

STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Caroline Robinson

CLERK: Mrs. Jenny Hollington

Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 3rd March 2014 at Steep Village Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Present:

Cllrs. Caroline Robinson (in the Chair)	Terry Cook
Charles Gibson	Simon Bridger
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: Cllrs. Jenny Martin and Nick Hurst

- 14/16 **MINUTES** – The Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 6th January 2014 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed.
- 14/17 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - The Chairman reminded Councillors of their responsibility to declare any interest in any matter on the Agenda.
- 14/18 **PUBLIC COMMENT** – None
- 14/19 **COUNTY COUNCILLOR COMMENT** – Please also see attached report.

With regard to flooding the County Councillor, Vaughan Clarke, said that HCC are to clean out the culvert at Mill Lane to assist water flow. At Ashford Lane, although thousands of pounds have been spent, no solution has yet been found. HCC are now considering draining the pond on adjoining land to see if that solves the problem.

With regard to proposals for Sheet Level Crossing, it was explained that if a full barrier crossing is provided, the down time for the gate in any hour would be 14 minutes (3 x 3 minutes and 1 x 5 minutes). Network Rail will draw up separate plans comparing the impact of full closure against the provision of a full barrier crossing.

- 14/20 **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT** –

District Councillor, Nick Drew, strongly recommended attendance at the forthcoming Network Rail Information Session to discuss options for the rail crossing, which is being held at Steep Village Hall on 4th March to make views known.

He also recommended that Steep Parish Council put pressure on Hampshire Highways to cut back the overgrown hedging on Stoner Hill between Island and Hays Cottages and on the sharp bend at Bedales to avoid potential accidents - Cllr. MacDonald was asked to follow this up.

Councillor Drew said that he continues in his role on the Planning Committee – submissions have increased by 30% which has increased revenue. However, this means there are more queries which then cause delays!

The District Councillor funding allocation for 2013/14 has now been spent, but Cllr. Drew will receive new funding for 2014/15 and will welcome applications from Steep for community projects.

14/21 FINANCE

(a) **Cheques** - The following cheques were approved:

100281	Get Mapping	£33.60	Parish maps
100282	R. Lilley	£19.45	Plants for War Memorial
100283	J. Street	£60.00	Website
100284	J. Hollington	£1040.00	Clerk's salary (Jan and Feb)

(b) **Bank Reconciliation** - The bank reconciliation for January and February was circulated and approved

(c) **Review of Financial Regulations** - The following items were raised:

- It was queried whether the Sub-Committee which was formed to look at precept and budget in more depth should be mentioned? It was agreed that the following text should be inserted “from time-to-time the Council may appoint a sub-committee to help and advise the Clerk”
- Point 2.5 – Consideration of a 3-year plan - it was agreed that a 3-year plan should be implemented in 2014/15 to provide a broader perspective.

With these points noted the Financial Regulations were duly approved

(d) **Review of Risk Register** – the following points were raised

- Good Corporate Governance –
Item 1- “validated regularly” should be amended to read “validated annually”
- Effective Financial Management :
Item 7 - Insurance – insert “3 quotes obtained”
Item 10 - Budgeting and precept setting – Finance Sub-Committee to be mentioned
- Maintenance of Assets –
Item 20 - The Village Hall – no long term plan is in place and this should be considered at the next Annual Meeting of the Trustees.
- Provision of Services –
Item 24 – Processing of Planning Applications - the Planning Committee should be mentioned;
Item 25 – Ad hoc events – amend “permission to be sought” to read “permission is sought”.

With these amendments the Risk Register was duly approved.

(e) **Review of Statement of Internal Control 2013/14** – It was agreed that under “Accounts Presentation” the following should be inserted “and with appropriate arrangements for independent audit”. The second page should be amended to reflect that the Parish Council now meets bi-monthly (to be reviewed at the Annual Meeting) not monthly. It was agreed that this should now read “at least 6 times a year”.

With these amendments the Statement of Internal Control 2013/14 was duly approved.

14/22 GOVERNANCE – TO REVIEW STANDING ORDERS

It was noted that the current document, at 24 pages long, is rather unwieldy and noted that other parishes have condensed their Standing Orders so that only the statutory items are included – it was agreed that the Clerk should circulate appropriate guidelines and this item should be reconsidered at the Annual Meeting.

14/23 ROADS AND TRAFFIC

- **Roads and Traffic Working Party** – Mrs. Openshaw is to meet with Hampshire Highways representatives in early March. The Chairman intends to attend this meeting and will discuss the inclusion of a Parish Councillor on the sub-committee with her.
- **Junction of Ashford Lane and Mill Lane** – an on-site meeting had been held between Hampshire Highway representatives, P.C. representatives and a local resident. HCC have acknowledged that the lack of consultation with regard to the kerbing was inexcusable and are willing to straighten out the kink which protrudes into the lane at the narrowest point. It was agreed that there is nothing else that can be done at this stage.
- **Speed restrictions on A272** – A site meeting is to be held between residents and HCC representatives to discuss speed implications on the Midhurst Road on Thursday, 6th March – it was agreed that, if possible, either Cllr. Gibson or Martin would attend on behalf of the P.C. and feed back at the next meeting.
- **Hedges** – the various protruding/high hedges around the Parish which impact sight lines will be chased up.

