

STEEP IN NEED

ITEMS FOR THE STEEP AND STROUD NEWSLETTER OVER THE YEARS

SUMMARY. The Steep in Need charity was formally established in October 2015, but meetings of trustees have been recorded since 2011. Items about the new charity have been published in the Steep and Stroud newsletter ever since.

SIN newsletter items since the beginning

OCTOBER 2010 - STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING HELD ON 6TH SEPTEMBER 2010

Trustee Meeting. The Chairman reported on the first Meeting of the Trustees of the "Allotment" land which took place on Thursday, 2nd September. She said that it has been made clear that the Trustees have a legal obligation to make the best use of the land on behalf of the beneficiaries of the Trust and it has therefore been agreed that the Clerk should seek professional advice as to the value of the plots. Concern had been expressed that the public would not make a distinction between the Council acting as a local authority and, separately, as Trustees of the Charity. However, it was clear that their duties in the two capacities were different and that their first duty as Trustees was to the objects of the Charity and not to the general community interest. It was concluded that, in view of the inherent possible conflict between the two duties, further thought should be given to arranging for a different trusteeship of the Charity.

It was agreed that the Minutes of the first Trustee Meeting should be made available via the website.

JULY/AUG 2011 - STEEP PARISH COUNCIL - ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – Thursday 19th May 2011

UP-DATE ON THE LAND HELD IN TRUST

The Chairman reported that new Trustees have been appointed and will meet for the first time in June. The Clerk and the Chairman will also attend the meeting to facilitate the handover.

JULY 2011 - A NEW PARISH BODY FOR STEEP

Readers will recall the recent controversy over the three parcels of parish land set aside for allotments, and notably the piece of land next to the village hall in Church Road. Members of Steep parish narrowly voted last year not to support proposals for that particular site, and the Parish Council next resolved to set up a body of independent trustees to take on the task of deciding what should be done to make best use of these pieces of land. Volunteers were called for, and in due course the council resolved to appoint the following trustees:

- ☑ Matilda Clark, a Church Road young mother, fairly new to the village
- ☑ Geoffrey Dale, Chartered Surveyor from Steep Marsh and a churchwarden
- ☑ David Dobson, from Steep Marsh and editor of the newsletter
- ☑ Janet Smith, a retired teacher who lives on the parish border in Reservoir Lane
- ☑ Robert Venables, a solicitor and charity specialist, who lives just outside the parish
- ☑ Michael White, a retired Civil Servant from Ridge Common Lane
- ☑ Jeremy Young, a Chartered Surveyor, who lives on Stoner Hill

The trustees have now had their first meeting, and this is how things stand. An application has been made for registration as a charity, and the Charity Commission has stipulated that we must start from the original purpose of providing allotments "for the labouring poor of the ...Parish of Steep". We believe that "the labouring poor" should now be regarded as meaning those in need. If however these criteria cannot be met, and the charity is therefore unable to discharge its duties, then the trustees must seek approval for other uses of the land, as long as they continue to be for the benefit of the needy of the parish.

Our first task therefore is clear; we need to find out if there are any in Steep Parish who are in need, and who wish to have an allotment. Once that is done, we shall again report via the newsletter. In the meantime, we are contacting individuals and organisations that deal with social needs in order to identify potential beneficiaries, and we hope readers of the newsletter too will let us know of anyone they feel might qualify.

David Dobson, on behalf of the trustees

SEPTEMBER 2011 - STEEP ALLOTMENTS SITES- MEETING OF THE TRUSTEES –

The trustees of the new body met for their first proper meeting on 26 July, and elected Geoffrey Dale as chairman and Matilda Clark as vice chairman.

Much of the meeting was taken up with visits to the three sites in Steep set aside for allotments, in Church Road, in Sandy Lane (Steep Marsh) and in Ridge Common Lane (near the border with Stroud).

As to the business itself, we still have to get approval as a body from the Charity Commission, but I do not see any difficulty with this, though it may take some time. In the meantime, the trustees are going out and listening to people, seeking views, and especially seeking cases of need. I think we all realise that the task before us is not a simple one, but we hope to do our best for the village. There will not be anything concrete to report for some time, but I promise to keep parishioners in the picture as far as is possible, via the newsletter.

