

STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: Jim MacDonald

CLERK: Jenny Hollington

Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 7th March 2016 at Steep Village Hall at 7.30 p.m.

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

In Attendance: County Councillor, Vaughan Clarke
District Councillor, Nick Drew
Clerk, Jenny Hollington

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Minute	Item	Action
16/19	<u>APOLOGIES</u> – Apologies had been received from Cllrs. Hurst and Thackrey.	
16/20	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> – The Chairman reminded Councillors of their responsibility to declare any interest in any matter on the Agenda.	
16/21	<u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u> – None.	
16/22	<u>MATTERS ARISING</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community resilience – Cllrs. Fairley reported that he has downloaded an Emergency Planning template document from the HCC website but will need volunteer help to fill in the blanks. It was agreed that Cllr. Cook would join Cllrs. Fairley and Thackrey and that Philip Mileham from Steep Marsh, who is an expert in this field, should be approached for help and advice.	GF PT TC
16/23	<u>COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT</u> – The County Councillor’s report for March 2016 is appended to the Minutes. Cllr. Fairley queried when the last section of the A3 re-surfacing, between Buriton and Steep, is to be carried out. Cllr. Clarke agreed to look into this and report back.	VC
16/24	<u>DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT</u> – The District Councillor reported on the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Litter at the A272/A3 junction - an EHDC litter pick is planned for the area within the next couple of weeks.• There is to be a 2% reduction in Council tax for 2016/17.• Cllr. Drew has £1295 remaining in his funding pot for the financial year – application forms for community projects need to be received before 18th March.	
	The Chairman queried whether the Bedford Road Recycling Unit is to close. Cllr. Drew confirmed that this is not the case.	
16/25	<u>EFFECTIVE COUNCILLORS</u> – The Chairman praised Steep Parish Councillors for their commitment to the work of the Parish Council. Meetings are well attended and business conducted	

in a friendly and collaborative atmosphere.

A pattern of setting up sub committees to focus on specific areas and report back to full Council for decision has worked successfully. However, meetings have full agendas comprising a variety of work that has to be completed. The Chairman proposed that in future all agenda items are supported by short, 1-page papers that focus discussion on the key issues. By reading papers in advance, business can be dealt with more quickly. To make this work, the papers must be available to the Clerk when the agenda is circulated to enable them to be read and digested. Councillors agreed to ensure that relevant papers/reports would be sent to the Clerk in good time for circulation with the Agenda.

ALL

It was suggested that in order to keep agendas and meetings shorter and more focussed, it would be better to revert back to monthly meetings and not include all regular items each month. Following discussion, it was agreed that monthly meetings with more specifically targeted agendas should be trialled until July. The County and District Councillors would not be expected to attend any more than they currently do.

The Chairman also reminded Councillors of their responsibility to stay in touch and asked for a commitment to checking e-mails at least twice a week, and sending a read receipt or phoning the Clerk to let her know the message had been received.

ALL

The Chairman felt the last area of concern was engagement - currently a small number of Councillors are doing the majority of the work and this is putting the Council under strain and makes the prospects of taking on new challenges, e.g. the Lengthsman Scheme, quite challenging. He requested that Councillors consider what time they can realistically offer and commit to supporting areas they feel they can assist. The Chairman undertook to speak to all Councillors individually over the next few weeks to discuss the above issues.

Chair

16/26 STEEP CRICKET CLUB – A request for a letter of Parish Council support for the Club had missed the deadline window. However, the Chairman has contacted Ray Street, who has agreed to attend the next Parish Council Meeting to up-date Councillors on the club’s activities, and what the Parish Council can do to support them.

