

**STEEP PARISH COUNCIL**

**CHAIRMAN:** Mrs. Caroline Robinson

**CLERK:** Mrs. Jenny Hollington

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014 in Steep Marsh**

**Present:**

Cllrs. Caroline Robinson (in the Chair)	Terry Cook
Jim MacDonald	Simon Bridger
Charles Gibson	Peter Cruttenden
Jenny Martin	

**In Attendance:** Mr. Mike Pillans, Assistant Highways Manager for E. Hants  
District Councillor, Nick Drew  
Clerk, Jenny Hollington

There were 23 members of the public in attendance throughout the meeting.

14/64 **APOLOGIES:** Cllrs. Nick Hurst and Peter Thackrey and County Councillor, Vaughan Clarke.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed thanks to Dennis Ryder for allowing the marquee to be erected on the green at the Brickyards to hold it in. She explained that District Councillor, Nick Drew, had to leave early to go on to another meeting and his report would therefore be bought forward on the Agenda.

14/65 **DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT** - District Councillor, Nick Drew, introduced himself to members of the public explaining that his ward covers Stroud, Froxfield, Priors Deane and Colemore as well as Steep.

A couple of large local issues have engaged his attention in the past few months - the first of these is the TAG proposals for Farnborough Airport - EHDC has now formally responded against this proposal for 4 times more airspace than Gatwick, as have Steep and Froxfield Parish Councils.

The second is the Network Rail proposals for Sheet Crossing – Village Street, Sheet is a main thoroughfare between the villages of Steep, Steep Marsh and Sheet and, in his opinion, closure of the crossing would have a very detrimental effect on small businesses and emergency vehicle access. Local MP, Damien Hinds, is following the issue closely before making representation and will be holding a surgery at Sheet Village Hall on Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> June if any parishioners wish to speak to him on this issue.

Within the ward, Cllr. Drew has recently visited Steep School where the children were undertaking citizenship training and discussing democracy. The children have come up with several ideas for the local area and these will be shared with the Parish Council and, if appropriate, via the Parish Newsletter.

As well as this, Cllr. Drew is still on the EHDC Planning Committee and also now a cabinet holder for community grants. He explained that the process for grant application has been simplified and applicants now only have to fill in one form. He urged anyone involved in running a community group to speak to him or apply if funding is an issue.

14/66 **MINUTES** – The Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> May were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

14/67 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - The Chairman reminded Councillors of their responsibility to declare any interest in any matter on the Agenda.

14/68 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- It was queried whether the need for affordable homes within the parish had been met and what the current situation is? Cllr. MacDonald explained that the plans for affordable housing on the Church Road site more than 4 years ago had divided opinion across the parish. However, the results of the parish plan questionnaire showed that the majority of parishioners would support a modest increase in affordable housing. The charitable land which was owned by the Parish Council is now in the hands of new Trustees, who are close to agreeing new objects with the Charity Commission. Once agreed, the Trustees will look afresh at those plots of land, although not necessarily for use for affordable housing. As a Parish Council, affordable housing will be considered by a newly formed working party looking at planning and development within the parish – Cllr MacDonald urged anyone with an interest in this subject to get in touch with either himself or Cllr. Cruttenden.
- Out of hours working is an issue at the Brickyards at weekends and it was queried whether the Parish Council could do anything to stop it – the Chairman said she would write to the owner of the units. If the problem continues, it will be raised with EHDC as a compliance issue.
- A question arose regarding allotments and the use of the “allotment” land at Sandy Lane. It was explained that the land at Sandy Lane is now owned by the new Trustees as above. Although originally held in trust as allotments for the working poor, the new trustees are hoping to agree new objects which may allow for a wider range of use. As trustees they will need to consider the best use of the land for the charity’s purposes. The Chairman pointed out that the Parish Council had advertised via the Parish Newsletter to gauge interest in allotments - there had been only a couple of responses. Since then, new allotments have been formed at Lords Farm, just outside of the parish and both that site and Sheet have vacancies if anyone is interested.
- With regard to planning and the requirement for a minimum of 100 houses (both market and affordable) within the villages of the SDNPA, it was queried whether there has been any tightening of the planning regulations now that Steep is within the National Park. Cllr. Drew explained that landscape now has a higher priority and there are areas where views are protected. SDNPA’s main aims are to protect the countryside and increase tourism.
- A member of the public sought views on the use of the barns adjacent to the Oast houses currently used for agriculture. In the past plans have been submitted to EHDC for a mix of affordable houses and market houses, but these were overruled at appeal. Plans for stables were withdrawn. The general consensus of the meeting was that traffic is the major issue. The current use for low scale farming does not cause a problem, and the farmer currently using the barns would need to go further afield if they were not available. Plans for many alternative uses would create more traffic on lanes which are already over used and in a poor state of repair. It was agreed that if the barns were re-vamped they would look better.

