

DRAFT

STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: Jim MacDonald

CLERK: Jenny Hollington

Minutes of an on-line Parish Council Teams Meeting held on Monday, 7th December 2020 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Jim MacDonald (in the Chair)
Terry Cook Peter Cruttenden Jeff Graham
Nick Hurst Jenny Martin Jonathan Turk

In Attendance: Nick Drew, District Councillor
Russell Oppenheimer, County Councillor
Jenny Hollington, Clerk

There was 1 member of the public present at the meeting.

Minute	Item	Action
20/154	<u>APOLOGIES</u> – Apologies had been received from Cllrs. Ashfield and Laycock	
20/155	<u>MINUTES</u> – The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 2 nd November were approved – the Clerk was asked to sign them on this occasion due to current Government restrictions.	
20/156	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> – The Chairman reminded Councillors of their responsibility to declare an interest in any matter on the Agenda –none declared.	
20/157	<u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coffee Cart – It was queried whether the temporary contract for the mobile coffee cart, sited in the Village Hall car park on Saturdays, could be extended? The coffee cart has proved popular and the temporary contract is due to run until 2nd January. It was agreed that this item should be referred to the Trustees of the Village Hall for their consideration.• War Memorial flooding – During periods of heavy rain the War Memorial becomes flooded – The Clerk was asked to liaise with the Lengthsman to see whether a ditch could be dug to drain the water away.• Church Road parking issues – As highlighted in the monthly village newsletter, contractors working at the Headmaster’s house in Church Road have been parking their vans on the pavement - this has caused all sorts of problems for pedestrians, especially mums with pushchairs. The foreman has been approached and is aware of the issue, but it appears that they have been asked not to park in the Bedales’ car park due to coronavirus. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Bedales highlighting the problems this is causing to residents.	Clerk Clerk Clerk
20/158	<u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brickyards – The response from the owner of The Brickyards assuring the Parish Council of his continued support where there he is given enough detail in speed complaints relating to the Brickyards, was noted.	
20/159	<u>PLANNING</u> – The Planning Committee has been operating under strength since the resignation of Cllr. Cook earlier in the year and new Parish Councillor, Jonathan Turk, had indicated that he would be willing to help in this capacity. Cllr. Turk was therefore nominated as a member of the	

Committee by Cllr. Hurst and seconded by Cllr. MacDonald and the appointment unanimously agreed.

20/159 LAND AT CHURCH ROAD – It was noted that wells have been dug to monitor the groundwater levels and these will now need to be checked regularly over the coming months.

20/160 OPEN SPACE WORKING PARTY – A draft summary of the consultation responses had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting and Cllr. Graham confirmed that the report had been independently reviewed and approved. Clare Moriarty was thanked profusely for the excellent work involved in production of the report. The summary will be made available to members of the public via the Parish Council website and this will be highlighted via the monthly village newsletter.

The next phase for the group will involve use of the summary as a basis to consider the open space as a whole and to focus on what it might look like in practice (perhaps with potential design ideas). It is envisaged that further engagement with both the Parish Council and residents will be involved and there was discussion about means of communication – e.g. whether it would be possible to hold a further public meeting in March. It was agreed that the working party should investigate a way of capturing residents' e-mail addresses for the purpose of communicating and keeping residents updated about the Open Space

CM

30/161 FINANCE -

- (a) External Auditor's report and conclusion of Audit 19-20 – The report from PKF Littlejohn has been received and the Clerk confirmed that no matters had come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. The Clerk also confirmed that the conclusion of audit notice is being displayed on the website and noticeboards.
- (b) Lengthsman Funding – A spreadsheet showing the current levels of spend across the cluster had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that there are still a couple of parishes with large amounts of grant funding to be used and it was agreed that the Chairman and Clerk would draft an e-mail reminding them that funding must be spent within the financial year or allocated to other parishes to use.
- (c) Budget 21-22 – A draft budget proposal had been circulated prior to the meeting and was discussed. Cllr. Cruttenden confirmed that parish finances are in good health. Projects included in the budget for 21-22 include the second phase of the tree management plan (although it is hoped that an application for S.106 funding will cover this), on-going footpath maintenance, and a £6,000 commitment towards Phase 2 CFI roads project. A small allowance has also been included for other community projects (e.g. a new children's swing at Hayes Cottages). A new area of reserves prepares the parish council for costs associated with the establishment of the new public open space. The draft budget allows for the precept to remain unchanged, but Councillors were urged to consider the potential financial challenges of Covid-19, and any other areas of expenditure not yet included in the budget. However, following discussion, the draft budget was approved, unchanged. Cllr. Graham offered to research ownership of the land at Hayes Cottages to see if the suggested new swing would be a possibility
- (d) Precept 21-22 – It was agreed that the Precept should remain unchanged for 21-22 at £19,000.
- (e) Bank Reconciliation – The bank reconciliation for November had been circulated prior to the meeting and was approved. The current account cashbook balance was £20,039 on 10th November 2020.
- (f) Cheques – Cheques for December payment were approved as follows:

