

DRAFT

STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: Jim MacDonald

CLERK: Jenny Hollington

**Minutes of the Steep Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 7th March 2022
at Steep Village Hall**

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

In Attendance:
Nick Drew, District Councillor
Jenny Hollington, Clerk

There were 5 members of the public present at the meeting.

Minute	Item	Action
22/38	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u> – Apologies had been received from County Councillor, Russell Oppenheimer</p> <p>Cllr. Hurst explained that he will have to take a leave of absence during April/May – he was wished well; Steep P.C. look forward to seeing him on his return.</p>	
22/39	<p><u>MINUTES</u> – The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 7th February were approved and signed.</p>	
22/40	<p><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.</p>	
22/41	<p><u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A resident expressed thanks to the P.C. in their role of Sole Managing Trustee of the Village Hall for organising the Community Meeting and said she hoped the newly formed Working Party would be able to elect their Chair.• A resident asked for clarity on the whereabouts of the income from the sale of land which had been passed to Steep in Need – i.e. land at Sandy Lane in Steep Marsh, and Ridge Common Lane. The Chairman confirmed that proceeds from a sale of land would be held by the Charity on behalf of the beneficiaries.• A resident thanked the P.C. for ensuring that the analysis of the consultation responses is now available on-line. However, she did not agree with the introductory wording and asked for it to be amended. The Chairman undertook to liaise with the resident direct.• Cllr. Andrew Martin and Bedales were thanked for donating the very tasty refreshments for the community meeting.	Chair
22/42	<p><u>FORMAT OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS</u> – The Chairman said that he had been reflecting on the amount of public comment at the start of each Parish Council meeting which, at the February meeting, had taken over 40 minutes to get through due to the length of some of the comments. He questioned whether there would be value in having a more social start to the meeting with coffee and biscuits and an ability to chat, to enable residents to ask questions during that time? In discussion, it was felt that the February meeting had been an exception and that it would be more appropriate if</p>	

members of the public e-mailed lengthy comments to the Clerk prior to each meeting, allowing time for them to be circulated to Councillors beforehand.

22/43 LAND AT CHURCH ROAD –

- (a) The Chairman confirmed that Stuart Wilson is happy to attend a future P.C. Meeting, although would prefer to do so when there is something new to discuss. In the meantime, following concerns about the consultation process raised at the February P.C. meeting, members of the P.C. met with Stuart and Anthony Littlejohn, Chairman of Steep in Need, to discuss the way forward. The meeting had been productive, and Stuart Wilson has produced an infographic setting out the various stages of consultation which can be found via the Steep in Need website. He explained that Stage 1 of the process is now complete (the evidence base) and he has moved on to Stage 2 (testing options). Comments on the pre-app are welcome and can be made via planning@southdowns.gov.uk quoting reference SDNP/21/05912/PRE or in writing to SDNPA, North Street, Midhurst, W. Sussex.
- (b) Land at Church Road Working Party - In response to concerns about poor communication, it was agreed that a Working Party should be formed, to be led by Cllr. Jenny Martin, and consisting of 3 or 4 residents and 2 other parish councillors, whose remit would be to improve liaison between village residents, the Parish Council, the developer, and Steep in Need, to achieve the best outcome for the village. Terms of Reference for the Group, circulated prior to the meeting and appended to these minutes, were approved.
- (c) The resolution of 28th February by the Parish Council acting in the role of Sole Managing Trustee of Steep War Memorial Village Club, to request that design options are developed for the whole of the central area of the Village, including the Village Hall land was noted. It is understood that this is to guard against any adverse impacts on the Village Hall and to maximise the value to the beneficiaries of the charity and that no sale of Village Hall land is contemplated at this time. It was resolved to support this decision (7-1) as working towards the best possible outcome for the centre of the village, as prioritised by the community in the 2012 Parish Plan.
- (d) Correspondence from the ICO – The Parish Council has been informed that the ICO has written to the complainant explaining that his case was unlikely to be upheld and inviting him to withdraw the complaint. Nothing further had been heard from the complainant and therefore the ICO has closed the case. In relation to this, individual Councillors have expressed concern about the unpleasant nature of correspondence they had received from the resident - the Chairman undertook to write to the resident concerned, asking that he communicate with the Parish Council via the Clerk or himself only.

