

MINUTES
Steep Parish Council Meeting
Monday 6th February 2023 at 7.30pm

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

Also present: District Councillor Nick Drew
County Councillor Russell Oppenheimer
Dawn Rodgers, Clerk
4 members of the public (MoP)

- | Minute | Item |
|---------------|---|
| 23/20 | Apologies for Absence:
Cllrs Jeff Graham and Andrew Martin. |
| 23/21 | Approval of Minutes:
Resolved: The minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 16 th January were approved as an accurate record. |
| 23/22 | Declarations of Interest:
None |
| 23/23 | Public Comment:
MoP 1 requested the District and County Councillor reports be made available before the meetings. The Chair stated these reports were updates to the Parish Council and therefore not appropriate to share them before the meetings. Both District and County councillors agreed.

MoP 2 asked how things were going at the village hall and whether a report was available. This is the business of the village hall and so the Parish Council do not report on it.

MoP 3 requested an update on the plans for development at the village hall. It was noted that we are a long way from a proposed scheme.

MoP 4 asked if biodiversity had been considered by the Council if the entrance to the village hall is moved. This is a matter for the village hall Trustees and should be covered by any future SDNPA planning applications. |
| 23/24 | Land at Church Road:
The Wilson Designer Homes pre-app has been submitted at SDNPA. |
| 23/25 | Steep Village Hall:
The report from the Trustee Working Group was noted (Appendix A).

It was suggested that another public meeting could be useful to communicate progress at a public meeting. A suitable date will be sought. <i>ACTION: Cllr Jenny Martin</i> |
| 23/26 | Church Road Traffic Management Working Party:
The first meeting took place, with apologies from Cllr Cook due to technological issues.

The working party report was read out at the meeting (Appendix B).

Cllr Cook asked if we are only proceeding with this working group if the development goes ahead. He believed other improvements could be made now, including crocodile walks to and from the school and liaising with Bedales re their vans. Cllr Jenny Martin said the village hall car park was often used for school drop off and |

pick up. Cllr Hurst wondered if Bedales had telemetry on their vans including tracking data so that feedback could be given as to when they use the road most often.

A potential overlap between this working group and the Trustee working group was acknowledged. The prospect of a joint meeting will be raised with the Trustee working group. **ACTION: Cllr Jenny Martin**

Other stakeholders were noted, including Wilson Designer Homes (if their pre-app is successful), Steep Church, and Parent Governor representatives from Bedales and Steep schools.

It was suggested Terms of Reference would be incredibly useful, given the many stakeholders that could be involved. However, Cllr Duthie advised, given her report, the working group would not be going forward.

23/27 **County Councillor Report:**

Cllr Oppenheimer's report was noted (Appendix C).

The Chair asked if the Stoner Hill works would be delayed due to Hampshire Highways dealing with pothole issues. Cllr Oppenheimer said it was likely, but he will nudge via email.

23/28 **District Councillor's Report:**

Cllr Drew reported on the following items:

- Church Road - Cllr Drew thanked volunteers working on these projects.
- Bins - Cllr Drew asked to be kept informed of any issues.
- Planning at Brickyards - Cllr Drew agreed with the comments of the Planning Committee
- Communication - Cllr Drew can be contacted via email (nick.drew@easthants.gov.uk) and is available at Drop-In meetings at Froxfield Village Hall, every second Saturday.
- 'Cosy' loan scheme - Cllr Drew brought our attention to this scheme, details on the EHDC website.
- District Councillor Grants - The scheme is nearing its close date and he encouraged applications asap.

Cllr Cook asked about road sweeping in the Parish and litter picking on Stoner Hill. Cllr Drew will follow up.

Cllr Holmes will email Cllr Drew re bins not collected on Ashford Road.

ACTION: Cllr Holmes

23/29 **Ashford Hangers:**

Lutcombe Pond –

Cllr Oppenheimer has arranged a meeting with Natural England, Steep PC and SDNPA on 19th May. The Chair asked if we could add Ash die back to the meeting.

Ash Die-Back –

Miyawaki method – a meeting with Emily Roberts would be requested.

ACTION: Cllr Duthie / Clerk

A response to our letter had been received from James Lovegrove, but their stance was not changed. HCC hope their current stance would improve disease resistance in the Hangers.

23/30 **Website:**

Testing was ongoing and decisions were needed on new development items

- Collating Steep Planning Applications
Resolved: A “scrape” of the SDNPA planning portal would be utilised to populate the new website at a cost £15+vat per month. **ACTION: Clerk**
- Church Road website: <https://news.steep-pc.gov.uk>
Resolved: This separate PC website should be incorporated onto the new PC website, which would cost approx £54+vat (eliminating future costs). **ACTION: Clerk**

- **Resolved:** A Website Working Party would be formed to check content and design at the appropriate time. Cllrs Holmes and Hurst volunteered.

