

DRAFT

STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: Jim MacDonald

CLERK: Jenny Hollington

**Minutes of the Steep Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 1st November 2021
at Steep Village Hall**

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

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

There were 2 members of the public present at the meeting.

Minute	Item	Action
21/176	<u>APOLOGIES</u> – Apologies had been received from Cllr. Freddie Holmes	
21/177	<u>MINUTES</u> – Subject to an addition to Minute 21/162 – Land at Church Road - to state that “Councillors wanted to see a firm date for the beginning of consultation and suggested it should start in December”, the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 4 th October 2021 were approved and signed.	
21/178	<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.	
21/179	<u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Almshouse access – Cllr. Cook confirmed he had looked at the safety concern re access at the Almshouses following the removal of the old hedge. He felt it was not appropriate for letters re hedge cutting to be sent out to Church Road residents at the current time.• Cricketer’s access – It is thought that the old access (referred to at the October P.C. meeting) to the rear of the Cricketers from Hayes Cottages had been on private land.	
21/180	<u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minutes – The Clerk was asked to ensure the Minutes of Parish Council Meetings are available via the website in a timely manner each month.• Coffee Cart – It was confirmed that members of the Village Hall Management Committee met with James Cooke to discuss provision of a coffee facility in the Village Hall car park - this is being progressed.• Land at Church Road – It was suggested that “Land at Church Road” should be automatically included on all Parish Council Agendas – Cllr. Duthie said that she endorsed this view. The Chairman said that the item had not been included this month as there is nothing new to report.	Clerk

- 21/181 PLANNING COMMITTEE – There are currently two vacancies on the Planning Committee (Cllr. Graham having stepped in temporarily to cover a gap). Cllr. Duthie said she was keen to join the Committee, and this was approved – she was thanked and welcomed. It was suggested that Cllr. Holmes may be interested in the second vacancy – as she was not present, this will be discussed with her outside of the meeting and, if appropriate, approved at the December P.C. Meeting. Chair
- 21/182 SDNPA DARK SKIES EVENT – This had been a lovely, well-attended, and informative evening arranged by Cllr. Holmes and held at Steep Village Hall - there had been a good mix of ages present. Dan Oakley, the SDNPA Dark Skies Officer, gave an entertaining talk and the sky had been clear which meant that everyone was able to make good use of the very large telescope in the Village Hall car park to study the stars. Steep falls within an intrinsic darkness zone and residents have a responsibility to take appropriate steps to reduce light spill (e.g. outside lights should face downwards). At County level, there is consideration of an extended rural dimming programme which would be welcomed by Steep P.C.
- 21/183 REGENERATION FUNDING – Three like-for-like grants are being sought to refurbish the B.T. Phone Box – alternative uses other than an Information Kiosk will need to be considered though because, following the closure of the Tourist Information Office in Petersfield, it is difficult to obtain appropriate information and leaflets. A decision on whether to go ahead with the refurbishment will be made at the December Parish Council meeting. FH
- 21/184 SPEEDWATCH – A analysis of the results of the Speedwatch Volunteers’ work was circulated which showed the outcomes of the group’s work on Stoner Hill and Bell Hill. All agreed that the information was very useful and that it would be good to be regularly updated – huge appreciation and thanks were expressed to the Volunteer Group for the work they have been doing which makes a big difference to the speed cars travel through the village at. Cllr. Graham explained that new members of the group are needed. He also noted that in the past few years there has been vast improvements to the technology used – new devices can now take a picture of speeding vehicles which cuts the work of the volunteers, but these cost in the region of £4,000. Both the County and District Councillor indicated that they would be prepared to offer grant funding towards up-graded equipment if that was thought appropriate – however, the Chairman noted that Steep P.C. has very recently been made aware that Hampshire Highways has been partially successful with a bid for central CIL monies from SDNPA - a contribution of £10,000 has been granted towards the Phase 2 traffic management scheme for the C18. These proposed improvements plus the proposed purchase of a speed indicator device should all help to slow traffic on Stoner Hill and a meeting will be arranged with Joe Folland, the Highways Engineer working on this project, as soon as possible to get this work into the system. It was agreed to wait until these works have been completed before deciding on any further actions. Chair/
JT
- 21/185 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT – Russell Oppenheimer’s report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was discussed:
- Climate Change Grants – HCC is offering grants to make community buildings more energy efficient as part of its commitment to combatting climate change.
 - Bus Service Improvement Plan – HCC’s immediate challenge is to get bus journeys back to pre-Covid levels but following the approval of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, they are now in a strong position to bid for a share of £3bn funding available.
 - Extra Funding to Expand Woodlands and Protect Trees – Grants of £250,000 to £500,000 will be awarded to projects across England as part of the “Trees Call to Action Fund”. If Parish Councils would like to be part of a bid to the Action Fund, they should let Cllr. Oppenheimer know as HCC, EHDC and SDNPA would be interested in forming a partnership to bid.

In addition to the items mentioned in the report, Cllr. Oppenheimer was asked to lobby HCC to re-think their policy to allow trees suffering from Ash Die-Back to stand and to improve the current state of the Ashford Hangers. Cllr. Oppenheimer undertook to talk to the Cabinet Member responsible in the next few days.

He was also asked about repairs to the leak at Lutcombe Pond - excess water is now impacting Ashford Lane which is regularly flooded so it is now an urgent Highways problem which will only get worse through the winter months. Cllr. Oppenheimer admitted that this project has hit an impasse and said he would try to get things going again.

