

DRAFT

CHAIRMAN: Mrs. Caroline Robinson

CLERK: Mrs. Jenny Hollington

**MINUTES OF THE STEEP ANNUAL PARISH MEETING – TUESDAY, 7TH MAY 2013 AT 7.00 P.M.
AT STEEP VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Vaughan Clarke (County Councillor)
Nick Drew (District Councillor)
Chris Murray (Service Manager, Planning Development, EHDC)
Jenny Hollington (Clerk)

1 member of the public was present throughout the meeting

APOLOGIES: Charles Gibson, Suzi Openshaw,, Richard Lushington and Peter Cruttenden

APM13/01 **Minutes of the last Meeting** – The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 10th May 2012 were agreed as an accurate record and signed accordingly.

APM13/02 **Guest Speaker** – Chris Murray, Service Manager of Planning Development at EHDC gave a very interesting and useful overview of the planning system – the discussion covered all aspects of planning and included localism and planning for growth, how decisions are made, neighbourhood plans, the Joint Core Strategy, enforcement and affordable housing. The presentation slides are available from the Clerk and appended to the Minutes.

There was a short time for discussion and questions and answers. In response to specific questions about affordable housing, Chris explained that so far it has proved difficult to deliver rural affordable housing and therefore it is intended that future policy will be more flexible, to enable potential for sites to be specifically allocated with a mix of market and affordable housing on small village sites as an incentive. These sites will be identified through the Allocations Development Plan Document and working with local communities to meet identified local affordable housing needs.

He confirmed that his colleagues, Helen Cann or Kelly Hoskins, from EHDC would attend a future meeting of the Parish Council to give further information on specific Village sites for affordable housing and confirm numbers on the housing register for the parish.

APM13/03 **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman thanked Chris Murray for making time to explain the larger planning picture and issues as they affect more local ones within Steep. Steep P.C. will liaise with EHDC with regard to affordable housing in the coming months.

The Chairman's annual report highlighted the work carried out by the many willing volunteers to improve the quality of life within the village - of particular note this year is the excellent work of the Parish Plan Steering Group in completing and launching the Parish Plan via the exhibition at the Village Hall. A copy of the Plan has been issued free of charge to all households within the parish (and extra copies are available via the Clerk at a small cost of £5). The main thrust of Parish Council work has been to follow up on the results of the Plan via the working parties looking into specific issues – e.g. Roads and Traffic, Steep Common, Recreation – and to achieve the outcomes raised. These projects are on-going and regular up-dates will be available via P.C. Minutes and the Newsletter.

Particular mention was also made of the community project to up-grade the Church Footpath carried out by Bedales' staff and young people over the Badley weekend – this has made a tremendous difference to walkers from Tilmore to Church Road.

Rosemary Lilley and Drake Hocking (Tree Warden) continue their hard work at the War Memorial and Steep Common respectively. The Village Website has been up-graded by Jonathon Street and now has a fresher feel. Along with the monthly Village Newsletter, also run by volunteers and delivered free of charge to all houses in the parish, it continues to provide a constant source of current information.

Thanks were expressed to Vaughan Clarke and Nick Drew, the County and District Councillor respectively, who work so hard on our behalf, especially in respect of roads and planning, and all members of the Parish Council for their hard work and commitment to the Village.

This year a Planning Committee has been set up under the Chairmanship of Jim MacDonald, in order to cope with the 3-week consultation deadlines for the many planning applications which the Parish Council are required to review. Although currently a trial, it appears to be running well and takes the pressure off the Parish Council Meetings.

In April a very successful Parish Council Meeting took place in Steep Marsh with representatives of EHDC and HCC and approximately 40 members of the public in attendance to discuss roads, traffic and planning. The Parish Council intends to hold at least one meeting a year in the Marsh – appreciation was expressed to Clive and Mary Kennett who hosted the meeting in their barn on this occasion.

APM13/04 **County Councillor's Report** (the full report is attached to the Minutes)

Vaughan Clarke said that for the 4th year running there was to be NO increase in the County Council's share of the Council Tax this year, although the government cuts of 34% were a heavy blow. HCC decided to deal with all the cuts over 2 years instead of 4 and this has allowed a more strategic approach and created improved ways of working. For the second year running the County Council has beaten its target to reduce carbon emissions from its buildings and streetlights, saving some £1.5 million.

Roads continue to be a concern, especially in rural areas – extra money has been set aside for more highway teams to work on potholes.

Hampshire remains a good place to live – life expectancy for males is 80.1 and 82.9 for females and unemployment in the area is low.

APM13/05 **District Councillor's Report**

Nick Drew extended his congratulations to Vaughan on his recent re-election as County Councillor.

His report focussed on the Broadband Programme which is moving forward and he urged Steep Parish Council to continue to encourage residents to register to make it clear that the parish needs the service.

Planning issues continue to keep Nick engaged and he is happy to liaise with parishioners who have any concerns.

APM13/06 **Finance Report**

The Clerk reported that as at 31st March 2013 the balance in the Co-operative Current Account stood at £5,475.33 and the HCC Deposit Account stood at £3234.14, giving a total of £9,709.47. Total cash and investments are down slightly from 2012/13 but the VAT return for £958.43 has yet to be claimed and it is hoped that the deposit which has been paid for the noticeboards of £940 will be recouped from grant funding.

The precept for the year had remained at £9,000. During the year, small grant funding had been received from HCC for work to BOAT 31 (£2,175) – this had been match funded by the British Horse Society (£300), E. Meon Riding Club (£250) and EHHBAG (£1,100). Hampshire Highways are funding the remaining £750.00 (2013/14).EHDC have contributed £500 from the Community Forum towards two new Village Noticeboards and it is hoped that the remaining funding can be obtained from Developers Contributions in order to complete the project in 2013/14.

Donations totalling £1823 were made through the year including £500 towards publication of the Parish Plan, £605 towards the Village Newsletter and £218 towards churchyard maintenance, as well as £500 to the CAB.

This year there has also been additional tree work on Steep Common at a cost of £550 and a contribution of £500 had been made to the replacement of the much loved circular bench.

The complete accounts were available for parishioners to inspect if required.

APM13/07 **Public Forum** - There were no comments from members of the public and the meeting closed for refreshments at 7.45 p.m.