

DRAFT

STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN: Jim MacDonald

CLERK: Jenny Hollington

**Minutes of a Meeting of Steep Parish Council held on Monday, 5th September 2022
at Steep Village Hall**

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

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

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

Minute	Item	Action
22/128	<u>APOLOGIES</u> – Apologies had been received from Cllrs. Nick Hurst and Jonathan Turk	
22/129	<u>MINUTES</u> – The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 4 th July were approved as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed.	
22/130	<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 of the Parish Council role as Sole Managing Trustee of the Village Hall and of the possible conflict of loyalties between the two roles. None declared.	
22/131	<u>PUBLIC COMMENT</u> – <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A resident noted that it was good to see that the War Memorial had been tended once again.• Councillors (in their role as Trustee) were thanked for organising the Village Hall consultation event.• Councillors were urged not to lose sight of the necessary repairs and improvements required at Lutcombe Pond.• A resident queried how it was proposed to fund improvements at the Village Hall when it is known to be struggling financially? The Chairman explained that Trustees were simply looking at options for improvement and funding would need to be sought.• Frustration was expressed in respect of recent water restrictions when the water company had made no attempt to fix a serious leak in Steep Marsh with any speed. District Councillor, Nick Drew, undertook to raise this issue at the upcoming EHDC Cabinet meeting.• Volunteers are being sought to help with the Royal British Legion door to door collections – anyone interested should contact Philip Mileham (
22/132	<u>LAND AT CHURCH ROAD</u> – Wilson Designer Homes’ second Exhibition is being held at the Village Hall on Thursday, 29 th September. It was noted that feedback from the first Exhibition has not been made available to the Parish Council or residents and agreed that this would be chased. Concerns raised about funding for the proposed Alms Houses were directed to the Steep in Need website where the information can be found.	
22/133	<u>TRUSTEE WORKING GROUP REPORT</u> - A report from the Working Group had been circulated to Councillors before the meeting and was read out to the meeting (Appendix A).	

Cllr. Duthie expressed concerns about various aspects of the exhibition proposals and was directed to address these via the Village Hall consultation. In respect of concerns about the cost of the Architect's drawings, it was pointed out that something needs to be done to improve facilities and bookings at the Village Hall, otherwise it will be lost to the community.

The full report from the Trustee Working Party is appended to the Minutes and can be found via the Parish Council website.

22/134 COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT - Cllr. Oppenheimer's monthly report (Appendix B.) had been circulated prior to the meeting and included the following items:

- Broadband – There is mixed news – 82% of East Hampshire homes are expected to receive full fibre, including most of Petersfield but there are still hard to reach properties which are out of scope of any planned infrastructure process.
- A32 Closure – Progress has been slower than expected which means that the A32 will be opening again in mid-September but will be closed again next year to enable the work to be completed.
- Hitting the Cold Spots – A free advice line is open from 9.00-5.00 Monday to Friday – 0800 804 860. Advisors will talk through the best possible solution for each caller.
- Solar Together – HCC runs a group purchasing scheme which has just opened for a second round. Residents can sign up until 27th September.
- Dementia Support Service – Cllr. Oppenheimer shared details of a new charity – Dementia Support Hampshire & IOW. Website – www.mydementiasupport.org and Helpline – 0344 324 6589. The charity offers support from the first signs of memory loss to end of life.

Cllr. Oppenheimer's full report will be made available via the Parish Council website.

22/135 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – Cllr. Nick Drew gave a report on the following items:

- Village Hall Funding – Attention was drawn to various grant funding schemes for Village Halls, many of which are struggling.
- Apprenticeships – East Hampshire continue to support the scheme and meet 50% of employer's costs.
- Brickyards Industrial Estate – Cllr. Drew has requested that the most recent application for variation of condition goes before the Planning Committee
- Stoner Hill – Cllr. Drew noted the recent serious accident on Stoner Hill and said he would continue to support the Parish Council's initiatives to slow the traffic on this dangerous stretch of road.
- Bins – Whilst ordinary waste collections have been kept going, there are not enough drivers currently to keep the glass recycling collection going. Residents are asked not to put the glass boxes out until they are re-started (possibly mid-October). The Chairman expressed his disappointment that the central glass collection points had not been cleared – Cllr. Drew undertook to feed this back to EHDC.
- Leaf Sweeping – Steep P.C. was asked to notify Cllr. Drew which roads/lanes they want prioritised for leaf sweeping in the coming months.

22/136 ASHFORD HANGERS –

Lutcombe Pond – Cllr. Oppenheimer reported that he had spoken to Peter Durnell about the problems at Lutcombe Pond – the main concern now appears to be the environmental impact of removing the silt and they are of the opinion that it may be better to allow the pond to revert to a chalk stream. Cllr. Oppenheimer is concerned that unless HCC Countryside Services are on-side, there would be very little chance of being able to raise funds for the project to clear the pond and fix

the leak. He undertook to speak to SDNPA and Natural England representatives to get their input and will report his findings back to the P.C. at the October meeting.

Regeneration – Cllr. Cook reported that the recent drought and heat are causing branches from the Oak trees to break because they are under stress. The Ash trees are also dropping their branches and the Hangers now need a lot of clearing to keep the footpaths and bridleways clear. It was agreed that the Chairman would write to Pete Durnell on this issue.

Chair

Parking at Banana Field – The landowner has been in touch with the Parish Council about regular incidents of inconsiderate parking across the entrance to his field. It was suggested that installation of a rope barrier and/or gate and signage would be appropriate, and this will be fed back to the landowner. A note will be included in the village newsletter asking residents to be more considerate.

JM
FH

22/137 WEBSITE – In Cllr. Andrew Martin’s absence this item was deferred until the October meeting. In the meantime, it was suggested that Mike Robinson, who has extensive knowledge in this specialist area, be invited to be part of the working group looking into solutions – the Chairman offered to speak to him.

