

STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: Cllr. Jim MacDonald

CLERK: Mrs. Jenny Hollington

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 1st June 2015 in the Barn at Burrvers Common Farm, Steep Marsh at 7.30 p.m.

Present:

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

In Attendance: County Councillor, Vaughan Clarke
Clerk, Jenny Hollington

There were 20 members of the public in attendance throughout the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. He introduced Councillors to members of the public.

- 15/82 **APOLOGIES** - Apologies had been received from Cllr. Nick Hurst.
- 15/83 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - The Chairman reminded Councillors of their responsibility to declare any interest in any matter on the Agenda.
- 15/84 **PUBLIC COMMENT** – The Chairman confirmed that Standing Orders would be suspended to enable comments to be received under the relevant agenda items. There were no comments from the public on any matters not covered on the Agenda.
- 15/85 **COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT** – County Councillor, Vaughan Clarke, reported on trials in Basingstoke on Smart scanned grit bins - these contain a sensor that records the level of salt in each bin, so that the salt run can be planned more efficiently to save time and money.

A new Smart road system will start soon, to ensure that before a team goes out to fill potholes, the system will ensure that nearby reported potholes are filled as well, rather than having to wait until a later visit.

The County has recently produced a cycling strategy for public consultation – www.hants.gov.uk/transport-schemes-index/cycling-strategy (comments should be received by 29th July).

A recent government initiative to provide free minibuses to groups providing community transport resulted in 15 minibuses for Hampshire (1 of which was for East Hampshire).

The County Councillor was asked whether there is a policy for inspecting repairs carried out by utility companies. It was confirmed that utility company repairs are regularly inspected and that it has to be a permanent repair. It was pointed out that the repairs in Ridge Common Lane are not faring well (only a few weeks after being completed) - the County Councillor promised to follow this up.

It was also pointed out that the grit bin at the top of Rockpits Lane has been reported as missing, but to date there has been no feedback from HCC. Cllr. Clarke said he would look into this further.

The County Councillor’s full report is appended to these Minutes.

- 15/86 **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT** – No report received.

15/87 ROADS AND TRAFFIC – Mike Pillans, Assistant Highway Manager, was unable to attend the meeting, but had met with the Clerk to discuss issues raised at last year's Steep Marsh P.C. Meeting and has provided the following up-date relating specifically to Steep Marsh:

- Sandy Lane – re-surfaced in January 2015;
- Elmwood Lane – ditches and soakaway – cleared last autumn. An order has been raised to clean the soakaway again within the next couple of months;
- Elmwood Lane – passing bays – these were not formalised when the resurfacing was carried out, but arrangements have been made for material to be laid to harden up the worst bays to make them safe for use. This work will be on-going over the coming months.
- Coldhayes – blocked ditch – no progress has been made - action will now be taken to resolve the issue.

In addition, it is understood from the Roads & Traffic Working Party that Ian Janes has promised that passing places will be up-graded and re-surfaced and appropriate signage installed at the entries to Steep Marsh.

Members of the public pointed out that the passing places need to be properly engineered and that it would be a pointless exercise if only the bare minimum of work is carried out. It was noted that the tarmac in the lay-by in Pratts Lane has already been torn up and needs replacing. There are also ditches which still need clearing, in particular the Elmwood side of the Bungalows where the ditch is full and water runs into the road, making it very hazardous. Any village entry signs should indicate that roads are single track lanes and that passing places should be used.

It was also queried whether weight limit signage could be installed on the A3 to prevent large vehicles coming down Pratts Lane?

The concern over the sleepers on the corner of Pratts Lane were also raised - it was confirmed that HCC are aware and looking into this, but will be chased again.

These questions and issues will be fed back to Mike Pillans and his response reported at the next Parish Council Meeting.

15/88 PARISH LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

The Chairman summarised the details of the scheme currently being trialled and sponsored by Hampshire County Council and which is based on the Lengthsmen deployed in Hampshire until the late 1960s. The County Council has recognised the importance of working closely with parishes to improve local responsiveness and the environment within these communities. The trial involves clusters of parishes who employ a Lengthsman between them, funded by HCC (£1000 to each parish) to carry out routine maintenance of parish highways with a lead Council to administer the cluster (who receive extra funding for this purpose). The types of duties which can be undertaken by the Lengthsman include clearing drainage, cleaning road signs, cutting back vegetation, clearing footways, grass strimming on highways etc.