23/31 **Lengthsman Funding 2023:**
This is confirmed. The Clerk asked for any jobs for the Lengthsman

- Check and clear signs.

23/32 **Roads and Traffic:**

(a) Phase 2 Traffic Management Scheme –
Stroud PC have confirmed they are hoping to sell their 50% share of the SpeedWatch kit.
Resolved: The Clerk will make an offer to Stroud PC, which includes 20% compound depreciation of original cost. **ACTION: Clerk**

(b) SID –
Cllr Drew suggested we put an article in the press for this successful project. Cllr Holmes will liaise with Cllr Graham and EHDC to produce. **ACTION: Cllr Holmes**

The Clerk noted we had not decided about purchasing an additional pole.
Resolved: A new post should be requested from Joe Folland as it increases safety. **ACTION: Clerk**

(c) Flooding –
Cllrs Holmes and Cook met with Lisa Davis of Hampshire CC on Thursday 19th January. Lisa mentioned no funding is available for works but she would contact Countryside Services re flowrate concerns from the dam at Lutcombe and silt build up at Old Ashford Manor.

(d) Overgrown hedges and overhanging trees –
Hampshire Highways had confirmed in writing that hedges should be cut back 1m from the carriageway and 5.3m high. It was noted this also applies to any barriers, objects, stones or sleepers left next to the carriageway. The Chair will write to those residents affected. **ACTION: Chair**
Cllr Oppenheimer said he was working on a letter for these type of circumstances with the Hampshire logo on.

23/33 **Finance:**

(a) Bank Reconciliation – Not required as was signed off at January meeting.

(b) **Resolved:** The following cheques were approved for February payment

Cheques - February 2023			
Chq No.	Amount	Payee	Service
100498	£140.83	Dawn Rodgers	Reimbursing Clerk Expenditure (Stationery, stamps, etc)
100499	£725.00	Dawn Rodgers	January salary - Clerk and Secretary to Trustee hours
100500	£160.00	Steep Village Hall	Meeting room hire Sept - Dec 2023
100501	£540.00	Hart Landscaping and Tree Services Ltd	Lengthsman Scheme - Jan 2023
Subtotal	£1,565.83		

The Clerk advised that documents would be needed to be approved at the March meeting ahead of Year End. The Clerk will send to all councillors, to be reviewed in detail before the March meeting by the Finance sub-committee. **ACTION: Clerk**

23/34 **Steep Marsh:**

Investigation is necessary to check if the new aluminium board could be swapped with an existing wooden board. Chair and Clerk will investigate further. **ACTION: Chair / Clerk**

23/35 **Steep Common:**

The Chair attended a meeting with an adjacent landowner re Ash felling works bordering the common. The wood will be extracted via Mill Lane. It was noted two Ash trees on the Common require work.

Resolved: The contractor should complete this work on the Common at the same time, once we are aware of price. Clerk to contact the landowner to request a price from his contractor. **ACTION: Clerk**

23/36 **War Memorial:**

Three tree work quotes are required from contractors. It was noted works might be possible under the Lengthsman scheme as he is a qualified tree surgeon. A meeting will be set up to discuss. **ACTION: Clerk**

Flooding still occurs and our volunteer, Steve Cook, has offered to do the necessary works to fix. Clerk has written to Heritage @ EHDC to see if listed monument permission is required.

Steve has been thanked for his work on the Memorial. The Council agreed and are very grateful.

23/37 **Footpaths:**

It was noted a meeting with Megan Cledwyn (Community Engagement Ranger at Countryside Services Hampshire CC) is arranged for Thursday 9th February.

23/38 **Community Project (Swings at Hays Cottages):**

Feedback now received from EHDC that the grant application was rejected due to lack of detail.

23/39 **Community Assets:**

The Cricketers is under new ownership and should reopen in mid March. It was proposed we should nominate it a community asset at some point in the future, which should protect it from future change of use. We also need to look further afield in the village.

Cllr Cooke gave his apologies and left the meeting.

23/40 **CIL Projects:**

It was previously noted that we might apply for CIL funding for a Footpaths project. Cllr Jenny Martin will check details. Councillors were asked to keep in mind any others. **ACTION: Cllr Jenny Martin**

Clerk to investigate if CIL monies can be used towards the village hall costs.

ACTION: Clerk

Cllr Duthie gave her apologies and left the meeting.