14/69 UP-DATE ON HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS - Mr. Mike Pillans, Assistant Highway Manager for East Hampshire, was in attendance to up-date the P.C. and residents on timescales for repairs to the parish lanes, and to answer questions.

He reported that the first and largest project is to be the resurfacing of Elmwood Lane through the hamlet from the junction at Sandy Lane. At the same time the verges are to be made up where there is overrun and ditches cleared out and pipes jetted. This work is scheduled to be completed in July. With regard to the flood at Elmwood corner, it was confirmed that there are plans to clear out and investigate the soak-away on the bend.

Mr. Pillans emphasised that the scheme going forward is for maintenance to the Marsh roads, not up-grading, so no new passing places will be created in the short term. The importance of properly engineered passing places with appropriate signage at the entrance to Steep Marsh was stressed by those present and it was agreed that Cllr Gibson would liaise with the Roads & Traffic representative for the Marsh, to produce a plan showing where passing places and signage are required and send this to Mr. Pillans for the future.

An issue was raised with regard to a man-made entrance to a local field consequently blocking a ditch and causing water to run down the road – Mr. Pillans agreed to look into this.

The green in front of the bungalows has been damaged and needs protecting – Cllr. Gibson was asked to look into this with the Steep Marsh roads representative.

With regard to other parts of the Parish, it was confirmed that the culvert under the road at Mill Lane, by the waterfall, will be cleaned out while the water table is low (so before next autumn) and the gully going up to Church Road will be cleared at the same time. Ashford Manor is also on the list for another attempt to sort out the flooding there.

Mr. Pillans was unsure as to whether the re-surfacing work promised by the County Councillor for Church Road is to go ahead and was asked to check. He confirmed that traffic calming schemes are carried out by a team at Winchester.

Mr. Pillans confirmed that where ditches have become overgrown and blocked, this is the responsibility of the landowner and Hampshire County Council will track them down to request they cut back hedges and clear ditches if they are aware of the problem.

Mr. Pillans was thanked for listening to problems sympathetically. It was agreed that he would follow up the meeting with a clear statement of work to include timescales.

14/70 COUNTY COUNCILLOR’S REPORT – The County Councillor had sent his apologies – however, his report was read to the meeting and is attached to the Minutes.

14/71 FEEDBACK ON THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF SHEET CROSSING – There has been no feedback from Network Rail on the “Drop-In” Sessions held in Steep and Sheet to discuss their proposals to close Sheet Crossing. However, the HCC traffic survey results following the temporary closure of the crossing are expected to be available within the next few weeks.

Residents reported that access to and from Steep Marsh to Petersfield at school drop off and pick up times was difficult during the temporary crossing closure because of the extra cars parking in Sheet on both sides of the Steep Marsh road.. The Chairman urged them to make their views known when the public consultation takes place in July.

14/72 FEEDBACK ON STEEP SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREA - Currently children from Steep Marsh do not fall into the catchment area of Steep School and this had been hi-lighted via the Parish Plan. Families in Steep Marsh would like the right for their children to have a place at Steep (rather than Sheet). Steep School is a Church School and the two should therefore have the same catchment area, being important for the cohesiveness of the Parish. The Chairman explained that the Parish Council has hesitated to take this forward as yet, as it is a big step which needs to be acceptable to all families which children in Steep Marsh. A show of hands of those in attendance indicated that this proposal was supported by 75% of those at the meeting – it was agreed that the P.C. should continue to take this forward.

14/73 FINANCE

(a) The Clerk reported that the Co-operative bank account was now closed and the sum of £1373.30 had been transferred to the new HSBC account. The following cheques were approved:

100001	£135.00	Internal Audit
100002	£510.00	Tree work at Steep Common
100003	£40.00	Marquee hire

(b) It was agreed that the sum of £4,000 should be transferred to the new account from the deposit account to cover 3-months, until the precept is paid in September. The Clerk will be paid 2-months’ salary in July.

14/74 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> July at 7.30 p.m.  
The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.