

STEEP PARISH COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN Mr Richard Coles

CLERK Mrs Jenny Hollington

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday, 11th January 2010 at 7.30 p.m. at Steep Village Hall

<u>Present:</u>	Richard Coles (in the Chair)	Caro Robinson	David Llewellyn
	Fran Box	Terry Cook	Nick Hurst
	Jenny Martin	Jo Bell	

In Attendance: Jenny Hollington (Clerk)
Ray Street (Webmaster)

There were 14 members of the Public present during the course of the meeting.

10/01 APOLOGIES – Charles Gibson, Vaughan Clarke, Jennifer Gray, Drake Hocking

10/02 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING – The Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 2nd November were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

10/03 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS - Richard reminded Councillors that any interests should be recorded.

10/04 PUBLIC COMMENT

Sale of land at Church Road - A question was raised with regard to the sale of land at Church Road and how Parish Councillors intend to manage the conflict of interest between their role as Trustee of the land and their position on the Parish Council. The Chairman confirmed that this would be included in the brief to Counsel (legal advice so far has been inconclusive) - an estimated cost for Counsel has been requested but, as yet, not received.

Correspondence regarding sale of land at Church Road - An e-mail to the Clerk concerning the land at Church Road was referenced. The main points were raised and discussed:

- That the Parish Council formally confirm the land is held on trust and that as Trustees the Parish Council are bound by the Charities Act;
- That the Parish Council confirm the land is held on trust for the purpose of providing allotments;
- That the Parish Council writes to Hyde terminating further discussions on disposal of the land as continuance will place the Parish Council in breach of the provisions of the Charities Act.

It was also pointed out that the Church Road representatives hoped to hear what advice the Parish Council had received so far and how they intend to move forward.

This was discussed further and various suggestions made. The Chairman stated that the Parish Council wished to form its own opinion – if and when a decision to proceed with the brief for Counsel is agreed – in order that the matter could be settled once and for all.

With regard to terminating discussions with Hyde, the Chairman said that the Solicitor's advice was that there was no need for the Parish Council to take this course of action – Tony requested that this advice be put in writing to the Church Road representatives.

David said that as a Trustee, and having studied all the available correspondence, he is not happy with the current situation - he pointed out that the Parish Council are not unanimous with regard to the sale of land at Church Road and that the Solicitor's replies seemed biased towards achieving affordable housing and did not take into account residents' requests for allotments. He asked about the initial brief to the Solicitor and whether this had been put into writing. The Chairman confirmed that he and the Clerk had

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met with the Solicitor at her office to discuss the situation verbally. The Clerk said that the Solicitor was in the process of preparing a written brief for the estimate for Counsel's advice. It was agreed that Parish Councillors, as Trustees, should have in-put into this brief to ensure impartiality and that the Clerk should request this from the Solicitor.

It was also pointed out that the Parish Council had voted in favour of asking the Solicitor to write to Hyde terminating discussions – it was thought that the P.C. could be viewed as giving preference to Hyde over other potential bidders and, therefore, in breach of the Charities Act. David asked that, as previously agreed, this should now be carried out – Fran seconded this. It was therefore unanimously agreed that the Clerk should arrange for a letter to be written to Hyde in order to protect the Trustees.

Concern was expressed regarding the cost of legal proceedings and a suggestion made that free advice should be sought from the Attorney General. Mark Taylor pointed out that Bedales School had had many dealings with the Charity Commission and found them very helpful – he urged the Parish Council to contact them.

Allotments – It was pointed out that the land in question is held in Trust for the purpose of providing allotments and that if residents of Steep require allotments then they should be provided.

Because of lateness of the hour, the Chairman declared Public Comment closed, in order to get through the other items on the Agenda.

10/05 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR COMMENT – No report was available.

10/06 COUNTY COUNCILLOR COMMENT – Vaughan Clarke had sent a detailed snow report - the cost to H.C.C. by 23rd December of £600,000 was hi-lighted.

Vaughan had also sent the necessary application forms for funding towards the duck-boarding to the Hangers Way footpath, as discussed at the last meeting. These were passed to Jenny Martin for action.

