

## STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN Mr Richard Coles

CLERK Mrs Bridget MacMillan  
01730 261666

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2006 At Steep Village Hall

Present: Richard Coles (in the chair) Terry Cook Philip Mileham  
Caro Robinson Fran Box Lyn Peters  
Charles Gibson David Llewellyn

In Attendance:  
Bridget MacMillan (Clerk)  
Jenny Gray (District Councillor)  
Michael Cartwright (County Councillor)

There were 16 members of the Public during the course of the meeting.

22/06 APOLOGIES

Peter Cruttenden sent his apologies.

23/06 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Terry proposed that Richard should be elected as Chairman of Steep Parish Council, thanking him for his hard work and active participation in the role, and Caro seconded the proposal. Councillors were unanimous in supporting the proposal and Richard was duly elected Chairman of Steep Parish Council.

Responsibilities

It was decided that responsibilities would be shared out as follows:

Allotments - Richard

Common – Terry and Charles

Footpaths –Lyn

Roads – Caro and David

The Hangers – Terry and Philip

Steep War Memorial Village Club –Richard and Caro

Housing /shop development – Peter to be contact point.

Planning – All members, as required

24/06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Richard reminded the Councillors that any interests should be recorded. David questioned the interests of Peter, as member of Drum Housing Association and Charles, on the development board of PHA. Charles responded that he had declared his interests in a letter to Richard at the outset of the project setting out his intention not to vote where there was a conflict of interests. David asked to see the letter. **Richard to action.**

25/06 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting dated Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2006 were agreed as an accurate record with an agreed amendment adding that David disagreed with the removal of the tree on the common.

26/06 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING:

There were no matters discussed from the annual parish meeting.

27/06 PUBLIC COMMENT

David requested that the item on the shop/housing be moved to before the public comment. The chairman declined the request, noting that this would suggest a debate with the public. He informed the meeting a public meeting was the place for that.

A question was asked as to why community fundraising may be needed for the shop and the issue of traffic was raised.

A question was asked as to whether a valid business plan was in place to tell the community who and how the shop would be run.

A comment was made that Steep already had 19 social houses in the mile between Hays Cottages and the Alms houses and it was asked whether any more were necessary.

A comment was made that the Parish Council were there to serve them.

A comment was made that the Parish Council does this in many other areas.

Questions were raised as to whether the driving force of the project had changed from having the houses to facilitate a shop and whether there would be no houses if the shop was not viable.

Richard responded that the possibility of having to raise funds for the shop was being discussed but that no figures were available as yet. It looked as though PHA would not cover all the costs of the shop but quotes were being sought to close the gap. He emphasised that this was still a shop and housing project and that the public would be consulted if and when there were proposals that the Parish Council were happy to put forward.

28/06 REPORT FROM SHOP AND HOUSING PROJECT

Philip gave a report to update the members on two meetings that had taken place in April.

On April 10<sup>th</sup> a number of members had met with the shop committee and Chris Webster, from PHA, however as John Lancaster, from Community Action Hampshire, had been unable to attend a second meeting had been set. PHA did outline the current shortfall of approximately £142,000 based on a £250,000 spend. The Parish Council members had challenged the figures by raising the possibility to reclaim the V.A.T., questioning the spend on the open space work and the increase in ownership values. Sources of grant funding were discussed. Philip reported that more detailed business plan had been discussed as the current draft was now a year old.

Philip told the meeting that it had been decided to approach Paul Garstin with regards to his becoming involved in the cost of the shop proposals.

Philip reported that a second meeting had taken place on 20<sup>th</sup> April with a number of members of the Parish Council, the shop committee, John Lancaster, Charlotte Boxhall, from ViRSA, Julia Potter and Natalie Meagher, from EHDC Housing Department, and Chris Webster.

Chris Webster had outlined the adjustment of the figures from the first meeting and the balance now stood at £98.985k

Grant options had been discussed, including those for start-up costs although none were confirmed at present. It had been hoped that a large grant would come from Defra but these had now been passed to Seeda and they were not yet in place. Options discussed included Lottery Funding, Hyde Plus, Esme Fairbairn Foundation, EHDC, HCC and Steep Parish Council.

Philip reported that the possibility of forming a Village Shop Association to apply for grants had been considered. He acknowledged that a firm business plan was difficult without grant funding identified and that grant funders wanted a firm business plan before giving funds.

Philip informed the meeting that other matters discussed had included fundraising in the community (which members of the council had responded to by saying that a small amount could be possible but not £100,000), building options (which were being discussed with Paul Garstin) and the possibility of having Buriton's Post Office unit.

Philip concluded by reporting that PHA wanted more certainty with regards to grants before committing more of its own funds to the project.

Richard thanked Philip for his report. After a brief discussion it was confirmed that the Buriton Post Office unit was only the furniture not the agreement with the post Office and Philip confirmed his position that he was working towards an agreement with PHA which the Parish Council felt able to take to a public meeting for a joint shop and housing project and should the shop not prove viable then he would be looking at the project from the beginning again.

29/06 REPORT FROM DAVID DOBSON ON BEHALF OF SPCC

Richard introduced David Dobson, Church Warden for Steep Parochial Church Council. David thanked the Councillors for their invitation to speak at the meeting. He gave a brief background to the Church finances over the previous years, saying that the church had broken even financially in recent years but last year had made a loss of £4000 (alleviated by a £2000 loan discharge) He explained that the major refurbishment of the church, including the re-rendering of the walls, replacement of the shingles on the steeple and re-hanging of the bells had made the church reserves rather low.