16/27 FINANCE

- (a) Steep History Group – a letter requesting financial support was discussed – the History Group was set up as a direct result of the Parish Plan and Councillors felt that Mrs. Box has achieved a tremendous amount since its inception. It was unanimously agreed to grant the sum of £250 from the ring-fenced parish plan funds, towards the cost of a data projector. Cllr. Nick Drew agreed to match fund this amount towards the on-going activities of the group.
- (b) Steep and Stroud Newsletter – correspondence requesting grant funding of £200 towards the cost of producing the monthly newsletter was discussed. This amount is less than budgeted due to increased income from adverts. A grant of £200 was unanimously agreed.
- (c) Petersfield Shakespeare Festival – This is now an annual event (greatly missed last year due to building work) which takes place each year at Bedales and aims to bring Shakespeare to everyone. The sum of £100 was approved and Cllr. Drew agreed to match fund this amount.
- (d) The following cheques for March payment were approved and signed:

Chq No.	Amount	Payee	Service
100065	£60.00	J. Street	Website
100066	£33.60	Parish-on-line	Get mapping
100067	£1073.80	J. Hollington	Clerk - Jan & Feb (+ tax refund)
100068	£250.00	F. Box	Steep History Project
100069	£200.00	Steep PCC	Newsletter

100070 £100.00 Petersfield Shakespeare Festival Summer event

16/28 AUDIT DOCUMENTS

- (a) The Risk Register 2016 (circulated prior to the meeting) - Councillors were reminded of their responsibility to consider risk across all Parish Council activities.

It was noted that the word “regularly” is used frequently within the document and agreed that specific timescales should be specified. The following changes were made:

2.7 (b) to read “Basic deposit account for the primary parish reserves was upgraded to a specifically designed higher yield account in early 2003 and the provision **annually** reviewed”.

4.1 to read “The Village Hall – Key safe provided and security code changed **at least quarterly**”

4.2 to read “Furniture and equipment – **An annual report** is received by the Management Committee”

Clerk

- (b) Statement of Internal Control 2015/16 (circulated prior to the meeting) – The up-dated document which sets out the way public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for by Steep Parish Council was approved.

- (c) Standing Orders (circulated prior to the meeting) - the Chairman reminded Councillors of the importance of this governing document. Standing Orders were last amended in 2015 to reflect the change to legislation with regard to the recording of meetings by the public. No further amendments were felt necessary at the current time, and the document was therefore approved.

- (d) Financial Regulations (circulated prior to the meeting) – It is understood that NALC will issue an amendment to the Financial Regulations shortly, in order to reflect the new Transparency Code. It was agreed that the Financial Regulations should be up-dated once this information is available.

Clerk

16/29 ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY – The draft policy, circulated prior to the meeting, was approved.

16/30 STEEP IN NEED CHARITY – The three parcels of allotment land, previously held by the Parish Council have now been transferred to the new charity, Steep in Need. The Trustees of the Steep in Need Charity have requested that control of all documentation connected to the land, deposited on permanent loan with the Hampshire Records Office (as per attached schedule), and any other documents related to the land that may be discovered in the future, is now transferred to them.

It was unanimously agreed that this request be approved and the Clerk was authorised to confirm this to the County Records Office.

Clerk

16/31 THE LENGTHSMAN SCHEME – Steep Parish Council have agreed to act as lead parish and administer the scheme on behalf of a local cluster of parishes, consisting of Stroud, Froxfield, Sheet, Langrish, and Buriton Parish Councils. Steep P.C. will receive £1000 for each parish on the scheme to cover the cost of the Lengthsman, with an additional 10% being paid to the lead parish towards the cost of administration. It was agreed that, if necessary, the £600 will be used towards an increase in hours to cover any additional time needed by the Clerk.

It was agreed that a Parish Council sub-committee should be formed to get the scheme up and running – Cllrs. Jim MacDonald, Jenny Martin, and Luke Spurdle offered to take on this role and it was agreed that they would meet as soon as possible to discuss advertising and interviews for the

Chair,
JM

position.

LS

16/32 ROADS AND TRAFFIC

- (a) Restoration of the old, iron sign at Cricketers Crossroads – A quote in the sum of £1720 has been received through HCC, to restore the old iron sign at the Cricketers Crossroad (+ £140 if it to be moved to a new position). HCC have agreed to fund 50% of the cost of the renovation.

The Chairman reminded Councillors that this proposal had arisen from last year's Steep Film Challenge when entrants had struggled to find the village signpost.