Although only a trial at the moment, HCC are considering widening the scheme out to additional parishes in the next financial year, if there is enough interest. The Clerk confirmed that she has enquired whether the parishes of Sheet, Froxfield and Stroud would be interested in forming a cluster, as this may make it easier to get onto the Scheme but as yet there has been no reply.

The Chairman said he felt the Scheme would be particularly beneficial for Steep, especially in view of the roads issues above, and recommended that Steep Parish Council express an interest in joining the scheme as soon as possible – this was unanimously agreed. The Clerk was asked to follow this up with Mike Pillans.

15/89 SHEET CROSSING

Network Rail will be running information sessions throughout the afternoon at Sheet Village Hall on Saturday, 13th June – however these are for Sheet residents only and not open to the general public. The sessions are simply intended to inform Sheet parishioners ahead of the referendum being organised by Sheet Parish Council to ascertain the majority view.

Steep Parish Council remains under the impression that there will be an opportunity for Steep Parish residents to attend a Public Exhibition in due course to view current Network Rail and Hampshire Highways proposals and the Chairman said he would get in touch with Camilla Bushill of Network Rail to find out when this will take place.

In general, residents present felt that a closure of the level crossing would make traffic through Steep Marsh worse, on lanes which are already struggling and it was queried whether the Parish Council are in touch with Gary Hedges at HCC who is responsible for looking at the implication of crossing closure on the roads. The Chairman said he was unaware of this and will follow this up.

The County Councillor confirmed that Network Rail are going for full closure of the crossing on safety grounds - double barriers are the fall-back position if the application fails. No definitive lengths of waiting times at the double barrier are available, because of future changes to the rail timetable to improve service. Current plans for the footbridge include ramps for wheelchair users, mums with pushchairs and cyclists but would not be suitable for horse riders.

It was queried whether Steep Parish Council would carry out a referendum on the crossing? The Chairman said that responses were collected following the initial public meeting held in Steep Village Hall and this had been overwhelmingly in favour of keeping the crossing open and had formed the basis of the initial Parish Council response to Network Rail. It is anticipated that Steep residents will have a further chance to engage after the proposed Public Exhibition.

Issues were raised with regard to the Stodham Crossing footbridge – currently cyclists have to carry bikes over the bridge as the wheel groove is too close to the side of the bridge. The Chairman agreed to also raise this issue with Camilla Bushill.

15/90 PLANNING – POSSIBLE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN RIDGE COMMON LANE

The Chairman confirmed that the Parish Council has been approached by HARA/Hyde concerning possible affordable housing on a site in Ridge Common Lane known locally as Forge Field. Details of this had been discussed at the Annual Meeting held at the School in May and the Parish Council has undertaken to obtain further information on the site from the SDNPA and Hampshire Highways before making a decision as to whether to work with HARA and Hyde in developing the proposal further. It appears however, that Hampshire Highways are unable to offer advice at this stage, as they require a full application to be made before their officers can visit the site. Information on road accidents in the vicinity is available via www.crashmat.co.uk.

The proposal is sensitive because affordable housing need is established via the Parish Plan. The site is outside the settlement area so would not normally be built on and for this reason a greater degree of consultation is required and this is why HARA wants to engage with the Parish Council at an early stage. It is anticipated that a decision will be made by the Parish Council at the P.C. Meeting in July.

An item on this issue will be included in the next Village Newsletter and a more detailed version will go on the website to maximise information for the community.

15/91 STEEP COMMON – The School's request to put up a marquee from 13th to 19th July for the School end of term activities was discussed. Concern was expressed about the length of time the marquee would be in place, and whether this would impact other users. Following discussion, it was agreed that this request should be approved and that Councillors with responsibility for the Common should look at drawing up a policy for future requests for use of the Common.

15/92 FINANCE - Chq No. 100043 (South & West Internal Audit) in the sum of £150.00 was approved.

15/93 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

- EHAP&TC AGM – Wednesday, 10th June – the Chairman will attend.

15/94 DATE OF NEXT MEETING - **Monday, 6th July at 7.30 p.m. – Steep Village Hall**

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Bridger for his help in facilitating the Steep Marsh Meeting – the barn had proved a great venue.

The Meeting closed at 8.36 p.m.