10/07 REPORT ON WEBSITE – Ray Street introduced himself as the Steep Webmaster for over two years. He explained that he intended to up-date and give the website a face-lift for 2010 to include more information and also to advertise local businesses. Recently he has been working more closely with the Newsletter Team who have been very supportive. His concern is that the website should become more independent and take a balanced view of activities in Steep. He then introduced Robin Hollington, an Information Security Consultant, who offered the opinion that the Parish Council would better meet its obligations under the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts if it separated the Parish Council website from Steep Village website and provided Parish Council e-mail facilities rather than private e-mail addresses. A number of questions were asked and explanations given as to why this was necessary and how it could be achieved. It was agreed that this would be discussed further at the next Parish Council Meeting. Ray undertook to help the Clerk come up with more detailed options.

10/08 OUTCOME OF THE MEETING WITH CHURCH ROAD RESIDENTS HELD ON 30TH NOVEMBER 2009 – It was agreed that this issue had been fairly well covered under Public Comment. Councillors discussed whether or not it would be appropriate to continue with plans for a public exhibition – concern was expressed that to proceed would be in breach of the Charities Act and it was pointed out that Hyde would not be prepared to bear costs without the Parish Council signing Heads of Terms.

10/09 PROGRESS WITH LEGAL ADVICE REGARDING THE SALE OF LAND AT CHURCH ROAD – The Clerk said that she has not received the estimate for Counsel from the Solicitor as yet. Councillors agreed that the Clerk should now also write to the Charity Commission asking whether it would be possible for the Trustees to meet with a representative to discuss the issues of the Trust.

10/10 LAND REGISTRATION – Following some initial investigations, it was recommended that Steep P.C. take up the special offer and go ahead with registering their land. Caro offered to follow this up with the Land Registry.

- 10/11 THE HANGERS WAY OAK TREE – The Chairman thanked everyone who had been involved in trying to save the oak tree, especially Drake Hocking, Steep's Tree Warden.

A letter from Ashford Hangers Preservation Committee and subsequent e-mail from Drake on this matter were discussed. Terry asked the Parish Council to consider writing to the EHDC Heritage Team to find out how the law could be changed to protect veteran trees in our Parish in the future, regardless of their state of decay. It was suggested that a letter should also be written to the Secretary of State and copied to EHDC – Drake to be asked to draft the letter.

- 10/12 THE SHIPWRIGHTS WAY – Caro said that she had attended a meeting with regard to this proposed multi-user way which will run from Alice Holt Forest through to Waterlooville. Current plans show the route going past The Harrow at Kettlebrook Cottages – concern was expressed that, although the route is a public right of way, the path is not wide enough. It was agreed that Steep P.C. should monitor this.

- 10/13 UP-DATE ON THE PARISH PLAN – An application for funding has been approved by EHDC and the group are now in the process of planning "conversation meetings" throughout the Village to be held in the next couple of months. Everyone in the Village will receive an invitation.

- 10/14 VILLAGE MAP BOARD – Jenny Martin said that she has received an e-mail stating that the Sign Shop will be in touch once the Board is ready for collection. The total cost of this is £610 and the Volunteer Day cost £420.

- 10/15 FEEDBACK WITH REGARD TO THE B.T. PHONE BOX – EHDC have written to Steep P.C. stating that B.T. wish to remove the phone box situated at Hayes Cottages. Fran said she has e-mailed them back to explain that we are currently negotiating with B.T. to refurbish the vandalised phone box, as the P.C. are interested in the adoption scheme. EHDC have now written back to B.T. to establish the current position.

- 10/16 DOG FOULING IN STEEP – This situation still requires monitoring as there have been further incidents. It was pointed out that there are "poop and scoop" bins at Bedales.

- 10/17 NEWSLETTER ARTICLES – Councillors were in agreement that names of who said what should be omitted from future Newsletter Articles – this was noted by the Clerk.

- 10/18 CHRISTMAS 2010 – A proposal received from John Owen, the Vicar, asking the P.C. to consider a contribution towards the cost of a Christmas celebration in 2010 was considered. The suggestion for a prominent Christmas tree, village carol singing and mulled wine was discussed. It was agreed that, in principle, the Parish Council would support the idea and suggested that the P.C.C. should put together a more detailed and costed plan.