14/24 RECREATION GROUP WORKING PARTY

P.C. representatives met with the landowner regarding the possibility of re-routing Footpath 4 which leads up through the garden at Restalls. However, it is clear that creating a new path on the other side of the road emerging further down towards the tennis club will not work. An alternative solution of a path through the sandpit at Bedales to join the Church Path will now be investigated - Cllr. Thackrey will facilitate a meeting between P.C. reps and the Bedales' Estates Manager.

Discussions with regard to better access to Footpath 12 continue – Elliott Rowe will be approached to discuss options further.

14/25 NETWORK RAIL

- (a) Network Rail has announced that, in response to safety concerns, a footbridge with cycle lane is to be installed over the Stodham Crossing on the Shipwright's Way. Train speeds have been reduced to 55 mph until the bridge is in place.
- (b) The "Drop-In" Session to discuss options for the rail crossing in Sheet is to be held on Tuesday, 4th March. The Chairman hi-lighted concerns with regard to the impact closure of the crossing would have on the Parish - isolating both the Harrow Pub and residents of Steep Marsh and pushing more traffic through the narrow Marsh lanes. The Clerk was asked to carry out a survey of the views of people attending the Drop-In session to ascertain the general feeling of residents. In the meantime Cllr. Drew's e-mail to Camilla Bushill will be published in the Newsletter as an open letter to encourage residents to make their views known to Network Rail. It was unanimously agreed that the Chairman should write to Camilla stating, that whilst the importance of the safety requirements is recognised, Steep Parish Council objects strongly to the closure of the crossing.

14/26 STEEP COMMON

- (a) Designs and quotes for a new bench on Steep Common were compared:

Darren Hammerton	£700
Andrew Hemington	£1000 - £1200
Alison Crowther	£7000 (verbal quote)

It was unanimously agreed to accept the quote from Darren Hammerton. Grants towards the project will be sought from the County Councillor and the District Councillor and funded via the Community Shop Fund as previously agreed.

- (b) Cllrs. Cook and MacDonald met with the Parish Tree Warden to look at opening up the area around the bonfire site. All parties agree that the bonfire is an important event in the Parish calendar and the Tree Warden confirmed that the Oak adjacent to the bonfire site is not in good condition, being rather lop-sided.

It was agreed that informal enquiries as to the possibility of removing the TPO should be followed up and the Tree Warden should be asked to prepare a report.

Three quotes for work to clear branches in the bonfire area and to cut the hedge between the School and the firework display area will be obtained.

14/27 PARISH PLAN

Planning and Development Working Party - Councillors Jim MacDonald and Peter Cruttenden met to discuss the scope of the new Working Party which will include investigating options for improved car parking, possible sites for business development and areas for affordable housing. It was agreed that a dialogue with the new Trustees of the charitable land should be initiated to increase mutual knowledge. Interested parishioners will be invited to join the advisory group via the Village Newsletter and website.

An increase in well-publicised, voluntary, neighbour-support activities – Cllr. Drew was thanked for facilitating an introduction at Community First, now based in Havant – Cllr. Cruttenden will arrange a meeting and report back. The Chairman has the meeting of Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators in hand.

14/28 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY AND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Following discussion, it was agreed that the annual meetings will be held on Thursday, 8th May at 7.00 p.m. and that the Police Commissioner for Hampshire should be approached and invited to speak.

14/29 PROCEDURE FOR RESPONSE TO CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN MEETINGS

It was agreed that where consultation deadlines fall between meetings, the Clerk will forward the information to all Parish Councillors as usual. If it is felt that a Parish Council response is required, the Clerk will be asked to arrange a Parish Council Meeting to discuss and agree comments.

14/30 PROJECTS FOR COMMUNITY FUNDING

Information on grant funding available from EHDC had been circulated. It was agreed that the children's play area at the Village Hall is in need of attention and would be an ideal community project. Cllrs. MacDonald and Cruttenden were asked to gather information and report back to the Trustees of the Village Hall.

14/31 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- The Chairman and the Clerk will attend the LCPD Localism Training on 6th March
- Cllr. Jenny Martin will attend the HCC Paths to Partnership Seminar on 5th June

14/32 CORRESPONDENCE

- SDNPA Partnership Management Plan – the Chairman has this and will pass it on as required.

14/33 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – The Annual Parish Assembly and Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Thursday, 8th May at 7.00 p.m. at Steep Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.