Geoffrey Dale, Chairman of Trustees

FEB 2012 - STEEP ALLOTMENT TRUSTEES UPDATE

Readers will see from the report of the proceedings of Steep Parish Council that the Charity Commission has not yet given authority for the setting up of an independent trustee body to decide on the future of the three allotment sites, so for the time being members of the Parish Council remain as trustees, and members of our new group can be no more than 'prospective trustees'. Clearly, we cannot make any decisions until we get the Charity Commission go ahead, but we will nevertheless continue to do our research and listen to views,
Geoffrey Dale

NOV 2012 - STEEP ALLOTMENT SITES - PROGRESS OF THE NEW TRUSTEES

I have not been able to report much progress so far because there has been little.

The Charity Commission were initially reluctant to accept that the Parish Council had a conflict of interest and that there was a need for new and independent trustees. This point has however now been accepted and the Commission made an order dated 2nd July 2012 confirming our appointment and also transferring the legal title of the three sites from the Parish Council to the Official Custodian for Charities.

We are now starting discussions with the Charity Commission about the future of the charity and will report as soon as we can.

Geoffrey Dale, Chairman of Trustees.

JUN 2013 - STEEP ALLOTMENT TRUSTEES – UPDATE ON PROGRESS

It is over a year since I last reported, and I have to admit that it has been a year of painfully slow progress with the Charity Commission. One of the problems has been that the Commission has cut its numbers sharply, and each time we tracked down a case officer that person seemed to leave, and we had to start again – or so it seemed. That said, we have made some progress: the tortuous process of getting the new trustees approved has been achieved; we now have (we think!) a proper case officer, and he has given us clear guidance on what we need to do next. No matter that the information asked for has been provided several times before; there is a proper procedure, and a proper sequence, and that's how things must be.

Our biggest challenge as trustees is this: the object of the original charity was for 'the provision of allotments for the labouring poor', but our consultations so far have shown that there are few if any labouring poor in the village who want allotments. That being so, we hope to persuade the Charity Commission to give us the necessary powers to widen the purposes of the charity. We are very aware of the clear wishes of the people of Steep as shown in the Parish Plan, and hope we may be able to persuade the Commission to allow us the freedom to act accordingly. However, at present they seem to take a rather more restricted view, probably linked to the relief of poverty.

The process from now on will I am sure continue to be tortuous and slow, but at least the new trustees now know what needs to be done, and since the Charity Commission set great store on what they term 'stakeholder consultation' I shall continue to keep Steep parishioners in the picture.

Finally, I welcome constructive comments.

Geoffrey Dale
Chairman of Trustees

MAY 2014 - STEEP ALLOTMENTS TRUSTEES-UPDATE ON PROGRESS

In order to keep everyone in the village informed about the plans of the new Trustees I gave updates in the Newsletter in November 2012 and June 2013.

In the earlier update I reported that the Charity Commission made an order dated 2nd July 2012 confirming the appointment of the new Trustees and transferring the title of the three sites from Steep Parish Council to the Official Custodian for Trustees on behalf of the new Trustees.

In June 2013 I reported that we were in discussion with the Commission on the basis that the original objects of the charity as set out in the Steep Inclosure Act 1866 to use the three sites as allotments for the labouring poor in the Parish of Steep were outdated and that it was appropriate to update them. This point was accepted by the Commission and the ensuing discussions have focused on the detailed wording of the new aims and objects.

The new Trustees are very aware of the clear wishes of the village of Steep for the Church Road site since these were set out in the Steep Parish Plan. We are also aware from our discussions with local groups such as the Almshouse association, the CAB and Steep school amongst others that 'need' is not necessarily restricted to financial need but can also include social and /or emotional need.

We therefore sought to agree with the Commission a wide definition for our new objects and proposed that they should be "to help those in need in the Parish of Steep and the adjoining area". We felt that this would give us flexibility to provide help in respect of a wide range of need not limited solely to financial need and could include the provision of recreational and educational facilities on the Church Road site.

The Commission have however taken a much narrower view. Their view is that updated objects are required to be as close as possible to the original objects. Since our original objects were to help the labouring poor the Commission are insisting that our new objects must be limited to helping those in financial poverty.

They have stated that "although they accept that relieving or preventing poverty may involve addressing social and emotional need in addition to financial need they would still expect beneficiaries who were in social or emotional need to also have some degree of financial need".

This outcome will limit our flexibility but it is clear that the Commission will not accept a wider definition. It is likely therefore that the new objects will be "The prevention and relief of poverty for the public benefit among persons who are in need, hardship or distress in the Parish of Steep and the adjoining area".