- 10/19 REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Common and Hangers: Jim Hobson, Countryside Ranger, has asked whether there would be interest from the Parish in a further work day to tidy up the area North of Lutcombe Pond, as further grants are available for the next financial year. It was pointed out that during the walk on New Year's Day, several people had expressed a desire to see the area at the edge of the pond, up-stream from the dam to the wooden seat, improved. It was suggested that a Volunteer Day on Sunday, 7th March could be organised for the work at the edge of the pond. Funding could then be applied for in the new financial year to repair the post and rails to the North of the pond.

Footpaths: Nothing further to report

Roads: The Parish Council's thanks were expressed to Bedales who cleared Church Road and the Village Hall car park of snow, and also to Terry Cook and Simon Bridger who had been out and about clearing roads and helping cars stuck in the snow. Caro pointed out that Simon had done a huge amount to help people stranded on the A3. In general the roads are in very bad condition following the snow, but Caro has been advised that Steep and Steep Marsh will have to take their turn.

Village 30 Scheme – The Traffic Regulation Order is being prepared and the signage plan being designed
– David has asked for a copy.

Steep Village Hall and War Memorial: Terry said that he has spoken to Ken Claxton regarding an extension and he has agreed to draw up rough plans.

Caro said that she will liaise with Rosemary Lilley to ensure that the War Memorial is looking at its best for the Edward Thomas Walk on Sunday, 7th March.

10/20 UP-DATE ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Decisions made

<u>Planning Number</u>	<u>EHDC Deadline for Comments</u>	<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Parish Council Input</u>	<u>EHDC Decision</u>
26530/003	15.10.09	Detached dwelling and detached garage	Stoner Rise, Stoner Hill, Steep GU32 1AG	Objection	Refused
26264/008	5.11.09	Replacement Stables	Natterjacks, Elmwood Lane, Steep Marsh GU32 2BP	No Objection	Permission
34931/010	27.10.09	Prior Notification – Detached building for use as agricultural store	Land west of Gardners Farm, Pratts Lane, Steep Marsh GU32 2BJ	Comments (re. size)	Prior Approval Not Required
32131/004	11.11.09	Single Stable Block (revision to planning permission 32131/001)	Land at Lythe Lane, Steep	Objection	Permission
21382/013	12.11.09	Single Storey Extension to Rear and Detached Store Building following demolition of store	Steep Lawn Tennis Club, Church Road, Steep GU32 2DB	No Objection	Permission
50326/013	20.11.09	Conversion of redundant poultry house/store into tourist accommodation, porch to north elevation and two chimney stacks	Collyers, Ridge Common Lane, Steep GU32 1AX	No Objection	Permission
3429/015	2.12.09	Continued use of land as logging business	Ashford Farm, Ashford Lane, Steep GU32 2DL	No Objection	Permission

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Decisions New and Pending

52341	7.1.10	Single storey extension to rear	Four Seasons, The Island, Steep GU32 1AE	No objection
22339/004	7.1.10	Change of existing hip end and dormer window to simple barn end with window	The Dell, Durford Wood, London Road, Sheet, GU31 5AS	No Objection
28656/002	18.1.10	New porch, conservatory and extension to side, single garage and studio following demolition of double garage	The Dell, Ridge Common Lane, Stroud, Petersfield, GU32 1AX	
35044/008	19.1.10	Conversion of existing garage to habitable space	Rose Cottage, Rockpits Lane, Steep Marsh, Petersfield GU32 2BN	

10/21 FINANCE –

Budget – The proposed budget for 2010 had been circulated prior to the meeting – this was discussed, amended and agreed. The budget showed the precept remaining at £6,000.

Although it was noted that the deposit with H.C.C. is not currently earning interest, Councillors agreed that the money should remain where it is for the time being.

Payments were made in accordance to the budget.

Donations – Two requests for donations were considered – It was agreed that support should be given to the Petersfield Area Neighbourhood Watch, but a request from the Hampshire County Youth Band was declined on this occasion.

10/22 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

- Letter from HALC regarding possible withdrawal from NALC – Councillors discussed the implications of this and it was agreed to support HALC. The Clerk said that she would be interested in hearing NALC's point of view if a local meeting is arranged.

10/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Monday, 1st March 2010

The meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.

P. Coles
1/3/10