23/41 **Correspondence:**

The following correspondence was noted as circulated prior to the meeting:

- Loose dogs on Ashford Hangers – postponed for discussion at next meeting.
- HALC – Extraordinary General Meeting 23rd February 2023 at 6pm (the Chair will attend).
- SDNPA Hampshire Parish meeting on the 21 March 2023 at 6pm (the Chair will attend).
- Community Climate Action Fund – no projects identified.
- HALC – King’s Coronation Saturday 6th May 2023 – postponed for discussion at next meeting.
- Letter from landowner re tree works adjacent to Steep Common – discussed earlier in the meeting.

Date of next meeting: The next meeting will be held on **Monday 6th March 2023** at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Steep Parish Council

Trustee Working Group Report to Parish Council February 2023

The working group obtained 3 quotes from Highways Consultants, as requested by trustees and these were made available for trustees to consider at their last meeting. Trustees agreed that the quote from Nick Culhane was the most competitive. The group has been in contact with Nick who is standing by until the outcome from SDNPA on the WDH pre app is clear.

The SDNPA planning officer, Nicola Martin, was recently in contact with me to ask for the outcome of the trustees' consultation in September. This is in the context of the WDH pre-app. Members of the working group asked for a meeting with Nicola and she suggested that a pre-app submission followed by a meeting was the best approach. The submission would incur a concessionary fee of 36 pounds and the meeting would cost 48 pounds. This was put to the trustees at the meeting and it was agreed that work on the pre-app could begin and be submitted once the response to WDH is known. Discussion as to what to include in the pre-app was postponed until the next trustee meeting.

The work on the business plan continues. The working group has produced a draft major maintenance/rebuild section which was discussed at the last trustee meeting. There was some disagreement about how many items should be included in phase 1 and discussions are continuing. It was agreed by trustees that the new manager of the hall should be included in prioritizing those improvements which would make the most impact on raising the halls 'hireability'.

The working group discussed fund raising and Freddie has agreed to look at the possibility of a grant from ACRE (Action with Communities across Rural England). The group recognizes the need to make a renewed effort to access fund-raising skills and is looking again at the consultation feedback forms and in addition, to seek information from the Petersfield Museum experience. Initial ideas for establishing a Village Hall 'Memorial' Fund are also to be explored by the group.

The working group recommended to the trustees that the number and location of parking spaces (disabled and otherwise) should remain as shown in the consultation. More spaces at the southern end could be considered at a later date should there be a demand. Trustees agreed.

At the trustee meeting, the working group raised the need for a person to be responsible for working with the Charity Commission and it was suggested that this should be a trustee. This was agreed. The responsible person will inform the CC of the scheme when the appropriate documentation is ready and in due course, apply to borrow funds from the COIF.

Finally, the working group is aware that there has been very little published information on the progress of the village hall project since the September consultation. Trustees agreed that the group should produce a draft report on progress for their endorsement.

Councilor Jenny Martin

Church Road Traffic Working Group report 06/02/2023

Genevieve is willing to talk through some deliverable, well designed traffic calming options for the proposed intersections (the Mill Lane / Church Rd junction and proposed accesses) if there is genuine interest in implementing them. She will not however, simply hand over plans for someone else to take forward or to be part of a tick box exercise. Rather than being excluded from the various working groups, such as the one for the Village Hall development and the Traffic Calming working group she hopes the Parish Council will value collaboration with all members of the community, irrespective of their varying views as there may be more common ground that is currently recognised.

She says design interventions along Church Road should not be considered in isolation from the Allocated Site and the Village Hall land. Recent National Planning Policy (the NPPF), best practice and importantly the South Downs Local Plan and Design Guide clearly set out the importance of 'placemaking' which would mean in this case, presenting a holistic concept for the village centre not submitting separate planning applications toward piecemeal development. There is an opportunity now to do this with SDNPA officers, Wilson Designer Homes and the Parish Council working together. Genevieve does not believe that the WDH project team has the skills and expertise to deliver a masterplan for the village centre, but the Steep community does. WDH are simply focusing within the 'red line' and proposing the bare minimum requirements, which is shortchanging the village, and if the PC is willing to accept the minimum then they will fail the community, especially when they knowingly have the expertise and knowledge within our community to do better.

She feels that for the PC to meaningfully engage her now, and for her to liaise directly with SDNPA officers on your behalf, would be of great benefit to the PC due to her current relationship with SDNPA officers, her experience as the former SDNPA Design Officer and her expertise in successfully submitting planning applications on behalf of developers in the SDNPA planning process.

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT
TO
ALL PARISH COUNCILS
IN PETERSFIELD HANGERS
1 FEBRUARY 2023**

1. Highways Update

The recent severe weather has placed unprecedented strain on the road network. We continue to ask for your support in reporting issues promptly on the website and for your patience as the Highways Team seek to triage and fix road defects as fast as they can.