Chair

22/44 RESIGNATION OF REV. JOHN OWEN – The Parish Council noted with sadness the retirement of Rev. John Owen after 13 years in Steep – John has been an integral part of Steep life and both he and Jane will be very sadly missed. They are wished well in their new life.

22/45 ROTHER BARN PREMISES LICENCE – The application for a premises licence at Rother Barn was granted, with conditions, at a hearing at EHDC in December. Since then, a resident living close to the venue has approached the Parish Council and asked them to appeal the decision on their behalf. Following discussion, Steep P.C. agreed that they did not feel it was appropriate to commit to the appeal process as they do not have enough knowledge of appropriate regulations, and therefore respect EHDC's decision.

22/46 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT – Cllr. Oppenheimer's monthly report had been circulated prior to the meeting and, in his absence, the following items were noted:

- HCC has expressed solidarity with the people of Ukraine and is ready to support the UK Government with the unfolding humanitarian crisis.

- Storms Eunice and Franklin in February had been challenging for HCC who received over 2000 incident reports and over 1000 trees down. The clear up operation is ongoing and the bill for the response will run to seven figures.
- HCC's precept for the financial year beginning 1st April will increase by a total of 2.99% of which 1% will go specifically towards adult social care. This equates to an increase of just over £40 a year for a band D property but will generate an extra £21m towards delivering essential County Council services.

Cllr. Cook noted that Surrey County Council has committed to spending £1.2m cutting down and replanting trees and requested that Russell Oppenheimer be sent the information to pass on to Hampshire. The Chairman confirmed that there is to be an on-site meeting with Pete Durnell, HCC Countryside Services, in the Hangers at 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday, 30th March to discuss regeneration

Clerk

Cllr. Oppenheimer is looking into the issue of the overgrown hedge at Hayes Cottages which appears to have got lost in the HCC system – it is hoped this issue can be resolved before the start of bird nesting season as the hedge is severely impacting pedestrian access to the pathway.

Cllr. Oppenheimer's full report is appended to these Minutes and can be found on the Parish Council website.

22/47

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – Cllr. Drew reported on the following items:

- Tree regeneration in the Ashford Hangers – Cllr. Drew suggested that EHDC's Environmental Officer is also invited to the meeting with representatives of HCC Countryside Services as EHDC has tree planting targets and may be able to add value to proposals.
- February Storms – Cllr. Drew thanked all those who had helped during the storms, especially local farmers who were out in all weathers and are often unsung heroes.
- Pre-App comments – Concerns had been expressed about names of those making comments on the pre application for land at Church Road being seen, despite assurances of confidentiality. Cllr. Drew confirmed that this is normal practice with planning applications.
- Fraud – Cllr. Drew said he had been assured by the resident who had sent him the correspondence referred to at the last meeting, that he was not being accused of fraud.
- Waterstones – Cllr. Drew made it clear that EHDC has not acted in a negative manner towards Waterstones Bookshop – EHDC continue to liaise with the company about their lease.
- Speedwatch – EHDC's press officer met with Cllr. Graham and the Speedwatch volunteers to promote their work and the new hi vis jackets (provided via Cllr. Drew's community grant scheme).
- Ukraine – EHDC are waiting for Government and County guidance on what will be required to help those seeking refuge in East Hampshire.
- Compliance issues at the Brickyards – Cllr. Hurst said that he had no response to his e-mail from the officer concerned – it was suggested that this is taken forward via EHDC's Chief Exec.

22/48

ROADS AND TRAFFIC

- (a) Phase 2 Traffic Management Stoner/Bell Hill – Cllr. Holmes reported on the meeting with Joe Folland, the HCC Traffic Engineer, working on detailed plans for this project. £10k central CiL monies has been committed by SDNPA towards the project and this can be used towards a pedestrian crossing at the Cricketers (subject to safety audit), decluttering/improvement of signage in the Stoner Hill vicinity (based on the Signage review recommendations) and the new village gates (for which there is additional S106 funding from

EHDC). Various gate designs are available and Cllr. Holmes was asked to select 3 options to present at the next P.C. meeting, prior to consultation with the village.

- (b) Signage Survey – This is very nearly complete and more detailed information will be available soon.

Cllr. Holmes had also circulated a detailed report on other roads and traffic issues prior to the meeting and it was noted that she continues to chase issues raised with Highways in January and is liaising with Russell Oppenheimer about verge cutting. The Fingerpost at Mill Lane/Ashford Lane has been restored and is back in place and looks very smart.