The Commission has also asked why we wish to extend the area of benefit beyond the Parish of Steep to include the adjoining area. Our main reason is to avoid uncertainty. The original definition is now ambiguous since boundaries have changed since the original Inclosure Act. For example parish councils did not exist in 1866. Although the church parish of Steep continues to include Stroud the current civil parish of Steep does not. Stroud has its own parish council. The slightly wider definition will also give the Trustees greater flexibility and will avoid potential unfairness if we are unable to help someone because their house is five yards on the wrong side of a particular boundary which might not have existed in 1866.

In the light of the likely new objects the new Trustees are now considering options for the three sites. We are also still in discussion with the Commission about local consultation and the fact that the scheme made by the Commission setting out the new objects will also need to include a power of sale.

I hope that this article is helpful in letting everyone know the current position. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to make any comments. The Commission have agreed that the name of the charity will be "The Steep in Need Charity" and I will use this title in future updates.

Geoffrey Dale, Chair of Trustees,

JUL/AUG 2015 - THE STEEP IN NEED CHARITY (FORMER ALLOTMENT SITES)

I write to give a further update on the discussions of the new Trustees with the Charity Commission (CC) to establish the new charity. This follows my earlier updates in this Newsletter in September 2011, February 2012, November 2012, June 2013 and a more substantive note in May 2014. Until the new charity is properly established and recognised legally by the CC the future of all three allotment sites remains in limbo.

Although the discussions with the CC have been harmonious they have not been easy. Based on our experience it seems far simpler to establish a new charity from scratch than to update the aims of an existing charity. I reported in my update in May 2014 that we had agreed the aims of the new charity but that in order to reach agreement we had had to compromise from our preferred wording. This resulted in the new aims being significantly more restrictive than we were originally seeking.

The next stage once the aims were agreed was for the CC to draft the wording of the new scheme under which the charity would be governed. We received this draft in July 2014. We were then advised that the draft wording was defective with the risk that the legality of the new charity could be challenged in the future. This was clearly an unacceptable situation.

Thus we had to persuade the CC through detailed legal argument that we were right and that their wording was inadequate. As can be imagined this was no easy task. The CC wrote to apologise for their delay in responding because due to the complexity of the matter it had to be referred to a high level in the Commission.

Fortunately our argument clearly carried weight and new wording was produced by the CC at the end of April this year which satisfied our concerns and which we accepted. It has been an extraordinarily long and frustrating debate with the CC since the first meeting of the new Trustees in June 2011.

The next step is for the CC to carry out public consultation so that members of the public can make comments. The formal notice drafted by the CC is shown below and will also be displayed on two noticeboards in the Parish. Each notice gives a link to the CC website which contains details of the wording of the new scheme. The public consultation lasts for one month after which the CC will issue the scheme on the assumption that the public consultation does not raise any substantive issues.

At this stage the Trustees will then be formally appointed and at last able to make decisions about the three sites.

Geoffrey Dale (Chair of Trustees) 894 570

CHARITY COMMISSION SCHEME

Charity: Allotments formerly held by Steep Parish Council, and now to be named The Steep in Need Charity.

The Commission proposes to make a Scheme (a legal document) for this charity. The Scheme will change the purpose of the charity and enable the trustees to sell its property. A copy of the Scheme can be seen at

<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/schemesdefault.aspx>

(If you cannot access this please call our contact centre on 0300 066 9197 or textphone 0300 066 9219).

Comments or representations on these proposals can be made to the Commission within one month from 1 Jul 2015 by completing the form on our website. Please quote 4008998/C-364082

JUL/AUG 17 - UPDATE ON THE STEEP IN NEED CHARITY, BY THE CHAIRMAN OF TRUSTEES, GEOFFREY DALE

It is some time since I last wrote about the Steep in Need Charity.

Readers will recall that the three unused allotment sites in Steep - in Steep Marsh, on Ridge Common Lane and by Steep Village Hall - were placed in the hands of independent trustees some time ago. A charity was subsequently set up, with the objects of "the prevention and relief of poverty in the parish of Steep and adjoining parishes". A website was also set up (www.steepinneedcharity.org.uk) and the charity recently achieved registration (Charity No. 1172000).