Whilst the weather has improved slightly in the last week, the overnight freezing temperatures have continued to exacerbate the pothole situation with many more now appearing, particularly in rural areas. Service demand across the county remains extremely high. Both our officers and contractors continue to work extended hours (including weekends) to try and keep on top of the situation. However, demand far exceeds capacity at the present time and consequently all work is having to be prioritised so that the highest risk issues are repaired first, and this will include the continued use of temporary ‘infill’ repairs. Milestone are doing everything they can to secure more gangs and equipment for Hampshire and when more resource becomes available it is being deployed immediately. It will be many weeks, if not months, before we are back to anything like business-as-usual.

Some of our senior officers attended a briefing session with both the Met Office and the Environment Agency last week. Unfortunately, it looks like there is more unfavourable weather on the way. The Met Office are suggesting that the weather in February is most likely to be unsettled, with the potential for more periods of stormy conditions and some further cold spells.

Heavy and prolonged rainfall during late December and early January has resulted in saturated catchments in many Hampshire areas with consequential surface water flooding (and ice problems) on some routes. The Highways Team is currently prioritising gully/manhole cleansing and ditch/grip clearance in those areas likely to be most vulnerable to ensure that, at the very least, our highway drainage systems are clear and operational.

We are very grateful to Parish Councils and to communities for your understanding of this challenging situation.

2. Lenghsman Funding

I am pleased to be able to officially confirm that the funding to Parishes for the Lenghsman Scheme will continue for the coming financial year 2023/24. This follows the extension of the Milestone contract and an agreement for them to provide funding for this.

The Lenghsman scheme is a good example of successful joined-up government in Hampshire and I am delighted that it will continue.

3. NEU Industrial Action

You will be aware that the National Education Union is taking industrial action today (1 February) as part of a dispute with the Government regarding pay. Any decisions to close schools as a result of striking are for individual Headteachers to make and will be based on their ability to open the school safely, and to maintain a full or revised curriculum.

As a County Council, we have communicated with Hampshire schools to reiterate the national guidance on managing strikes provided by the Department for Education, and to support schools in preparing as far as possible for any strike action by staff.

Teaching staff do not have to declare their intention to participate in a strike until the day itself. Consequently Headteachers may not be in a position to gauge the potential impact of planned strike action in advance. However, Headteachers were asked, where possible, to ascertain whether any staff will be striking so that they could determine the likely impact on their school and whether the impact is likely to mean that the school will need to implement a full or partial school closure.

Schools have been advised to declare closures using the [County Council's emergency closure system](#), where you will see a number of schools have already notified HCC of their plans to close.

4. Major investment in Hampshire Schools

On 12 January 2023 the Exec. Member for Children's Services Cllr Edward Heron approved a total planned investment programme in Hampshire schools of £221m over the next three years. The programme includes a number of proposed school expansions; projects for special schools, early years settings and children's social care; as well as other improvements and modernisations across existing buildings.

Ongoing pressure for school places is largely driven by major new housing developments. Additionally, there has been a substantial increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who need a specialist school place. The proposed capital programme includes plans for new schools linked to new housing developments, and a number of special school projects, to respond effectively to demand and ensure that sufficient school places remain available, in line with our statutory duties as a County Council.

5. HCC extends its support for Community Energy projects

A grant of £100,000 has been awarded by HCC to Community Energy South (CES), ensuring continued support to resident groups, helping them develop and manage community-based renewable energy projects in Hampshire. The funding will be available over the next two years as part of the Authority's activity to support the county to become Carbon Neutral by 2050 and be resilient to a two degree rise in temperature.

Further support includes a revolving community energy fund which can invest up to £25,000 in any individual community project in Hampshire. Any profits are reinvested to support further community schemes. Communities interested in generating renewable energy can find out more at [Community energy | Hampshire County Council](#)

Renewable energy currently generated in Hampshire is only 5% of the total used, so there is a sizeable opportunity to generate local, low carbon energy. The funding awarded to CES will enable them to train and guide a growing number of Hampshire communities who want to come together to buy, manage, and generate low carbon heat and power. Examples of ways this might be achieved could include setting up a residents' home energy advice service or building community solar power facilities.

6. SDNPA is recruiting a new Authority Member

There is a vacancy for a Secretary of State Authority Member at the SDNPA and the appointment process is being run by DEFRA. The closing date is 20 February. If anybody is interested or knows somebody who might be interested please find below the link.

<https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/appointment/secretary-of-state-members-to-national-park-authorities-and-aonb-conservation-boards/>

It is definitely in our interests to encourage strong Hampshire representation on the Board at the SDNPA.

7. Grant pot

I seem to still have £900 in my HCC grant pot. These funds need to be allocated by 18 February so please do get in touch with me as soon as possible if you have a scheme which you think could be suitable for funding.

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER
County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers

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