Cllr. Oppenheimer's full report is appended to these Minutes and can be seen on the Parish Council website – www.steep-pc.gov.uk

- 21/186 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – The East Hampshire District Council pledge to plant 120,000 trees across the district to off-set our carbon footprint was noted. Cllr. Drew also has an allocation of £1000 for tree planting schemes and would be happy to support a grant application by Steep Parish Council for a scheme on Steep Common. He also offered to engage the Leader of EHDC in support of tree work on the Ashford Hangers if this was the wish of the Parish Council.

Following an Almshouse charity event, Cllr. Drew engaged with EHDC Officers to ascertain whether Alms houses are permitted social housing and was assured that they are.

In respect of planning and compliance issues in Steep Marsh, Cllr. Drew confirmed that EHDC Officers continue to engage with residents to resolve concerns.

21/187 FINANCE -

- (a) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Receipt of a further £867.96 CIL monies was noted
- (b) Bank Reconciliation – The October bank reconciliation had been circulated prior to the meeting and was approved and signed.
- (c) Cheques – Cheques for November payment were approved as follows:

Chq No.	£	Payee	Service
100413	£950.00	Ginkgo Landscaping	Lengthsman
100414	£44.22	T. Knights	War Memorial Planting
100415	£9.00	J Graham	Refund - Expenses - Hayes Cottages consultation
100416	£580.00	Ginkgo Landscaping	Hedges and fence repairs – Steep Common
100417	£35.00	Royal British Legion	Wreath for Remembrance Day
100418	£1,207.14	Jenny Hollington	Clerk (+ backpay and new rate)
100419	£154.11	HMRC	Tax
	£2,979.47		

- 21/188 BUDGET 2022-23 – It was agreed that the Finance Committee would meet in the coming weeks to discuss initial proposals and present a proposed budget for discussion/approval at the December P.C. meeting.

21/189 FOOTPATHS –

- Grant Applications - There has been no progress with grant applications towards improvements needed on a number of parish footpaths – it is intended that these will now be completed ready for the Spring.

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- Hangers Way Improvements - The Hampshire Monday Group, in conjunction with HCC Countryside Services, have carried out the improvements to the surface of the Hangers Way where it crosses the fields at the bottom of the Common – however, the improvements to drainage at the top of the wooded area have not yet been carried out. An e-mail will be sent to Elliott Rowe asking for assistance to repair the very muddy part of the Hangers Way on the approach to the Water House. JM/
 - Hedges on Stoner Hill - There has still been no feedback from Radian about the overgrown hedges blocking the footpath from Stoner Hill to Hayes Cottages and this has been chased via HCC who have instigated a legal process. Cllr. Drew offered EHDC input into this issue – EHDC Officers work very closely with Radian and may be able to apply pressure. JG
- 21/190 ASHFORD HANGERS – The Chairman said he had not heard back from the Hampshire Rangers on re-planting projects for the Ashford Hangers – he will continue to chase their response. Chair
- 21/191 SIGNAGE WORKING PARTY – The survey of parish signage is progressing well, with all information being collated on Parish On-Line. A full report will be given at the December P.C. meeting. Instructions on how to access and use Parish On-Line will be sent to all Councillors. FH Chair
- 21/192 ROADS AND TRAFFIC –
- (a) Purchase of a Speed Indicator Device – Detailed analysis and quotes for various types of speed indicators from 4 different companies had been circulated prior to the meeting and were discussed. It was agreed that the speed indicator and quote from TWM Traffic Control Systems Ltd was the most appropriate and purchase was approved in the sum of £2885.55 + VAT. JT/Clerk
 - (b) Eroding Bank at Steep Hollow – Nothing further has been heard from Hampshire Highways on this issue – to be chased. Clerk
 - (c) Flooding on Ashford Lane - As discussed earlier under the County Councillor’s report, Steep P.C. is concerned about the flooding from the Ashford Stream, which is badly affecting Ashford Lane – the matter has been reported to Hampshire Highways, but nothing heard back yet.
- 21/193 COMMUNITY PROJECT – PLAY EQUIPMENT AT HAYES COTTAGES - A consultation leaflet has been posted through every door at Hayes Cottages and responses are being collated. Once the consultation responses have been analysed, feedback will be shared with East Hants District Council. JG
- 21/194 STEEP COMMON
- (a) Phase 2 Tree Work – The work to fell the remaining trees suffering Ash Die-back will commence in the third week of November. JG
 - (b) Play Equipment – Issues raised in the Annual Play Inspection are in the process of being addressed – hedges have been cut back to improve sight lines and gaps in the hedges filled in. Estimates for the necessary repairs to the swings will be sought. Other items, e.g. appropriate signage, improved access will be considered and, if appropriate, items included in the 2022-23 budget. Cllrs. Andrew Martin, Cook and Graham will meet at Steep Common to discuss the Inspection report in more details and define what is required. JG/AM TC
- 21/195 STEEP WAR MEMORIAL – Due to a prior engagement, the Chairman said he was not able to lay the wreath at the Remembrance Day Service on 11.11.21 – in his absence, Cllr. Jenny Martin will do the honours. District Councillor, Nick Drew, confirmed he would also attend to lay a wreath on behalf of EHDC. Members of the speedwatch team will be present to help with traffic control. Refreshments will be offered at the Village Hall afterwards. JM/JG Clerk

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21/196 FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Bonfire and Firework Event – 5.11.21 – Steep Common – Letters will be hand delivered to Church Road residents asking them to avoid parking in Church Road on the evening of the event to help prevent the road from becoming blocked.

Chair/
JM

21/197 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – The next meeting of Steep Parish Council will be Monday, 6th December at 7.30 p.m. at Steep Village Hall.