AM
Chair

22/138 ROADS AND TRAFFIC –

- (a) Phase 2 Traffic Management Scheme – Cllr. Holmes continues to liaise with Joe Folland at HCC who is in the process of drawing up the final plans. It was agreed that an element of the SDNPA funding should be utilised to cover the cost of the Village Gates – a condition of the funding will be that the gates include the SDNPA logo and will be of similar design to other villages across the National Park. Hampshire Highways has conducted an initial review of the area close to the Cricketer’s crossroads and say that a pedestrian crossing may be possible if average speed on that length of road is genuinely 30 mph – Cllr. Graham undertook to speak to the speedwatch team to see if they would be willing to focus on the area to gauge average speed before arranging an audit by Hampshire Highways (at a cost of £300).
- (b) Road Signage Review – Joe Folland will carry out a survey of the signage on Stoner Hill and review the data collected by the working party.
- (c) Verges – Froxfield Parish Council have assumed responsibility for cutting their own verges – Cllr. Holmes undertook to liaise with them about their experience and will feed back relevant info at the next meeting.
- (d) Road Maintenance Issues – Cllr. Holmes reported that the ditches in Steep Marsh are to be cleared at the end of September. The road work signs left around the parish will be reported to Hampshire Highways who will hopefully collect them soon!

JG

FH

FH

22/139 FINANCE –

- (a) Audit 21-22 – The Clerk reported that the External Audit of the accounts for the financial year 21-22 has now been completed and “no matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met”. The notice of completion of the Audit will now be advertised via the website and noticeboards.
- (b) Grant Application – A grant application in the sum of £292 towards the cost of hiring the Village Hall by the Welcome Club was approved.
- (c) Precept Contribution – Village Hall – A request for an annual contribution from the precept towards the running costs of the Village Hall was discussed. It was noted that there had been support for this proposal at the first of the consultation events held by the Trustees. The Clerk will discuss this proposal with the Internal Auditor.
- (d) Shop/Post Office Monies – Councillors were reminded that this money had been donated by village residents some years ago to help support a proposed village shop and post office – however, the project had not come to fruition in the end. It was agreed to close the account

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

and transfer the funds to the Village Hall account to be ring-fenced for a similar and/or appropriate project at the heart of the village. The Clerk will follow this up with the account signatories.

Clerk

- (e) Correspondence from SAAA - The correspondence about the option to opt out of the SAAA central external auditor appointment arrangements was noted – it was agreed that the Finance Committee should look at this in more detail and make a recommendation to the Council at the next meeting.
- (f) Bank Reconciliation – The August bank reconciliation had been circulated prior to the meeting and was approved.
- (g) Cheque payments – A list of cheques approved by the signatories in August was noted as follows:

Finance
Comm.

Chq No.	Amount	Payee	Service
100467	£75.00	T. Morgan	website updates
100468	£900.00	Hart Landscaping	Lengthsman - July
100469	£746.90	J. Hollington	Clerk
	£1,721.90		

- (h) Cheques for September payment were approved as follows:

Chq No.	Amount	Payee	Service
100470	£240.00	PKF Littlejohn	21-22 External Audit
100471	£40.00	Information Commissioner	Registration fee
100472	£132.00	Mythic Beasts	Domain and hosting fee
100473	£746.90	Jenny Hollington	Clerk
100474	£292.00	Welcome Club	Grant
	£1,450.90		

- 22/140 STEEP COMMON – Many of the new trees have survived the dry summer and are doing well. A community workday will be held on Sunday, 9th October as there is a number of tasks to be carried out – volunteers will be sought via the October newsletter

FH

- 22/141 FOOTPATHS – Grant funding in the sum of £3,815.00 has been received from Countryside Services towards repair of footpaths 22a, 17 and the permissive path on Steep Common – the work will be carried out by Chris Budd within the next couple of weeks. Cllr. Martin will continue to chase Countryside Services for help in restoring the surface of Footpath 20 (the Hangers Way) at the bottom of the Common.

JM

- 22/142 COMMUNITY PROJECT – Steep Parish Council was not successful in securing community grant funding from EHDC towards the swing and picnic table at Hayes Cottage - feedback will be sought as to why this was. Cllr. Drew will liaise with Cllr. Graham about alternative sources of funding

JG

- 22/143 STEEP WAR MEMORIAL – Two village residents have now come forward to offer their help to care for the planting area at the War Memorial. The Chairman has spoken to both residents, and they are happy to work together. Steep P.C. is very grateful to Steve Cook and Debbie Stickley for their help. As previously, any costs will be reimbursed.

- 22/144 CORRESPONDENCE

- The Chairman said he had received an e-mail from a resident expressing concern about rising energy costs and the impact this would have on village pubs, in particular the Cricketers which has only just re opened - it had been queried whether it would be appropriate for the

Parish Council to register the pub as an Asset of Community Interest? During the discussion it was noted that if this is to be considered, the owners should be made aware – it was agreed to include this item for further discussion at a future Parish Council Meeting.

Clerk

- SDNPA Parish Workshop – Cllrs. Graham and Holmes will attend the workshop on 1st November on behalf of Steep P.C.
- SWR Community Funding – Cllr. Graham will investigate whether the swing at Hayes Cottages would be eligible for this grant

JG

22/145

PARISH CLERK

- (a) Remuneration – Following discussion, a 10% increase to the Clerk’s hourly rate was approved, back dated to April.
- (b) Job Specification and Advert for replacement Clerk – Drafts will be circulated via e-mail for approval at the October meeting.

Chari

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING –The next meeting of Steep Parish Council will be held on Monday, 3rd October 2022 at 7.30 p.m. at Steep Village Hall.