The big question is, how do the trustees plan to achieve this "prevention and relief of poverty"? (We spent a long time trying to persuade the Charity Commission to give us much broader objects, but they were quite adamant about the wording). The answer is that we hope to build up a capital fund, from which to make monetary grants to those in need, and we have made a start by offering for sale, on the open market, the old allotment site in Sandy Lane, Steep Marsh.

What next? The first thing is that we are keen to begin making grants, and have already identified possible candidates. Grants will be very small at this stage, but at least we are making a start. The next big challenge is what to do about the Church Road site, where there is obviously keen interest from villagers and of course Steep Parish Council. We are well aware of the aims set out in the Steep Parish Plan and we will be working with the Council throughout our deliberations. I realise that this doesn't really tell you much, but I hope to be able to say more in the autumn.

I suspect that some of you will want to know how we propose to identify those in need, and how do we assess that need? The answer is that we are in touch with various welfare organisations - CABs, churches, schools etc – and they let us know where our help would be beneficial. The decision on grants will be made by the trustees.

We plan to update the website to reflect these developments.

November 2017

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

The Pre-Submission version of the South Downs Local Plan opens for public consultation from 26 September to 21 November 2017. This will be the last opportunity for members of the public to comment before it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in spring 2018. The South Downs Local Plan will replace more than a thousand existing local plan policies currently operating in different parts of the National Park with one set of 96 consistent policies. SDNPA are asking people to give their final comments this autumn and whilst they are mainly looking at the soundness of the plan, comments on all other aspects of the plan will be listened to. Every comment will be passed to the Planning Inspectorate who will respond to them as part of their examination into the Local Plan.

Steep residents' attention is drawn to the changes proposed to our Settlement Boundary. The Settlement Boundary is a line that is drawn on a plan around the village, within which development would normally be permitted. Any land and buildings outside of the boundary are usually considered to be open countryside where development would be exceptional and closely regulated with stricter planning policies. However, even where land has been included within the boundary, this does not guarantee approval of any planning application. The main proposed changes for us are threefold:

- A general reduction in the extent of the boundary, shaving off minor areas such as long gardens where development might previously have been possible*
- The removal of two areas – Island and the group of properties to the west of the Dunhurst Corner on the C18 – from the boundary altogether*
- The incorporation of the land adjacent to the Village Hall in Church Road (SD93) within the boundary. This was designated as Open Space in the earlier Local Plans. The allocation of this space within the Boundary includes the indicative potential of between 8 and 12 residential dwellings on the site.*

Details of the proposals can be found on pages 343-344 of the Localplan <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/national-park-local-plan/> and on Page 7 of 13 of the Sheet to West Meon section of the A3 settlement inset maps on the same site.

December 2017

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

As explained in the last edition of the Newsletter, the new South Downs Local Plan was open for public consultation until 21 November 2017. The Parish Council considered its own response to the Plan at its November 6th meeting. The full text of our response can be found via the Parish Council website www.steep-pc.gov.uk

In summary, the Parish Council:

- Welcomed the incorporation of the land adjacent to the Village Hall in Church Road into the Settlement Boundary. This has been discussed for many years and the proposed change will open-up the potential of the site (which is under the control of the trustees of the Steep in Need charity) to meet some of the community priorities identified in the Steep Parish Plan.*
- Noted the potential development capacity of 8 – 12 dwellings suggested by the SDNPA, but commented that the*

number of homes the Council would be prepared to support would be a matter for detailed consideration once actual landscape and architectural designs were available and public consultation had taken place.

- Recognised that the proposed exclusion of the Island and the collection of properties to the west of the Dunhurst corner of the C18 from the Settlement Boundary would either maintain or improve the current levels of protection against unwanted development and should be supported.
- Expressed some concern that those exclusions, together with the removal of a number of smaller areas (such as gardens) from the Settlement Boundary – would significantly reduce the potential for future “in-fill” development. Whilst beneficial in some respects, this could also eliminate the possibility of even a small growth in the size of the community in years to come. For that reason, the Council requested that the SDNPA should be sympathetic to any small Rural Exception Site requests, should such opportunities arise in the medium- to longer-term future. If you have any comments or questions about the Local Plan and its implications for Steep, please contact the Parish Clerk, Jenny Hollington clerk@steep-pc.gov.uk

MARCH 18 – UPDATE FROM STEEP IN NEED CHARITY

WWW.STEEPINNEEDCHARITY.ORG.UK

This local charity owns two former allotment sites in Steep, in Church Road by the village hall and in Ridge Common Lane near the border with Stroud. Its objects are the prevention and relief of poverty in Steep and adjoining parishes, and there is at present a vacancy for a trustee. If you are interested in becoming a trustee, please give me a call and I will tell you what the job is all about.

