

**DRAFT**

**STEEP PARISH COUNCIL**

**CHAIRMAN:** Jim MacDonald

**CLERK:** Jenny Hollington

**Minutes of the Steep Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021  
at Steep Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllrs. Jim MacDonald (in the Chair) Terry Cook Jeff Graham  
Freddie Holmes Jenny Martin Jonathan Turk

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

There were 4 members of the public present at the meeting.

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>
21/96	<u>APOLOGIES</u> – Apologies had been received from Cllr. Nick Hurst	
21/97	<u>MINUTES</u> – The Minutes of the AGM held on 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 were approved and signed.	
21/98	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> – The Chairman reminded Councillors of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary interest in any matter on the Agenda. He also reminded Councillors that the Parish Council is Sole Managing Trustee of the Village Hall and of the possible conflict of loyalties between the two roles.	
21/99	<u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>An item of public comment was addressed to the District Councillor concerning approval of the planning application for B2 use at Buryer’s Farm in Steep Marsh despite the objection of the Parish Council and residents, and the request for the application to be taken to Planning Committee. Cllr. Drew explained that the constitution is clear - it is always the decision of the Planning Portfolio holder, Officers, Head of Planning and Chair of Planning whether an application will go to Committee or not. In this case they did not believe there were enough policy arguments to support the request. In response to a question about the legality of the application, Cllr. Drew confirmed that he had queried this with the legal department and been advised that the application is legally correct.</li></ul>	
21/100	<u>BY-ELECTION FOR 2-PARISH COUNCILLORS</u> – EHDC has advised that a by-election has been requested for the two vacant positions on Steep Parish Council and arrangements will be made for this to be held mid-July.	
21/101	<u>ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY 2021</u> – This year’s APA had been held via Teams because of Government restrictions – consequently it was a very quiet affair. The meeting had covered the work being done to restore Lutcombe Pond and maintain the footpath network.	
21/102	<u>VILLAGE HALL HYBRID CONSULTATION MEETING</u> – Whilst it had been a challenging meeting, the technology had held up which enabled a small number of residents to be present in the hall, with others joining the meeting on-line. We received a lot of feedback from the meeting and it had been good to engage with residents. Following the meeting a complaint about a Councillor’s behaviour had been received. The Chairman had investigated the complaint and the Councillor had apologised for their behaviour.	

21/103 EHDC CODE OF CONDUCT – The Chairman explained that EHDC are keen to harmonise the Code of Conduct across all Town and Parish Councils in East Hampshire and have invited parishes to adopt their newly revised Code (circulated prior to the meeting). Whilst the need for a common Code was understood, it was noted that the new Code of Conduct is complex and difficult to follow - Cllr. Drew explained that it had been written by the Legal Department and designed to be robust. It was agreed that the Chairman should write to the Legal Department and ask if they could assist in writing a simple summary document to sit in front of the lengthy formal document to make it more easily understandable. Chair

21/104 FINANCE -

- (a) Grant Application – A grant of £200 towards production of the monthly Steep & Stroud Newsletter was approved. The hard work and dedication of the newsletter team in keeping residents up to date with local activities each month is greatly appreciated.
- (b) Bank Reconciliation – The May bank reconciliation had been circulated prior to the meeting and was approved
- (c) Cheques – Cheques for June payment were approved as follows:

Chq No.		Payee	Service
100394	£63.84	N.W. Adams	Annual Play Inspection
100395	£730.00	J. Hollington	Clerk
100396	£200.00	Steep PCC	Grant - Newsletter production
	£993.84		

21/105 LUTCOMBE POND – Cllr. Turk said that he has been in touch with Flood and Water Management at HCC about the leak at Lutcombe Pond – they have advised that the Estates Team are legally responsible for Lutcombe Pond and that their agreement will be required before the project can be progressed. Cllr. Oppenheimer said that he would liaise with Pete Durnell, Countryside Ranger, about whether the Estates Manager does need to be involved. This will be followed up at the July meeting. JT

21/106 FOOTPATHS – Three quotes have now been received for the maintenance work required on footpaths highlighted by the Recreation Working Party. It was agreed that, before making a final decision on priorities, Cllr. Martin and the Clerk would meet with Adam Macey to confirm that Footpath 20 (the Hangers Way) is to be addressed by Hampshire and the Hampshire Monday Group as previously promised. If this is the case, F/P 22a, 26 and the permissive path on Steep Common could be prioritised by the Parish Council. Grants will also need to be sought via Countryside Services to stretch the Parish Council’s £2000 budget. Of the three quotes received, it was agreed to offer the work to Chris Budd who has already been involved in various footpath maintenance projects on Steep footpaths. Full details will be discussed in July, when more information will be available from HCC. JM/  
Clerk

21/107 LENGTHSMAN – Cllrs. Martin and Holmes confirmed that they would be happy to help with admin support associated with the Lengthsman role. FH/  
JM

21/108 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT – The County Councillor’s report for June had been circulated prior to the meeting and the following items were noted:

- HCC Budget Consultation - HCC face a budget shortfall of at least £80million over the next two years and is seeking residents’ views on how to address this – Cllr. Oppenheimer encouraged Steep P.C. to respond.. The full consultation document can be found via: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/balancing-the-budget> and closes on 18<sup>th</sup> July.

