

DRAFT

CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Caroline Robinson

CLERK: Mrs. Jenny Hollington

MINUTES OF THE STEEP ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – THURSDAY, 10TH MAY 2012
AT STEEP VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Caroline Robinson (in the Chair) Terry Cook Nick Hurst
Jim MacDonald Graham Banks Jenny Martin
Simon Bridger

IN ATTENDANCE: Nicholas Drew (District Councillor)
Jenny Hollington (Clerk)

9 members of the public were present throughout the meeting

APOLOGIES: Vaughan Clarke (County Councillor), Cllr. Suzi Openshaw and Jeremy Young

APM12/01 **Minutes of the last Meeting** – The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19th May 2011 were agreed as an accurate record and signed accordingly.

APM12/02 **Guest Speakers** - Nick Heasman and Doug Jones of the South Downs National Park Authority gave an interesting and informative presentation which covered some of the history and the work which has been carried out during the first year of the South Downs National Park Authority. This was followed by a very useful question and answer session.

APM12/03 **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman thanked Nick and Doug for coming along to up-date Parishioners on the work of the South Downs National Park Authority during its first year and for their time in answering questions.

The Chairman said that it had been a very good year within the Village with much being achieved thanks to the hard work of volunteers – particular thanks are due this year to Tony Struthers, Peter Cruttenden and the Parish Plan Steering Group for the enormous amount of work they have put in on the Parish Plan - this is now nearing completion and publication is due soon. Also, Drake Hocking, our Tree Warden for the many hours he has devoted to Steep Common, obtaining grants, working with the school, encouraging the children and also for his work on the Landscape Assessment. Other volunteers who work steadily through the year include Ray Street who keeps the Village Website up to date, and the Newsletter Team, David Dobson, Celia Storey and Kay Bennett, and the delivery boys and girls! Not forgetting also, Rosemary Lilley who works so hard at the War Memorial and keeps it looking beautiful.

The two Jenny's - Cllr. Jenny Martin (Vice Chair) and Jenny Hollington (the Clerk) were also thanked for their help and support, as were all the Parish Councillors for their hard work on behalf of the Village and, of course, the District and County Councillors who attend the Parish Council meetings and help as much as possible with village concerns.

One of the other main achievements of the year has been the completion of the extension to the Village Hall - part funded by Defra/Leader and built by a local company - it provides much needed storage space for various village clubs as well as the new short mat bowls club. Thanks to Cllr. Terry Cook the newly adopted, cleaned and painted B.T. Phone Box is now in its new home outside the Village Hall and it is intended that this will be kitted out as an information centre during the summer.

Projects still underway include work being done to the Shipwrights Way (linking Alice Holt and Portsmouth) as it comes through the Village by the Harrow and the transfer of the land held in trust, from the Parish Council to the new Trustees, which is also almost complete – the governing document still has to be finalised but the new Trustees are looking forward to the challenge ahead of them.

Plans for celebrations to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee on Steep Common are well underway by a small sub-committee of Volunteers – a full programme of entertainment is being organised for Saturday, 2nd June and it is hoped that everyone will make the most of this opportunity to get together and make it a day to remember.

APM12/04 **County Councillor's Report**

Vaughan was unable to be present at the meeting, but his report was read out by the Chairman. The report drew attention to the fact that there has been no increase in the County Council's share of the Council Tax – for the 3rd year. The County Council has decided to deal with all necessary cuts over 2 years instead of 4 and this has allowed a more strategic approach and forced improvements to ways of working. There has been a great reduction in the labour force with 1400 job cuts in the year 2011/12 and a further reduction of 228 in the year 2012/13. There has been a lot of consolidation occurring with office property owned and used by the County Council. The 53 offices are being reduced to 15 to deliver £2m plus annual savings, plus £14m in capital costs which will be reinvested. Hampshire has also gained in its ability to sell services to other bodies - services, especially IT, are sold to Dorset, Gloucestershire, Surrey and Kent, plus the Police, Fire and Schools. External business is now worth about £100m.

The Olympics has provided good news for Hampshire with construction contracts worth £30 m – the largest contract going to Hillier's for 4,000 semi-mature trees for the Olympic Park worth about £1.5m.

The really cold weather has not been experienced this year - however, salt provision has been increased to 18,000 tonnes. A new salt barn for the Havant area is expected in 2012 and new blades have been fitted to a number of vehicles.

APM12/05 **Finance Report**

The Clerk gave a brief overview of the year's accounts. She said that as at 31st March 2012 there was a balance of £1,279.00 in the current account and £11,232 in the deposit account. The total income throughout the year had been £15,791 mainly made up of the precept (£9,000) and grants (£1,670 for Bridleway 16 and £3,302 for the Common). The total payments through the year had been £16,196 made up primarily of staff costs, election costs, and payments for the work to Steep Common and Bridleway 16. Donations totalling £1,260.00 had been given during the year for churchyard maintenance, the newsletter and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

APM12/06 **District Councillor's Report** (due to unforeseen circumstances, Nick was delayed and arrived too late for the meeting - this report was given after the close of the meeting but before the AGM)

Nick Drew hi-lighted the areas of work he has been involved in during his first term of Office which include:

- Member of EHDC Planning Committee – Through this Nick is able to gain an overview of the District. Nick thanked the Parish Council for their help in bringing planning concerns within the village to his attention promptly;
- Rural Broadband Programme - This project is intended to provide superfast broadband to 90% of the district by 2015 – residents are urged to register their interest at <https://www3.hants.gov.uk/broadband/broadband-signup.htm> - there have only been 5 registrations so far.
- Development Policy Panel – looking at development within East Hampshire over the next 15-20 years, Nick is able to influence correctly for this area
- District Plan – Under the Localism Act it is possible that Developer's will approach directly – Nick is able to help and give advice on Neighbourhood Planning.
- The Community Forum – the purpose of this Forum is to share ideas on issues in the District. Community Funding is also available through the Forums, although as yet no funding has been achieved for Steep
- Merging of Services – although the merging of the Rubbish Collection service went far from smoothly it did enable Nick to engage with residents!

Nick finished by urging parishioners that if they had any issue with EHDC to get in touch with him sooner rather than later. His contact details can be found on the website and in the monthly newsletter.

The meeting closed at 7.45 p.m. and refreshments were served.