

STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN Mr Richard Coles

CLERK Mrs Jenny Hollington

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday, 7th September 2009 at 7.30 p.m. at Steep Village Hall

Present: Richard Coles (in the Chair) Caro Robinson David Llewellyn
Charles Gibson Fran Box Terry Cook
Jenny Martin Jo Bell

In Attendance:

Vaughan Clarke (County Councillor)
Jennifer Gray (District Councillor)
Jenny Hollington (Clerk)
Drake Hocking (Tree Warden)

There were approximately 65 members of the Public present during the course of the meeting.

09/46 APOLOGIES – Nick Hurst

09/47 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was pointed out that under Representative Reports (Minute 09/41), Commons and Hangars, it should read “narrow the **entrance**” **not** “the **gates**”. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th July were then agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

09/48 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS - Richard reminded Councillors that any interests should be recorded.

09/49 PUBLIC COMMENT

The Chairman asked if there were any comments **not** related to Affordable Housing:

- It was pointed out that the kerb stones opposite Pennyfold in Church Road have been damaged and asked whether anything could be done to remedy the situation – David to follow this up.
- The road markings at the top of Mill Lane need re-painting as cars cut across Church Road, causing problems to other drivers – David to investigate.

The Chairman asked for comments regarding the proposed development on Church Road, and explained that these, along with the questions received from Church Road residents and circulated prior to the meeting, would be addressed by him at the end of the public comment session.

Questions and comments regarding the Village Questionnaire and results, and the need for affordable housing, allotments, and a village green space were raised.

For the purpose of the Meeting Mark Taylor, Bursar at Bedales, outlined the contents of a letter to the Chairman, which he had delivered that day, voicing the School’s concerns – namely, the amount of traffic, the value of the open land to the Village and the lack of outline proposals. He also asked that the letter from Church Road residents indicating their concerns, be taken into account.

The Chairman then read out the Church Road residents’ questions and his reply.

He asked for consideration to be given to the proposal for a meeting between Parish Councillors, Church Road residents and a mediator to resolve some of the issues and hoped that this could be achieved as soon as possible.

David Llewellyn queried whether the Chairman's response was on behalf of the Parish Council. The Chairman confirmed that this was so. David then said that in this case he believed the Chairman's response was invalid because neither he nor other councillors had been consulted, hence their views had not been taken into account in formulating the replies. The Chairman stated that he had spoken to all Councillors prior to the meeting to explain that he would answer all the questions at the end of the Public Comment and propose a possible way forward.

Jenny Martin reminded everyone that at the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 3rd November 2008 it was agreed "to progress the scheme to the next stage – a sketch scheme for public consultation". She pointed out that some of the Church Road residents who have objected to the scheme are not entirely sure exactly what they are objecting to because, as yet, no plans have been circulated. She said it had been hoped to have an initial draft plan showing the houses, green space and allotments, available at this meeting but that the plan has not yet been received from Hyde Housing. The Chairman confirmed that as soon as the up-dated plan is received, it will be advertised on the website and Village Notice boards and further public comment sought.

The Public Comment session was then closed.

09/50 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR COMMENT

Jennifer Gray said that E.H.D.C is under huge pressure from the government to provide Affordable Housing and emphasised that all alternative sites within Steep have been considered. She noted Bedales' late objection but pointed out that Hyde Housing could not continue to spend money and would be within their rights to submit a planning application for the Church Road site. She urged Steep Parish Council to "bite the bullet" and progress the plan for Affordable Housing.

09/51 COUNTY COUNCILLOR COMMENT

Vaughan Clarke said he was pleased to report that Steep is to receive £1,000 from his budget, for the purchase of land next to the Common.

He also outlined plans for a proposed scheme to introduce a Parish Lengthsman to carry out minor drainage work, litter clearing, etc. in each Parish.

09/52 TO DISCUSS UP-DATED PLANS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND THE LETTER RECEIVED FROM CHURCH ROAD RESIDENTS

Richard said that he has sent a letter to Chris Buchan-Hepburn asking for an artist's impression of the proposed scheme, suitable for use at a Public Exhibition (to avoid incurring the £30,000 cost of plans).

Jo asked for clarification as to whether the housing would be for sale or rent as it appears that some members of the public are under the impression the houses would be for shared ownership. It was confirmed that the affordable housing would all be rented.

David asked for clarification of the way ahead and pointed out the following:

- The Ridge Common Lane site would have a minimal effect on residents and fulfils HARA guidelines;
- The R4 site also ticks HARA boxes but is wanted for a village green space and allotments;
- Bedales, which flanks two sides of the site, now oppose the use of the site for housing;
- The P.C. is in no position to sign the Heads of Terms now required by Hyde
- It is wrong to refuse legitimate use of the R4 site – people want allotments and other requests have also been turned down.
- a priceless green space would be lost if a compromise is not found;
- A new Committee, comprising residents, Bedales and the Parish Council, should be formed to work together to find a suitable solution.

Fran hi-lighted the fact that the results of the Questionnaire show there is only a 2% margin between those who want affordable housing and a village green site, and those wanting allotments and green space.

In response to this it was pointed out that according to the latest plan, half the R4 site would be allocated for allotments and a village green space - David argued that people would not use the facilities if it was perceived as “belonging” to the houses.

The decision to discount the Ridge Common Lane site simply for being more closely aligned to Stroud, if E.H.D.C. is really under pressure to provide housing, was also queried. Attention was drawn to the lack of footpaths, narrow road and distance to the Village Day Nursery, Steep School and the Church which would necessitate the use of a car, and thereby increase the traffic in Church Road.

It was also noted that the Parish Council had spent the past 7 years talking to residents and acting on their behalf – e.g. the path from the school, and Bedales’ traffic plan. The results of the latest Village Questionnaire showed the majority of Steep residents are in favour of Affordable Housing on the R4 site.