Geoffrey Dale, Chairman of Trustees. Tel: 894570; email: geojdale@hotmail.com

JUN 18 - UPDATE FROM STEEP IN NEED CHARITY

The major change in recent months has been the publication by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) of their draft plan for the whole National Park including Steep. This recommends that the former allotment site on Church Road, now owned by the charity, is included within the settlement boundary and with potential for development.

The trustees welcome the proposal since our preference is to secure a comprehensive plan for this site at the centre of the village; to include some development incorporating lower cost housing and community benefit including open space, extra car parking for the village hall and, possibly, a more prominent and accessible site for the War Memorial; all to be combined with a strong focus on the quality of design and materials.

We have had regard to the Steep Village Plan and also recognise the importance of extensive public consultation.

The draft plan has now been submitted to Central Government with an examination of the plan expected in summer 2018. Once the plan is approved we can then work up more detailed proposals for the site with input from SDNPA, the Parish Council and the village as a whole.

If anyone would like further information or would like to make their own suggestions please contact me on geojdale@hotmail.com or any of the other trustees listed on the website.

Geoffrey Dale, Chair of Trustees

FEB 19 - SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK LOCAL PLAN - AN END IN SIGHT?

The U.K.'s newest National Park covers an area of 628 square miles of Southern England and the journey to adoption of the new South Downs Local Plan has been a long one. After a number of years in preparation and an extensive consultation process, the plan has been undergoing a formal examination by Inspector Brian Sims in recent months. His review is intended to check whether or not the plan is technically sound and that all the representations received during the consultation have been carefully considered. The Inspector will decide whether the Plan can be adopted as it currently stands or whether modifications are required. Depending on the significance of any changes he requires, a further period of consultation may be needed. The Plan is a large and complex document, covering many aspects of planning policy, as well as determining the use of a number of specific areas within the Park. Full details of the document, the changes that have so far been made and the process being followed can be found by going to www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning and following the links to the Local Plan.

This process matters to Steep because the Plan includes a number of changes to the Settlement Boundary for the parish. Most significantly, there is a proposal to incorporate the land south of Church Road and next to the Village Hall (now in the care of the trustees of the Steep in Need charity) plus a small area of Village Hall land into the settlement boundary. These changes – and the Parish Council’s view of them - were described in the Newsletter of December 2017 and also referred to in the June 2018 issue (these back-copies are accessible on www.SteepVillage.com under Useful Information). The South Downs plan identified a potential development of between eight and twelve houses on the Church Road site. Because some representations had been received which objected to this change in the Settlement Boundary, the Park planners reviewed their proposal, reconfirmed the proposed allocation for development but have suggested a modification to the plan by adding a condition that 20% of the area should be retained as open space. There was a specific review of the objections (and the SDNPA’s revised proposal) by the Inspector in early December. We will not know the result of his deliberations until his overall decision on the Plan is published in due course. There is no definite date for this but it may happen in the next ninety days.

Once the Planning Inspector’s report is issued, the substance of the Plan will be firmer, and we can start to discuss the possibilities for this important site in the heart of Steep. The trustees of Steep in Need, of the Village Hall and the Parish Council are committed to ensuring that there is the best possible consultation on any proposals.

If you have questions or comments on this topic, please contact the Parish Clerk, Jenny Hollington, on clerk@steep-pc.gov.uk or Chairman of the Steep In Need Trustees, Geoffrey Dale, on geojdale@hotmail.com

MAY 19 - LAND NEXT TO STEEP VILLAGE HALL

Further to the article in the February newsletter I am writing with an update on the current position.

At the end of January the South Downs National Park Authority (NPA) announced that, at the request of the planning inspector who in late 2018 carried out the public examination into the new draft local plan, it planned to carry out further public consultation on modifications it had made to the plan since it was originally published.

The further consultations commenced from 1 February and ended on 28 March.

The main modification in respect of the land on Church Road next to the village hall suggested that any development proposals should provide approximately 20% of the total area as informal public open space.

The joint owners of the land, Steep in Need Charity and the Village Hall trustees, have written to the NPA to confirm their support for this modification.