22/49 STEEP COMMON – A quote from Mill Farm Trees for a variety of new native trees, stakes, and guards, in the sum of £680 + VAT was approved. Cllr. Graham is progressing a grant application via Cllr. Drew to cover this cost and there has been a good response from the community to help with tree planting. Cllr. Graham was thanked for his hard work on this project.

22/50 FINANCE

- (a) The Clerk explained that she is undertaking training on the new accounts package and will circulate the February bank reconciliation as soon as possible. Clerk
- (b) Cheques for March payment were approved as follows:

Chq No.		Payee	Service
100438	£1,284.12	Intellitec MV Ltd	Lithium Batteries for speed sign
100439	£582.00	Starboard Systems Ltd	Scribe Accounts Package
100440	£390.00	Sawscapes Play Ltd	Play equipment repairs - Steep Common
100441	£1,212.50	Ginkgo	Lengthsman Jan and Feb
100442	£54.00	GeoXsphere Ltd.	Parish On-line
100443	£859.34	Jenny Hollington	Clerk (plus 10 hours ICO overtime work)
100444	£4,035.67	HMRC	Tax (Clerk)
	£8,417.63		

22/51 AUDIT 21-22 – The following documents had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting for review:

- Risk Register 21-22 – It was queried whether the threat of legal action should be listed. and the Clerk was asked to confirm this was covered by insurance. Clerk
- Standing Orders – The Clerk confirmed that there had been no amendments to the Standing Orders during the year and the document was approved.
- Financial Regulations – The Clerk confirmed there had been no changes to the Financial Regulations during the year and the document was approved.
- Statement of Internal Control 21-22 – There have been no changes to the systems of internal controls and the document was approved.
- Asset Register 21-22 – The register will be updated to include the new speed radar device once it has been received. Clerk

22/52 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY – It was agreed to invite a representative from PeCAN to the meeting to talk about climate change and the type of help available for residents to retrofit their homes - the Annual Parish Assembly will be held on 9th May 2022. Clerk

22/53 THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE – Plans are underway for a celebratory community event to be held on Saturday, 4th June at Steep Common. Parish Council representatives will continue to work with the newly formed volunteer working party to take this forward. TC/
Clerk

22/54 ON-GOING ISSUES – The following items were noted:

- Adhurst St Mary – No response received so far from SDNPA or EHDC in respect of concern about the condition of East Court.
- Ashford Hangers re-planting – As per Minute 22/46 – a meeting with Countryside Services will take place on 30th March at 10.00 a.m. Chair
- Leak at Lutcombe Pond – Nothing further to report but this issue will be chased at the meeting with HCC Countryside Services on the 30th. Chair
- Lengthsman – The Lengthsman will be asked to tidy up hedges around road signs and footpath signage and to clean the village gates in Steep Marsh. Clerk
- Community Project – Swing at Hayes Cottages – EHDC has recommended a 30-year lease agreement to enable Steep P.C. to install a swing on land at Hayes Cottages. Further detail will be sought on the detail of the proposed lease but there was general support for the proposal. JG

22/55 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS –

- SDNPA Town and Parish Council Workshop – Wednesday, 16th March – Cllr. Martin agreed to attend on behalf of Steep P.C and feedback any relevant information to the April meeting JM
- HCC Town and Parish event – Thursday, 17th March – Cllr. Holmes will attend on behalf of Steep P.C. and feedback to the April meeting. FH
- EHAP&TC Meeting via Teams on Thursday, 17th March – Cllr. MacDonald (as Chair of EHAP&TC) will provide relevant feedback at the April meeting. Chair

22/56 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – The next meeting of Steep Parish Council will be on Monday, 4th April 2022 at 7.30 p.m. at Steep Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.38 p.m.

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

2 MARCH 2022

1. Ukraine: HCC Leader's Statement

Hampshire County Council has expressed solidarity with the people of Ukraine and has stated its preparedness to support the UK Government, if called on, to help with the unfolding humanitarian crisis.

Leader of Hampshire County Council, Councillor Keith Mans said: "As the world watches events in Ukraine, across Hampshire we all send our thoughts and prayers to the Ukrainian people, including those who are living in Hampshire. None of us would have expected to have seen such hostilities in Europe in these modern times, and we condemn the attacks on Ukraine's innocent citizens.