Clerk
Chair

JG

Chq No.		Payee	Service
100364	£240.00	PKF Littlejohn	External Audit 19-20
100365	£925.00	Bill Robinson	Lengthsman - November
100366	£150.00	Sheet Parish Council	Grant contribution - Tools for HMG Volunteers
100367	£98.79	J. Graham	Refund - bird box materials
100368	£20.00	J. Hollington	Refund - Gift token for Bugler (11.11.20)
100369	£1.67	HMRC	Tax and N.i. + Emp Contribution
100370	£737.33	J. Hollington	Clerk
	£2,172.79		

20/162 LUTCOMBE POND – Cllr. Martin reported that she and the Chairman had met with a local contractor to discuss the work required to fix the leak. However, the contractor was concerned that to do the job properly the pond would need to be dredged and drained and that this would be too big a job for him. Cllr. Cook confirmed that he had received a similar response from his contact. Cllr. Oppenheimer offered to approach the contractor working on the lake at the Heath for Petersfield Town Council to see if they would be prepared to quote for the work required.

20/163 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT – Cllr. Oppenheimer’s monthly report had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The following items were highlighted:

- Extra funding from Government to support vulnerable families with meals – The funding package comprises 3 different schemes and full details can be found via the Hampshire County Council website.
- Training for Lengthsmen to work on the Highway – HCC is keen to extend the work the Lengthsmen can do on the highway and are offering Traffic Management Training which will then allow the Lengthsman to erect basic traffic signage and work on the carriageway on low-speed roads.
- HCC Tree Strategy – HCC has made a commitment to plant 1 million trees by 2050.
- Verge cutting in 2021 – Cllr. Oppenheimer explained the two different types of cut (annual and biennial)
- Safer Care Home visits – A number of care homes across Hampshire will be taking part in an innovative new scheme to support family visitors to visit loved ones more safely with regular Covid-19 tests.

Cllr. Oppenheimer also highlighted the work of a local group, Petersfield Climate Action Network, a new environmental charity based in Petersfield. They would like to hear from homeowners interested in benefitting from subsidised retrofitting of energy saving measures such as insulation, double-glazing, or air-source heat pumps. More information on this will be made available in the village newsletter and via the noticeboards.

20/164 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT – Cllr. Drew highlighted the following items of particular interest to Steep residents:

- Church Road development – Cllr. Drew said he has been contacted by various residents concerned about the proposed development. He pointed out that he is unable to take sides as he represents the whole of the community.
- Planning for Burryers Farm – A resident has queried how the new planning application differs from the previous application which has been overturned? Cllr. Drew has referred this question to the Legal Department at EHDC for a response.
- Brickyards – Cllr. Hurst said that there appear to be mixed messages and lack of clarity

from the compliance team – Cllr. Drew undertook to get a more formal response on this issue from them.

- Environmental Grant – Cllr. Drew confirmed that this has now been spent, with over 1000 trees being planted across the Ward.

20/165 STEEP COMMON

Ash Die-back – Phase 1 of the tree management scheme has now been completed and the contractor has done a wonderful job. However, in respect of the wood which was left where it was felled, the offer of £100 to remove it for logs has now been reduced to £50 because of the poor condition of the wood – Steep Parish Council confirmed that they were prepared to go ahead with this reduced sum. No response to the application for S.106 monies has been received from EHDC.

The Clerk was asked to write a note to thank Bedales' students who have been building bird boxes – these have now been installed.

Clerk

20/166 ROADS AND TRAFFIC –

Phase 2 Traffic Management Scheme – Joe Folland, HCC Traffic Engineer, has reported that the application to SDNPA for central S.106 monies towards this scheme was not successful this time round - he will apply again in the new financial year. The legal process in respect of the change in speed limit on Stoner Hill is still going through the legal process.

20/167 FOOTPATHS –

Hangers Way – Adam Macey has confirmed that work to improve the surfacing of the bottom path will take place in the Spring when hopefully the weather will have improved.

Ashford Hangers – The Clerk was asked to write a thank you letter to the Rangers who work so hard in the Hangers and take such a lot of responsibility upon themselves – a copy will be sent to Pete Durnell.