- A parish forum zoom meeting on motorcycle noise and nuisance is to be held on Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> June – Both Damien Hinds and the Police and Crime Commissioner will be present. Cllr. Holmes said she would attend on behalf of Steep P.C.
- New funding for home retrofit assessments is available via PeCan (Petersfield Climate Action Network) who are offering 150 assessments on how to make homes more energy efficient at a fraction of their normal cost. More information is available via [pecan.email@gmail.com](mailto:pecan.email@gmail.com)

FH

The County Councillor's full report is appended to the Minutes and will be made available via the Parish Council website.

21/109 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

- In respect of the item of Public Comment, Cllr. Drew said that he recognised that planning issues are incredibly emotive and that whilst he welcomes residents' input, he did not appreciate aggression! He confirmed that he is supporting Steep Marsh residents over an on-going compliance issue which has taken EHDC far too long to resolve. The Chairman said that many Councils are becoming equally frustrated with the lack of transparency of the planning system – it feels as if there is no point to reviewing planning applications if objections are constantly overruled. It is an issue that he will take forward via EHAP&TC.
- Grant Applications – Due to the pandemic many larger Charities are applying for grants from District Councillor allocations - a recent application from Hampshire Search and Rescue is a case in point. In these circumstances, Cllr. Drew will always seek the views of each of his wards before considering the application and encouraged Steep P.C. to put forward ideas for use of the grant.

21/110 STEEP COMMON – Cllr. Graham had circulated a short presentation of recommendations from the Annual Inspection which remain outstanding – all are low/medium risk. It was agreed that these items should be addressed as soon as possible – quotes for the work should be sought and the Lengthsman asked to address some of the minor items. The question of the use of weedkiller on the Common is being followed up via Steep School.

JG

21/111 ROADS AND TRAFFIC –

- (a) Correspondence re Steep Hollow – Residents' concerns about damaged signage, the erosion of the bank and driver behaviour were noted and will be followed up via Andrew Wood at HCC Petersfield depot.
- (b) Blocked drains – It was noted that drains in Mill Lane have now been cleared following complaints to HCC. However, there are, of course, many more drains across the parish which need to be addressed. It was agreed to seek the help of the public, via the newsletter, asking them to report any blocked drains in their part of the parish via the HCC website.

FH

21/112 COMMUNITY PROJECT – SWINGS AT HAYES COTTAGES – Cllr. Graham reported that he is making progress and has established that EHDC own the land and there are no covenants over it. The next step will be to consult with residents about the proposal to install a swing to replace the rope swing which had been removed by EHDC operatives.

JG

21/113 STEEP WAR MEMORIAL – The Clerk has been in touch with the Conservation Officer at EHDC about whether permission is required to re-lay the stones around the War Memorial to prevent flooding and will follow this up.

Clerk

21/114 SDNPA DARK SKIES WEBINAR – Cllr. Holmes attended the on-line webinar on behalf of Steep P.C. and explained that preserving the dark skies is to be prioritised in the SDNPA's new

management plan. A new Technical Advice Note (TAN) on lighting is to be published shortly which will have important implications for Steep. For domestic users, there are some simple guidelines – use low, warm lights (500 lumens and 3000K or less), lights should be pointed downwards. Exterior lights should be shielded, point downwards and be on proximity sensors. Low transmittance or tinted glass, blackout blinds and curtains all help reduce light spill from interiors. Planning applications with external lighting will now need to include a lighting assessment - permission could be refused if a proposal has an adverse impact on the dark landscape. It was suggested that Steep P.C. could consider improving lighting at the Village Hall and potentially consider whether improvements could be made to street lighting. Cllr. Holmes said she was keen to organise a star gazing event in the Ashford Hangers (similar to a recent event held in Buriton) and was happy to take this forward.

FH

21/115 CORRESPONDENCE:

- E-mail correspondence re timing of HCC verge cutting – Cllr. Drew said that Froxfield Parish Council has taken over the cutting of their verges from HCC – he will feed back any relevant information to Steep P.C.
- FoI Requests – These continue to come in and are proving to be very time consuming – so much so that they are starting to affect the smooth running of the Council. The Chairman confirmed that several offers have been made to meet the resident to address his specific concerns but these have not been taken up. He will now contact the ICO’s office for advice.

21/116 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS – Members of the public were excluded from the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 to enable Councillors to discuss the Clerk’s annual appraisal and any actions required. Following discussion, a pay increment in line with inflation was approved – 1.5% backdated to April 2020 plus 1% backdated to April 2021. Consideration will also be given to subscribing to a Council specific accounts package to help ease workload.

21/117 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – The next Meeting of Steep Parish Council will be on Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at Steep Village Hall at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 10.05 p.m.