Following discussion, it was agreed that once renovated the signpost should be moved to the opposite side of the road, next to the Cricketers hedge, just beyond the pathway where there is more space and it will be more of a feature.

Clerk

- (b) Highways issues :

- Water leaks in Church Road and Pratts Lane – no up-date has been received.
- Blocked culvert in Mill Lane – the culvert has now been cleared on one side of the lane, but the other side has been ignored.
- Hedge cutting on Stoner Hill – The Clerk was advised that the overhanging trees are not enough of a problem to require letters to be written to landowners and should be checked again in the autumn.
- Mill Lane Corner – HCC say the encroachment issues are not considered significant enough to warrant further correspondence. They were more concerned about the opposite corner next to the War Memorial, where the hedge has become very thick, and have written to the owners of that property.
- Flooding at Elmwood Corner – An engineer has now been out to investigate the problem, but no feedback has been received.
- Road sweeping and cleaning – Correspondence received from EHDC states that they will brush the lanes but not collect the leaves, and that this is HCC responsibility.
- Village gates in Steep Marsh – The gates and signage have now been installed.

In discussing the above issues, Parish Councillors felt that Hampshire Highways' response is extremely disappointing. It was agreed that a letter should be written hi-lighting the danger to pedestrians at the junction of Mill Lane/Church Road, as well as the problems caused to high sided vehicles by the overhanging trees and hedges on Stoner Hill. The issues of the unfinished work in Mill Lane and the continued flooding at Elmwood Corner will also be raised. A copy of the letter will be sent to the County Councillor.

Clerk

- 16/33 (c) A272 Speed Limit Extension - Correspondence received concerning the proposed 50 mph speed limit extension on the A272 was discussed – It was agreed that the Clerk should write to confirm the Parish Council's support for the proposal.

Clerk

SHEET COMMON

- (a) **“No parking” sign for gate** – No up-date - the Clerk will continue to liaise with Signs Express in Portsmouth and circulate their proposal to Councillors for final approval.
- (b) **Annual Play Inspection** – It was agreed that Nick Adams should be asked to carry out the Annual Inspection.

Clerk

16/34 FOOTPATHS

- (a) **New footpath at Steep Common** – Work is due to commence in April.

- (b) **Coach Road** – It was agreed that the £200 donated by the motorbike club for use to repair BOATS (Byways Open to All Traffic) will be put towards repair of the Coach Road which is in need of drainage – Cllr. Martin will look into this. The Clerk was asked to write to thank the Bike Club for the contribution and advise them of how it is to be spent. **JM/
Clerk**
- (c) **Steps on Footpath 12** – An estimate of £1400 to repair the steps on Footpath 12 has been received. It was agreed that this work should go ahead - the path has recently benefitted from two new kissing gates and is to be featured as one of the parish walks (see below). **JM**
- (d) **Kissing Gates** – Jim Hobson has now moved on to a new role and the promised kissing gates from HCC have not materialised. Peter Durnell, who has replaced Jim Hobson, hopes to be able to obtain some more. The Chairman will continue to chase this. **Chair**
- (e) **Walks Pamphlets** – Three local walks have been identified, centred on the village. It is intended to produce professionally illustrated leaflets to advertise the routes which will all be accessible by footpath from Petersfield Railway station. It is thought that the cost of the production of the leaflets will be in the region of £600. Cllr. Drew agreed to fund 50% of this cost from the remains of his community funding for 2015/16. **JM
Chair**

16/35 MEETINGS ATTENDED

- HCC Devolution Workshop – the Chairman attended the meeting and gave a brief report on the huge amount of work going on behind the scenes. As yet, it is unclear how this will progress.

16/36 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- EHP&TC – Wednesday, 9th March – The Chairman confirmed he will attend this meeting. **Chair**

16/37 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY – The Clerk has not yet heard back from RAF Odiham. It was agreed that alternatives may need to be considered if nothing is heard within the next couple of weeks (Damien Hinds or RSPB were suggested as possibilities). **Clerk**

16/38 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – **Monday, 4th April 2016 at 7.30 p.m. at Steep Village Hall**

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.