Clerk

20/168 WAR MEMORIAL – There had been a good turnout for the small service at the War Memorial to commemorate Armistice Day, 11.11.20. Cllr. Drew was thanked for attending to lay the wreath on behalf of EHDC and Cllr. Cruttenden on behalf of the Parish Council. Cllrs. Graham, Cook and Martin were also thanked for their help with traffic management during the service. The War Memorial was looking beautiful once again – Tony and Suzanne Knights continue to do an amazing job!

20/169 STEEP MARSH NOTICEBOARD – The Clerk said she had spoken to Philip Mileham about the possibility of installing the board on the verge along the hedge-line to his property. However, he was concerned that the lanes are very narrow and the verges very muddy, so it would be far from ideal! It was agreed that the Clerk would continue to liaise with residents to find the best spot.

Clerk

20/170 DATES OF MEETINGS 2021 – Future meeting dates for 2021 had been circulated prior to the meeting and were approved.

20/171 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, 11th January 2021 at 7.30 p.m. Details to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 9.35 p.m.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT
TO
ALL PARISH COUNCILS
IN PETERSFIELD HANGERS**

1 DECEMBER 2020

1. Extra funding from Government to support vulnerable families with meals

I mentioned last month that Hampshire County Council had moved early to ensure that free school meals would be available to vulnerable families throughout the half term and holidays. On 9 November, the Government then announced a £170 million winter funding package. £2.89 million of this funding will come to Hampshire. The funding will provide further support to the most vulnerable children and families - including providing free meals to disadvantaged children during the Christmas holidays. The funding package comprises three schemes:

- The Covid Winter Grant Scheme funding will support children, families and the most vulnerable over the season.
- The Holiday Activities and Food programme will be extended to cover the Easter, summer and Christmas breaks in 2021.
- Healthy Start payments will increase from April 2021 to help expectant mothers and those with young children on low incomes and in receipt of benefits to buy fresh fruit and vegetables.

2. Training for Lengthsmen to work on the Highway

Both the County Council and Parish Councils greatly value the role of the Parish Lengthsmen. The scheme allows quick response to localised issues. HCC is keen to extend some of the work which Lengthsmen can do on the highway and are offering **Traffic Management Training** which will enable Lengthsmen to work under the appropriate safety requirements.

The training will allow the Lengthsman to erect basic traffic management signage and then work within the live carriageway on low speed roads. Currently the Lengthsman are not permitted to work within the live carriageway, only on footways and verges. The funding for all Lengthsmen for next year was confirmed on 19 November by Executive Member Cllr Rob Humby.

3. HCC Tree Strategy

Hampshire County Council has published a Tree Strategy. It is a very readable document and, for those interested in trees, I would say that it is worth a read. To accompany this new strategy, Hampshire County Council has made a commitment to plant 1 million trees by 2050. There is a commitment to working with partners and residents in the Strategy. Here is a link:

<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/environment/tree-strategy.pdf>

4. Verge cutting in 2021

I would like to clarify the HCC approach to verge-cutting. I have recently had a long conversation with the HCC Officer responsible for these matters.

There are two types of verge cut: the annual 1m cut and the biennial 3m deep cut (every other year).

Annual Cut

The Annual Cut is primarily aimed at maintaining pedestrian refuge points and visibility. Parish Councillors will recall that HCC undertook the annual verge cut early in 2020 as an experiment (around April). There was not universal approval for this, and I did pass on the feedback I received from Parishes. However the consensus seems to be that the early cut experiment was successful; Plantlife and County Botanist Nicky Court have been involved in the assessment process and they are apparently satisfied that the biodiversity of the verges did benefit from the early cut. A final decision on whether to undertake the cut early again next year will be taken in January but at this time it does seem that this is likely.

Biennial Deep Cut

The Deep Cut is aimed at preventing the formation of scrub which could negatively impact the Highway network, pedestrian safety and wildflower growth. The 3m Deep Cut used to take place every three years. In 2020 the frequency changed to every two years on the advice of Plantlife. The 3m Deep Cut will always take place at the end of the season, around October. **This means that every other year, all Parishes will get two cuts.**

I hope that is helpful clarification.

5. Hampshire chosen for innovative pilot offering regular testing to family members for safer care home visits

A number of care homes across the Hampshire County Council area will be taking part in an innovative new national scheme to support family visitors to have regular Covid-19 tests in order to visit loved ones more safely. Hampshire is one of only three areas in England chosen to take part in the pilot ahead of a wider roll-out nationally.

Regular testing will be offered to one family member or friend per resident, which – when combined with other infection-control measures such as PPE – will support more meaningful visits. The aim is to enable, where possible, indoor visits without a screen to take place while reducing the risk to care home residents, staff and visitors.

For more information visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pilot-for-family-members-to-get-regular-testing-for-safer-care-home-visits>

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER
County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers