

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
Steep Parish Council
Held on Monday 2 February 2026 at 7.30pm
in Steep War Memorial Village Hall**

Present: Councillors Alison Driver (Chair), Charlotte Duthie (Vice), Shannon Askew, Robin Hollington, Andrew Howard, Barry Haywood, Terry Cook and Paul Nayton.
District Councillor Nick Drew
Sam Marchant (Clerk)
2 members of the public (MOP).

Minute Ref	Item
26/26	Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Andrew Inkley. County Councillor Russell Oppenheimer not present.
26/27	Declarations of interests Cllr Hollington declared an interest as his business was the supplier of the Councils email accounts.
26/28	Approval of minutes To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 12 January 2026. The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 12 January were reviewed; they were then approved and signed by the Chair.
26/29	Responsibilities: to appoint Cllr Nayton It was agreed for Cllr Nayton to join the IT working group.
26/30	Public Comment Discussion points: Land near the Cricketers pub. Update on land negotiations, fundraising and exclusivity agreement with the deadline of early March. Millennium bench located on the land. Possible Asset of Community Interest and CIL funding for entrance works. Naming of the Church Road development. Concern over short consultation time for naming. Steep Marsh flooding and road condition concerns. RO had included in his report that a 2-week good weather window was needed to begin to make any road repairs. Action: Feedback to EHDC to lodge a complaint for the short consultation time given for naming the Church Road development (SM/ND)

Send RO report to resident (AD)
Investigate CiL/entrance to mentioned land ownership (RH)

- 26/31 County Councillor Report:** to receive a report
Cllr Oppenheimer's report had been circulated prior to the meeting. (Appendix A)
- 26/32 District Councillor Report:** to receive a report
ND had been following up with Planning officers around compliance in regard to the Planning letter sent by the Parish Council in response to the SDNP/25/02138/FUL Microbrewery approval process. He had been hoping for a meeting which had not happened. He had escalated his thoughts on this decision.
- 26/33 Correspondence**
a) Request for information letter re the Church Road development site (AD)
Discussion points:
The letter had been circulated to Councillors when received.
The information request had been responded to by letter and a letter had also been sent to Steep In Need requesting further information regarding final settlement details etc.
- Action:
Continue locating documentation (AD/BH)
- 26/34 Website update:** to appoint Cllr
Discussion points:
In light of the previously discussed correspondence, it had brought to attention that the website needed urgent update.
Retention policy required.
Publishing Q&A regarding Church Road development.
- Actions:**
Ask permission to use questions (SM)
Include separate report section (SM)
Publish Q&A in newsletter (AD)
- 26/35 Neighbourhood Plan:** to receive an update (AD)
Action:
Arrange online meeting (AD)
- 26/36 SDNP Local Green Space Assessment:** to appoint Cllr
Resolved: Cllr Nayton to take responsibility.
- 26/37 SSEN Transformer (AD):** to receive an update
Discussion points:
AD had been waiting for SSEN to provide further location options.
Actions:
Request wider coverage map (AD/RH)

- 26/38 Church Road New Housing Development:** to receive suggestions for road name and agree a recommendation for EHDC
Discussion points:
 Themes agreed: Memorial / Allotments / Field Gardens

Actions:
 Submit recommendations and request extension (SM)
- 26/39 War Memorial (CD)**
Discussion points:
 Repairs required and grant opportunities were revisited.

Actions:
 Contact EHDC (SA)
 Ask contractor for update to quote and clarify draining away from the flooring (CD)
 Investigate map software for boundary (SM)
 Apply for grant funding (CD)
 Enquire about funding from RO (RH)
- 26/40 Roads and Traffic (CD/AI):**
 a) Church Road 20mph: to update (AI)
Discussion points:
 CD had written to RO after receiving a reply from HCC which implied there would be a £30,000 cost. Clarification was needed to determine whether the PC would be paying toward this.

Action:
 Continue to liaise with HCC (CD)

 b) Signage in Steep Marsh: to update (CD)
Discussion points:
 CD had chased as discussed previously. The reply received had not indicated that there would be action taken due to HCC considering signage adequate.

Actions:
 Continue to apply pressure for action from HCC (CD)
- 26/41 Steep Marsh (AH/BH):**
 a) Water runoff from Brickyards (AH)
 i. Proposal to fund a one-off baseline water quality test: to approve
Discussion points:
 Environment Agency was considered responsible.
 AD was currently waiting on a response from the Agency.
 PC support concept but not funding currently.

Actions:

Clarify powers of spend (AD/RH)

Gather further information on testing options (AH)

ii. Agree to retain the test results on file to support future monitoring, enforcement, or remedial action if required.

Agreed not to pursue at this time.

b) Traffic survey & cameras (AH)

i. Proposal to commission an independent traffic assessment and authorise investigation and funding: to approve.

Discussion points:

Further clarification on final quotes was required.

Data to be used in support of Planning consultation and enforcement of restriction on previously approved applications.

Actions:

Investigate independent assessment further (AH)

c) Planning letter response SDNP/25/02138/FUL Microbrewery: to receive and update (AH)

Discussed previously.

26/42

Combined project (AD):

a) S106 report: to update on progress (BH)

Discussion points:

BH would provide his update after his meeting with the developer.

Find out when the first occupancy was to be as that would be when the decision needs to be made on taking over the Open Space.

BH to get quotes for costing to cover the legal document to see if legally binding.

CD thanked BH for the clarification and asked if possible, could the design of the public open space not to be just grass.

Actions:

RH to speak to the designer in question on the combined projects (RH)

BH to ask Stuart Wilson for timeline and include in the PC agenda 2 months prior to any decisions being made (BH)

Seek legal costing advice (BH)

26/43

Common (SA/TC/CD/AI): to receive a written report (SA)

Report circulated

Discussion points:

AI responsible for making a No Parking and location/contact in emergency signs.

CD had replaced the padlock and chain for the entrance gate.

Actions:

AI to order signs. (AI)

Astro turf to be removed (SM)

TC to organise a working party to tidy up when the weather gets better. (TC)

SA to include in Newsletter. (SA)

26/44 **Footpaths (AI/CD):** to update on progress (AI)

Discussion points:

Muddy conditions noted.

Actions:

CD to monitor (CD)

26/45 **Grant Opportunities (AI/CD):** to receive plan (AI)

Discussion points:

Deferred to March.

Action:

March agenda item (AI/SM)

26/46 **Standard Operation Procedures:** to adopt (AD):

Discussion points:

AD asked for RH comments with suggested solutions as had been promised in previous meetings.

AD stated that the documents was to be considered as guidelines for timelines between meetings (to be include in the title)

The document had been discussed since being initially circulated for the July meeting.

Action:

RH to send over his comments with solutions ASAP. (RH)

RH to receive feedback from comments. (AD)

AD to circulate comments and document before the March meeting. (AD)

26/47 **Policies/Procedure for adoption**

a) Pre Project Overview form (AD/BH)

Discussion points:

Deferred to March meeting.

b) IT Policy

Discussion points:

Deferred to March meeting

Actions:

IT working party to produce for circulation for the March meeting. (SM)

26/48

Policies/Procedures for review

a) Steep PC Grant Application form (RH)
Deferred to March meeting

b) PC Risk Assessment
For review for approval at the March meeting

c) Asset Register
For review for approval at the March meeting.

Action:

Clarify with auditor how look written off items need to stay on the list. (SM)

26/49

Finance and Admin:

- a) To approve the HSBC bank reconciliations to 10 January 2026
Unavailable due to late bank statement.
- b) To approve the Lloyds bank reconciliations to 31 January 2026
Approved.
- c) To approve Finance Summary Actuals vs Budget and list of Payments & Receipts report (Appendix B)
Approved.

d) Closure of HSBC account: to receive an update

Discussion points:

Form to be signed by RH and TC.

Actions:

Clerk to send form to HSBC for closure of account.

e) Submission of all Digital Asset details to Clerk: to receive an update

Discussion points:

Number of digital assets of which should be in control of the Clerk.

This information had been asked for in October 2025 and had so far not been forthcoming from Inspired-IS.

Deadline was set for this Friday.

RH agreed to do his utmost to provide information by Friday.

Actions:

AH considered putting forward a motion for a new IT supplier (AH)

26/50

2026/27 Budget Proposal: to approve

Discussion points:

Deferred to March meeting.

26/51

APM Speaker: to receive suggestions

Discussion points:

Discussed ideas already put forward which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Environmental talk preferable.

Another option the new Headteacher of the Steep Primary School.

Actions:

Clerk to ask for contact details from Buriton PC (SM)

26/52

Items for the next agenda: to receive items

Items to be included in the next agenda were identified as:

Clerk to send out blank agenda for the March meeting for Councillors to send items and proposals via email. (SM)

26/53

Date and time of next meeting: Monday 2 March 7:30pm

The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Monday 2 March 2026 at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting closed at 9:26pm.

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

1 FEBRUARY 2026

1. Highways maintenance update

I am acutely aware that the state of our roads is bad at the moment, and that residents are upset by it. I drive to various places in my car every day and so I share the frustration. I wish to assure you that the problems we are seeing are not the result of a lack of focus by Hampshire County Council. The main culprits are: increasingly extreme weather, heavier vehicles and rampant materials inflation over the last five years. Of course, the funding crisis in local government caused by escalating care costs and escalating special educational needs costs has played a key part. We are 100% reliant on the Highways funding we get from central Government, which is totally inadequate. The experts tell us that it would cost £600m a year properly to restore and maintain Hampshire's roads. Yet we are actually in receipt of just £60m per year in Hampshire.

Since Christmas, wintry and wet weather has hit our highway network particularly hard. The impacts of regular freeze-thaw cycles and persistent rain have accelerated road deterioration, leading to a significant surge in pothole reports and repair requests. This level of degradation leads to weakened road surfaces and the failure of the underlying layers. To tackle the damage and spike in demand, the Highways Team, working closely with our contractor M Group, have successfully secured extra supply-chain resources - and they have managed this despite a significant rise in demand for frontline resources nationally from other highway authorities.

Highways have extra Jet/Dragon Patchers already out on the Hampshire network with more due soon. In addition, extra carriageway patching gangs started on 12 January, and more are expected to join by the end of this month. Further resource increases are likely over the coming weeks. However, their work has been hampered by ongoing heavy rain and low temperatures. You cannot repair potholes when the road surface temperature is below 8 degrees or when it is raining heavily. We need to hope for a clear fortnight for the teams to really get a grip on it.

While dealing with potholes will remain the main focus over the coming months, the winter weather is also placing pressure on other parts of the network, especially drainage assets. To help manage the increase in flooding, there are also additional jetting machines available to respond to issues related to piped drainage systems. A team is also available to tackle other localised flooding problems. In addition, an extra white-lining team is now on the network addressing small, localised sites where markings have deteriorated.

In light of the increased demand, it is inevitable that some reported defects will need to be temporarily infilled to ensure road safety. Whilst permanent first-time repairs are always

Appendix A

preferred, the level of demand is currently so high across Hampshire that infill repairs will need to be considered as a quick-fix for safety reasons while longer term permanent repairs are scheduled. Nobody likes infill repairs because they sometimes fail within days. But I trust the Highways engineers when they say that this is the best way to maintain safety for road users. They are the experts.

In summary, we are doing everything we can to bring our highways back to a safe and acceptable state as swiftly as possible. I appreciate your patience and I would be very grateful for your help with explaining the situation to residents.

2. May 2026 elections.

As you know, Hampshire County Council refused to request a delay to elections despite pressure from Ministers to do so. I am proud of our principled stance. Thankfully, the Government has not imposed a delay on Hampshire so the May elections are proceeding.

Town and Parish Councils may wish to consider organising village hustings for candidates in April so that residents can hear directly from the candidates. This can be an important and helpful part of local democracy.

3. County Councillor grants

I wish to draw attention to a change to the rules around County Councillor grants to Parish Councils. Recently, a grant which I had approved to Ropley PC was caught by this rule and rejected by officers. This was vexing for me and even more vexing for Ropley PC.

The rule quoted at me by the Grants Team was this one:

iv) Grants will continue to be available for Parish Councils, however grants should not support normal business operation or projects that can be revenue funded (including through precepts) or funded through alternative sources like the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Please could I ask Town and Parish Councils to be mindful of this constraint when making applications in the future. We may need to check with the Grants team in advance which I can always do.

4. New Partnership Management Plan for South Downs National Park

The SDNPA have published their new 5-year management plan covering the period 2026-2031. This is a key document for the National Park and is a requirement of the National Parks legislation. I was interested to note a shift towards nature recovery which I think is welcome.

A range of ambitious targets have been agreed, including increasing tree canopy and woodland cover by 4,200 football pitches (2,625 hectares) by 2031 to help store carbon, soak up water and create vital new havens for wildlife.

Appendix A

A goal of restoring or creating more than 3,300 hectares of wildlife-rich habitats by 2031 has been agreed – an area the size of Worthing or Hayling Island. These new havens are outside current protected nature sites and will help significantly boost regional biodiversity in the long-term and increase resilience to higher temperatures and flooding.

Meanwhile, a key goal is that all water bodies in the National Park achieve “high” or “good” status by the end of 2027. It comes after a major study last year showed that most bodies of water are failing to meet good ecological standards.

The Plan also commits to engaging with 2,500 schools, inside and outside the National Park, and delivering 500 nature-based activity sessions for young people. I do not think any of us would argue with that one.

The plan is for the whole National Park and it can only be delivered in partnership with farmers, landowners, local authorities, the health sector, water companies, businesses, schools, charities and communities. There is an important role for Parish Councils in identifying areas for nature recovery and getting plans in place for designating those areas and restoring them through planting and other measures.

You can read the full plan at this link:

<https://partnership-management-plan.southdowns.gov.uk/>

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER
County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers

Financial Report

Feb-26

Below is a summary of Actual v Budget 2025/2026

Summary of Cost Centres – Payments

	Actual	Budget	Variance
Steep Common & War Memorial	5,371.77	5,800.00	428.23
Community Projects	9,766.53	31,700.00	21,933.47
Overheads	19,656.10	27,533.00	7,876.90
Grants	5,700.00	6,200.00	500.00
Council Projects	0.00	5,050.00	5,050.00
Lengthsman	5,718.30	7,700.00	1,981.70
Insurance Claim - ASW & SID Replacement	3,078.99	0.00	-3,078.99
Total	49,291.69	83,983.00	34,691.31
VAT	4,765.91		
Summary of Cost Centres – Receipts			
	Actual	Budget	Variance
Precept	46,000.00	46,000.00	0.00
Grants	250.00	26,500.00	-26,250.00
Bank Interest	321.77	600.00	-278.23
Lengthsman	7,700.00	7,700.00	0.00
Insurance Claim - ASW & SID Replacement	2,828.99	0.00	2,828.99
Defibrillators			
Common Make Over - CiL Funding	7,000.00	0.00	7,000.00
Total	64,100.76	80,800.00	-16,699.24
VAT	2,229.01		
Total CiL Monies Held to Date	4,494.90		
PC Combined Bank Balance 31 January 2026	66,706.52		

Steep PC payments 11 December 2025 - 10 November 2025 HSBC

Organisation	Amount	Method	Date Paid

Steep PC cleared payments from 1 January - 31 January 2026 Lloyds

1	Hart Landscaping - Lengthsman	480.00	Online	12.01.2026
2	Arborlec Services Ltd - Drainage Works	2,445.50	Online	12.01.2026
3	Lloyds - Bank Charge	9.50	Online	19.01.2026
4	Inspired-IS - Email/Microsoft	85.80	Online	19.01.2026
5			Online	
6			Online	
	Total	3,020.80		

Steep PC cleared Receipts from 1 January - 31 January 2026 Lloyds

1	SDNPA - CiL Funding - Steep Common Make Over	7,000.00	Online	15.01.2026
	Total	7,000.00		

Appendix B