In the last year David reported that Church had spent £38,000. £19,000 went to parish share (the quota) which mostly goes on the vicar's stipend and pension fund £12,000 went on church maintenance nearly £7,000 of which had been needed to provide a new tank (due to new rules) repairs to the heating system and the pruning of the yews. £3,000 went on vicar's expenses and £4,000 went to charity in the wake of the Tsunami and the Asian earthquake.

David was unsure whether the difficulties in the church finances were a one-off or a trend. He wanted to rebuild the levels of reserves to enable the church to cope with unexpected expenses. He was also sure the quota would rise to cover the large pension deficit.

David reported that the PCC were looking at ways to make savings and increasing pledged giving but their major concern was to preserve the 900 year old church for the whole community, whether they are part of the 10% of the parish who are regular churchgoers or not. He said that he believed that the majority of the parish wanted to see a strong living church in Steep.

A short discussion followed the report and members thanked David for coming.

30/06 REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

**Common and Hangers:**

Terry asked if the Council agreed to pay Stephen Marsden to develop the Common Management Plan. The members agreed to do this.

He reported that the new team leader for the Hangers – Paul Thompson had agreed to a consultative meeting prior to the July meeting of the Parish Council.

Lyn reported that Alex had requested a budget for his design quotation. The sub-committee has suggested £15,000 based on the premise that £7,000 match funding had been allocated from the PC. He had agreed to itemise the quotation and to use options for both possible sites on the common. He had agreed to have the drawings and estimate done by the end of May. Alex had would like to dig a trial pit to see what footings will be necessary after the quote is accepted. Philip reported that Alex was happy for the equipment to be independently inspected prior to the PC accepting responsibility for it. Annual maintenance would be discussed with Alex.

Philip informed the meeting that when they had this quote the sub-committee would be able to start the grant process. Charles reported that they would approach: EHDC, HCC, Playing Fields Association FOSS (Friends of Steep School) as well as the PC and another anonymous source.

Lyn reported that Allianz Cornhill insurers had received the inspection report on the current equipment and requested that all medium risk problems be repaired or the equipment removed before 19<sup>th</sup> June. The Parish Council agreed to remove the equipment. **Richard to organise.**

**Footpaths:**

Fran reported that she had received a request from Hampshire County Council to complete a survey on one or more of our footpaths involving a questionnaire to find out where people were going to and how many were using them. This information would then be fed back to the PC. After a brief discussion the Councillors agreed to decline to participate in this survey.

**Roads:**

Caro reported that there was now traffic calming red or white strips on the roads, although it was noted that these were not in the places agreed.

She also noted the bollards in Steep Marsh were now the District responsibility.

Caro congratulated Terry and Tony Struthers, as well as others, for the completion of the pavement in Church Road. She acknowledged the problems on the north side of the road with regards to the verge and some pooling of water at Kay Bennet's. It was suggested that remedial work could be requested in due course.

After a brief discussion it was confirmed that Stoner Hill was in the parish of Steep but no action was agreed.

**Steep Village Hall and War Memorial:**

Richard reported that he had received a quote of £1445 to build the cupboard in the meeting room. One quote had been received for the redecoration work and another was awaited. The date for the AGM for SWMVC was confirmed as Monday June 12<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm

**Allotments:**

No comments were made.

31/06 PLANNING

**Decisions Made** (March 6<sup>th</sup> – May 9th)

F.27898/014	<b>Garden Hill Cottage, Island Farm Lane</b>	Dormers to front and alterations to porch and two storey extensions to side and rear following demolition of outbuildings.	No Objection	Permission
F.49339	<b>Kettlebrook Meadows</b>	Conversion of dwelling into two	No Objection	Permission
F.25511/005	<b>Cobblers, Mill Lane</b>	External staircase to rear of Garage	No Objection	Permission

**Decisions New and Pending**

F.39564/001	<b>The Birches, Rockpits Lane</b>	Single storey extension to side and rear. Detached garage to front
F.26533/003	<b>49 Church Road</b>	Replacement detached double garage to front

Philip observed that the land adjoining Hilliers appeared to have a stable block on it despite only having permission for a hard standing. **Caro to investigate.**

32/06 FINANCE

Bridget informed the meeting that draft accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 had been circulated with the agenda Caro proposed the adoption of the accounts and Terry seconded. The Council agreed unanimously to adopt the accounts for the year ending March 31<sup>st</sup> 2006.

Section 137 payments had been set at £5.44 per elector.

Bridget informed the meeting that the Portman Account stood at £14354.76

The following cheques were approved at the meeting:

800214	Allianz Cornhill	(Insurance)	£364.61
800215	Lexis Nexis	(Arnold-Baker Book)	£48.00

33/06 CORRESPONDENCE

Bridget reported that she had received the following correspondence:

Allianz Cornhill – Playground inspection report – as discussed previously in the meeting.

HAPTC – Clean Neighbourhood and Environmental Act 2005 – Bridget explained that although new powers were available to Parish and Town Councils to issue fixed penalty notices for littering, graffiti and flyposting, as well as a new system for controlling dogs, few were initially likely to take them up because cost is likely to exceed income on the activities and there were concerns over health and safety issues. Current byelaws remain in place unless replaced by a dog control order. Defra have issued a guide to the new

legislation and are developing a training course for any council who wish to use the powers.

EHDC – South Downs National Park – EHDC have written to appraise members of their understanding of the recent decision by DEFRA to halt the design process. EHDC estimates the delay will add at least six months to the process although it could be more if an appeal is heard.

34/06 Next Council Meeting –  
Monday 3rd July 2005 – 7.30pm