It was agreed that, because of the time, this item should be closed in order to try and cover other items on the Agenda.

09/53 UP-DATE ON TREE WARDEN ISSUES

Drake said that he is in the process of drawing up expert advice regarding improved management for the woodland component of the Common. In the next few weeks he will also attend meetings at Bedales, Steep School and with the South Downs Joint Committee, regarding conservation.

As mentioned previously by Vaughan Clarke, £1,000 has been agreed to purchase parcels of land bordering the Common which warrant inclusion because of their ecological value.

A Deputy Tree Warden is needed to help cover Steep Marsh and to attend a training event on 4th October, which Drake is unable to attend.

Attention was drawn to a promotion by EHDC to nominate 3 trees from the Parish. Drake will follow this up at his forthcoming meetings.

09/54 UP-DATE ON VILLAGE MAP BOARD

Jenny Martin circulated the proposed wording for the Village Map Board and said that photos showing Shoulder of Mutton, Lutcombe Pond, All Saints’ Church and Kettlebrook Cottages are required. A Village photo competition, to be advertised by flyer in the Village Pubs and Schools, was suggested and it was agreed that Terry, Fran and Jenny should judge the competition - the “prize” to be the kudos of having their picture on the map board.

09/55 UP-DATE ON THE PARISH PLAN

A meeting is to be held at the Village Hall on Monday, 14th September. It was confirmed that there would be no charge for the hire of the Hall for the meeting. Fran asked for a small donation to help with start up costs of postage, etc. - the sum of £50 was agreed. Fran confirmed that once things are up and running it is intended to apply for grants towards costs of producing the Parish Plan.

09/56 VILLAGE HALL NOTICE BOARD

The Clerk said that she and Ben had met up over the summer to discuss options for the design of the Village Notice board. There were a few queries and these were confirmed as follows:

- The Notice Board to be glass fronted and lockable. Posters for advertising will need to be dropped in at the Village Hall, or sent to the Clerk;

- The board to be mounted on two small concrete footings;
- Wording - “Steep Notice Board”
- No Village symbol is required.

09/57 STEEP MARSH LITTER BIN – This item was deferred until the next meeting.

09/58 PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT (S.76) –

“allowing appointed Councillors onto local councils, allowing only elected councillors to become Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, and requiring 5 elected councillors in order for a council to operate and be quorate”.

This item is brought to Councillors’ attention but does not impact Steep P.C. at the present time.

09/59 CLERK’S TRAINING - The Clerk said she would be willing to attend the next available course of CiLCA (believed to be starting in November).

09/60 REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Common and Hangers: A lower quote has been obtained for the gates to the Common and Terry is happy to go ahead with this. The proposed clearing at Lutcombe Bottom is on-going and a site meeting is to be held with Jim Hobson to discuss the issue.

Footpaths: There were no footpath issues to report.

Roads: David said that he, Caro and the Clerk met with representatives of Mott Gifford to discuss the Village 30 scheme. He outlined the proposals for the 30 mph limits and the legal requirements involved. It was agreed to proceed with the scheme.

Steep Village Hall and War Memorial: The decorating of the corridor, small hall and toilets has been completed.

It was noted that Rosemary Lilley, who has undertaken the upkeep of the planting at the War Memorial, has been working very hard. Caro said that she would write to her to express the Parish Council’s thanks.

09/61 UP-DATE ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Decisions made (July - September)

Steep Parish Council – Minutes of Meeting 7.9.09

<u>Planning Number</u>	<u>EHDC Deadline for Comments</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Parish Council Input</u>	<u>EHDC Decision</u>
50081/003	15.7.09	Retention of converted roof space to habitable accommodation and roof lights to front and rear	53 Church Road, Steep	No Objection	Permission
50081/004	21.7.09	Retention of converted roof space to habitable accommodation with roof lights to front and rear	53 Church Road, Steep	No Objection	Permission
32538/002	16.7.09	First floor rear extension	39 Church Road, Steep	No Objection	Permission
50081/003	23.7.09	Dormer windows to front elevation, covered way to rear following conversion of roof space to habitable accommodation	Ashford Farm, Ashford Lane, Steep,	No Objection	Permission
50326/012	28.7.09	Retention of single storey outbuilding for use as garden store/workroom	Collyers, Ridge Common Lane, Steep	No Objection	Permission
21386/004	28.7.09	Two storey extension to side, conservatory, porch and detached garage	Island Cottage, The Island, Steep	No Objection	Permission
3328/002	4.8.09	Construction of two buttresses to stabilise garden wall	Bees Cottage, Ashford Lane, Steep	No Objection	Consent
20324/022	6.8.09	Covered outside teaching area, decking and dwarf wall	Dunhurst School, Bell Hill, Petersfield	No Objection	Permission

Decisions New and Pending

39982/004	21.8.09	Conversion of 4 barns into 3 office units and 1 warehouse	Westmark Farm, Midhurst Road, Petersfield, GU31 5AT	No Objection
33640/001	25.8.09	Replacement front wall and entrance gate	Bridge Mill, Mill Lane, Sheet GU32 2AJ	No Objection
29289/011	4.9.09	Replacement single storey home office incorporating double garage	Coppicefield Cottage, Ridge Common Lane, Steep GU32 1AJ	No Objection

09/62 FINANCE

The following payments were made in accordance to the budget:

J. Hollington – Salary and Expenses

Information Commissioner's Office

Donations to the Village Newsletter and Churchyard Maintenance were considered and agreed.

09/63 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

Fran asked to see the letter from B.T. regarding the adoption of the red telephone box at Hayes Cottages.

09/64 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, 2nd November 2009 at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 10.10 p.m.