We now await the inspector’s report which is due for publication during the summer and once it is received we will be able to discuss the options for this land in more detail.

Geoffrey Dale, Steep in Need Trustees (geojdale@hotmail.com).

JUN 19 - UPDATE FROM ‘SAVE OUR VILLAGE GREEN’

As many will know, the South Downs National Park Authority is close to adopting its first Local Plan covering the period 2014-2033. As part of this plan, the Government appointed inspector has conducted an examination into the soundness and legality of the Local Plan and is due to issue his report very soon.

The inspector will make recommendations regarding the whole Local Plan including:

- ☑ allocation of 8-12 houses on the land next to the village hall in Steep.
- ☑ the removal of the open space / village green designation for the land next to the village hall in Steep (the only designated public open space in the village and parish)
- ☑ the removal of the Steep settlement boundary in a number of locations in the parish including The Island

The land is currently allocated as ‘open space (village green)’ in the East Hampshire District Council local plan. For decades, it was used as allotments by people living in Steep. A group of local residents has come together under the banner of Save Our Village Green to protect the land as open space for the public.

The development of this land has been controversial for years. In 2010, it was subject to a referendum which rejected houses being built on the land by a vote 52% to 48%. One of the many arguments put forward by those who want to see the land developed is that it will provide much-needed affordable homes.

Some may be surprised to learn, therefore, that the Local Plan requires just a few affordable homes on the site.

According to Matt Bates, the lead officer on the Local Plan for the South Downs National Park Authority, the minimum number of affordable houses on the site will be as follows.

Houses built	Minimum affordable houses
8	3
9	3
10	4
11	5
12	6

Matt Bates says that we will not know the precise amount of housing to be provided on the site (and hence will not know the number of affordable units) until the scheme details are finalised through the development management process. Please also note that the Government's definition for affordable housing is up to 80% of market rate (see NPPF 2019 Appendix 2).

In July 2017, Geoffrey Dale chairman and trustee of Steep In Need (the charity that owns part of the land which is to be developed), wrote in this newsletter that the charity's objectives were 'the prevention and relief of poverty' and that that 'we hope to build up a capital fund, from which to make monetary grants to those in need'. Given this, it is hard to see how the trustees will not maximize their income from the land by selling as many market-value homes as is allowed.

Following the submission by Save Our Village Green, South Downs has proposed modifying the proposal for the land in question and set aside 20 per cent for public open space. This means that it is unlikely that there is sufficient space to build 11 or 12 homes on the land.

It may well be then, after all the years of debate and anguish, that very few affordable homes will be built on the land next to the village hall. Do we really want to give up our only designated open space in the centre of the village for market housing and maybe a small number of affordable houses?

If you are interested to learn, more please see www.saveourvillagegreen.org or let your parish councillors know how you feel about the proposals.

Thomas Harding, info@saveourvillagegreen.org

OCT 19 - LAND TO THE SOUTH OF CHURCH ROAD AND THE LOCAL PLAN

The First Local Plan for the South Downs National Park was adopted by the National Park Authority on 2nd July. As explained in earlier up-dates, the new plan incorporates the Church Road site next to the Village Hall and opposite the Mill Lane junction within the settlement boundary for the village. It has been identified by SDNPA as having the potential for between 8 and 12 houses.

The largest part of the site is in the trusteeship of the Steep in Need Charity and a smaller portion belongs to the Village Hall (also a Charity – the Steep War Memorial Village Club). The Parish Council had discussed the topic recently and re-affirmed its wish to ensure that there should be the best possible community consultation on any proposals for this important site in the heart of the village.

Following the adoption of the Local Plan, we had considered holding an initial public consultation event in the fairly near future, in conjunction with the two charities. However, a legal challenge has been lodged against the Local Plan by a Steep resident. Until this judicial review process has run its course, we do not think it is appropriate to proceed with the planned consultation.

We will keep residents informed of future developments via our website (www.steep-pc.gov.uk), the parish noticeboards and the monthly newsletter. Questions may be addressed to the Parish Clerk, Jenny Hollington,

OCT 19 - THE POSITION OF THE NEWSLETTER ON THIS MATTER

Many thanks to those who have sent letters and articles on the Church Road saga for publication in the newsletter.

We are unable to publish them because, as explained in the June issue, our constitution prohibits us from becoming involved in controversial matters.

However, we will continue to publish factual statements, such as the one above by Steep Parish Council. David Dobson, editor.