also affecting wildlife. For this reason it was agreed that the campaign should be supported by Steep Parish Council. An article will be written for the September Newsletter and published on the Village website explaining what measures residents can take to reduce light pollution from their homes.

The Chairman will write to Dan Oakley on behalf of Steep Parish Council and also sign up to the on-line pledge.

15/105 SHEET LEVEL CROSSING

The results of Sheet Parish Council’s referendum on the possible closure of the Sheet Level Crossing were discussed – Sheet residents had voted 2:1 against closure of the crossing.

The Chairman reported that he and Cllrs. Cruttenden, Cook and Martin had met with Camilla Bushill and her team, just prior to the Sheet Information Sessions on 13th June, to discuss the current state of play. Network Rail indicated that they will press ahead with their application to HCC to close the crossing, on

safety grounds. Options for a pedestrian footbridge, suitable for wheelchair users, pushbikes, pushchairs, but not for horses, as well as for turning circles and parking either side of the crossing, had been viewed and discussed - any potential footbridge has to be future-proofed for overhead cables and of a certain gradient for wheelchair users and is therefore, of necessity, a huge structure - Steep P.C. representatives had pressed on Network Rail the effect this would have on a small rural community.

The HCC Regulatory Committee is due to meet in October and it is assumed that Network Rail will ensure their application meets this deadline. Concerns were expressed with regard to timescales and potential for further community engagement on this subject and noted that the next parish newsletter is not due out until September.

It was agreed that the Chairman would write to Hampshire County Council, Highways Department, and SDNPA, expressing concerns with regard to the impact on access for emergency vehicles, and impact on landscape, if plans to close the crossing go ahead.

15/106 STEEP COMMON

(a) Annual Play Inspection Report – this was reviewed and the items marked medium or high risk discussed further:

- Gates – recommended gap 12 mm to eliminate finger entrapment (medium risk) – The gates are usually locked - it was therefore agreed no action is necessary.
- Gate with catch recommended within “slow” barrier and infilling adjacent open railed fence with mesh to contain younger children – there have been no known instances or complaints and it is believed that the risk is mitigated by parent supervision. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the situation.
- Maintain hedge as low and back from road to improve sight lines for motorists and for pedestrians emerging from the recreation ground (medium/high) – it was agreed that the hedge should be more aggressively cut back in future – the Clerk will contact Harvey Coles.
- Exposed root trip hazard at slow barrier (medium risk) – the Chairman will dig out the offending root and next time work is undertaken at the Common, top soil and seeding of this area will be carried out.
- Infill flush worn hollows in the football goals and pitch (medium risk) – the Chairman undertook to liaise with the School as this work needs to be undertaken as soon as possible.
- Additional handgrips recommended for vertical climbing wall (low/medium) – this was previously categorised as low risk so no need for change.
- Trip zones at edge of protective surfacing – work was carried out on these areas last year – not considered serious at the moment – no action required.

A play area accessibility assessment had also been carried out, the results of which were noted. If the play equipment is ever to be replaced, the Parish Council undertook to consider the needs of disabled children.

It was agreed that in future the Annual Play Inspection Report should be reviewed by Parish Councillors with responsibility for the Common to report their findings to the Meeting.

(b) Bonfire & Firework Display – Concerns had been expressed about the high numbers of people at last year’s event and the implications for safety if there were to be an incident. Various options for improving safety were discussed and included consideration of reducing the size of the bonfire, increasing distance from the bonfire to members of the public, and closing the road to traffic to free up more space on the Common. Cllr. Cook stressed that an appropriate risk assessment is carried out each year and the insurance company have approved the current arrangements.

It was agreed that road closure should be considered and that this cost would be covered by the Parish Council as well as extra manpower to patrol the closure. The Chairman said he would meet with representatives of the Bonfire Committee to discuss this further prior to the September meeting.

- (c) Requests for use of the Common – Parish Councillors with responsibility for the Common were asked to produce a policy for use of the Common - to be circulated for comment prior to the next meeting.