"Hampshire County Council, in common with the rest of the country, is watching the concerning situation in Ukraine and stands in solidarity with the Ukrainian people and communities affected by this conflict. Should Government seek our support, we will assist as needed - building on our experience of supporting refugees and evacuees from previous conflicts."

I am sure all Councillors will share this sentiment from the Leader. Incidentally Keith Mans will be standing down in May 2022 and this has been reported in local newspapers. HCC will therefore be under new leadership in May following an election process within the Conservative Group.

2. Storms put Hampshire Highways to the test

The consecutive Storms Eunice and Franklin in February were extremely challenging for everyone at Hampshire Highways. We had over 2,000 incident reports and over 1,000 trees down. The clean-up operation is ongoing and may take another week or two. The bill for the response will run to seven figures. When the ground is wet, it is always more likely that trees will come down in storms. Councillors will be aware that the ground is still unusually saturated and so

we are currently vulnerable in the event of further high winds. I would advise people to be very cautious about driving during storms when the ground is so wet.

Sadly there was a fatality in Alton which shows how dangerous these storms are. The bravery and commitment of our Highways teams cannot be overstated. We all rely on our highways to live our lives and these frontline workers are doing a great job this winter, showing considerable resilience. We owe them our profound thanks.

3. 2022/23 Budget is approved by Council

Hampshire County Council's council tax precept for the financial year beginning 1 April 2022 will increase by a total of 2.99%, of which 1% will go specifically towards adults' social care. This equates to an annual charge of £1,390.86 for a Band D property – an increase of just over £40 per year. This recommended increase will generate an extra £21m towards delivering essential County Council services in the next financial year, especially in the care of the vulnerable.

Hampshire still has one of the lowest Council Tax rates in the UK, alongside Somerset. This year's increase has to be seen in that context. Price inflation and demand growth in social care (both adults and children) have put pressure on budgets and mean that a Council Tax rise is the most responsible decision.

Alongside revenue budget plans, the County Council has approved a capital programme worth £556.2m over the next three years to boost jobs, build schools and cycle paths, and improve the quality of the environment. This provision for Hampshire's infrastructure brings the County Council's four-year total investment in the fabric of Hampshire, to £832.6m. Our prudent financial management and strong reserves has made this investment possible. Very few County Councils in the UK have the capacity to embark on such a substantial capital programme.

Nevertheless, the financial challenge facing Hampshire County Council over the coming years looks to be considerable. At HCC we are lobbying the Government to use its review of Local Government Finance to increase funding and to provide a multi-year settlement so that we can plan services effectively.

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER
County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers

STEEP PARISH COUNCIL: CHURCH ROAD SITE WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Working Group

The Group consists of a small number of councillors and residents of Steep and is responsible to Steep Parish Council. It will be chaired by a Parish Councillor and include at least two other Parish Councillors. One of those should be charged with ensuring a Village Hall perspective is maintained during discussions. Other members will be drawn from the Steep Community at the discretion of the chair. Membership should not exceed eight in number.

The Group has no delegated authority but makes recommendations for the Parish Council to consider. Its initial remit lasts for six months and will deliver a report on its operations and recommendations at each monthly Council meeting. Working Group meetings will be private, and their frequency will be determined by the Group.

It is granted an initial budget of £500 and will handle all matters within its scope related to the Church Road land as described below, except for legal matters and Freedom of Information requests.

Scope of Work

To encourage and support the development of proposals for changes to the centre of the village (within the boundaries of the Steep in Need and the Village Hall land) that may help to achieve the community priorities reflected in the Steep Parish Plan of 2012.

To act as the Parish Council's working contact point for Steep in Need, Wilson Designer Homes and the South Downs National Park Authority

To discuss and comment on new design possibilities for the village centre, ensuring that all creative possibilities are considered

To work with relevant parties to ensure that all community consultations are of the best possible standard and effectively publicised

To improve communications to all residents on this topic – this may be leaflets, an enhanced or dedicated web site, "village" meetings or drop-in sessions and so on – and thereby collect and respond to residents' questions, ideas and concerns. In particular, it should keep the public record of questions and answers up to date.

To consider and recommend how any final planning application relating to the centre of the village will be handled, in conjunction with the Parish Planning Committee.