15/107 FOOTPATHS

- Stiles on Footpaths 11 and 2 – E-mail correspondence with regard to the dangerous condition of the stiles was discussed. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to the land owners in the first instance.
- Stiles on Footpath 12 – landowner permission has been obtained to replace the stiles and improve access on Footpath 12 from Stoner Hill to Froxfield (via Ridge Hanger) – the Clerk was asked to progress the SGS grant funding application.
- Steps on Footpath 17 – Jim Hobson has written to the Parish Council asking them to apply for SGS funding towards materials to repair the steps on the Shoulder of Mutton. His volunteers will carry out the work to provide match funding.
- Footpaths 20/26 – a quote has been received in the sum of £420 to create a path and install a gate where it would meet the road. It was agreed that funding should be sought to enable the work to go ahead.
- Footpath 18 – advice has been taken with regard to spraying near water and this will be followed up by Cllr. Martin.
- Footpath 13 – Discussion with regard to the work are on-going with the landowner – to be followed up by Cllr. Martin
- Kissing Gates on Footpath 22a – one of the kissing gates has been installed, the other will be installed within the next few weeks.

15/108 ROADS AND TRAFFIC –

- (a) Stoner Hill – E-mail correspondence regarding the dangerous road condition following a recent storm which washed sand and gravel from byway 33 on to the road, was discussed. Highways had responded quickly to the situation but it is only a matter of time before the situation is repeated – a permanent solution is required, not a temporary fix. It was agreed that the Parish Council should write to Hampshire Highways, copying Jim Hobson into the correspondence, insisting that the situation is improved.
- (b) Sight Lines and Hedging – Overgrown trees/hedging on Stoner Hill have been brought to the Parish Council's attention once again. The District Councillor said he would investigate hedge cutting via the farmer who had carried out the work last year and feedback to the P.C.

15/109 WAR MEMORIAL

Contact has now been made with Rosemary Lilley who has been incredibly busy this year and therefore unable to give as much time as previously to the War Memorial – however, she is happy to carry on now that things have quietened down a little. Help with watering over the any summer dry spells will be necessary and appreciated. The Chairman said he would speak to the owner of a neighbouring property to see if they could assist with this. It was agreed that a token of appreciation should be sent to Rosemary to thank her for all her hard work at the end of the summer.

15/110 MEETINGS ATTENDED

- Bedales Annual Open Meeting – the on-going issue of parking on Church Road by Bedales residents had been raised but had not resulted in any commitment from the School. Details of the Badley Community Festival being held on 27th September were noted.
- EHAP&TC – Cllr. MacDonald had attended the quarterly meeting. Items discussed included how to make the EHDC Community Forums more effective and internal politics between HALC and NALC.

- Hangers Management Meeting – the Chairman had attended this walk through the Hangers with the Rangers. He reported that Juniper Hanger and the Shoulder of Mutton haven't been cut this year because the mower was out of commission during the crucial period. However, the highland cattle are doing a great job and plants are thriving at Cobbett's view. It was noted that Jim Hobson is now going to be taking on an office role and will no longer be looking after the Hangers - a new, young, chap will be taking his place.

15/111 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

- HCC – Consultation on electoral review of Hampshire – no response required.
- EHDC - e-mail correspondence regarding maintenance contractors – it was agreed that this could be a useful contact for small grounds projects – e.g. footpaths – and the information should be kept on file for future reference.
- Forge Field – A number of e-mail comments had been received and circulated to Councillors for info prior to the meeting. The correspondence from D. Glyde, S. Cleminsons, S. White, T. Hines, Mr & Mrs. Hocking, and H. Nickless were discussed and the points noted. The Chairman explained that he and Cllrs. Cruttenden and Martin had met up with Robin and Jody Ashfield in order to clear up misunderstandings that appeared to have arisen. The notes from this meeting had been circulated to Councillors. Cllr. Cook said that he felt that all e-mails and responses should be discussed as a Parish Council and not responded to individually - quick responses would lead to problems. The Chairman acknowledged this and it was agreed that in future the Clerk/Chairman will simply acknowledge correspondence and respond only once the P.C. had discussed the issue raised.
- Dunhurst School – E-mail correspondence re. work experience for students – the Chairman will speak to Cllr. Thackrey to ensure the Parish Council get involved next year.

15/112 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – **Extraordinary Meeting – Thursday, 16th July at 7.45 p.m. at Steep Village Hall.**