

**FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY 10th NOVEMBER 2014
7.30 PM IN THE STEYNING CENTRE**

Present: Cllrs Lloyd, Rogers, Ness-Collins, Toms, Alexander, Muggeridge, Hopkinson, Muncey, Willet, Trundle, Toomey, Marshall and Staines.

Members of the public: 41

Clerk: Rebecca Luckin

Cllr Lloyd advised that in the absence of Cllr Bowell, he would Chair the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order 1k)

Questions from the floor:

1. Q – Over the past three years, Steyning residents have had to read on websites, particularly FoMPF lately, regarding a leaflet that has caused concern to residents of Steyning. I feel it is about time that some of those claims are refuted, I feel that it is full of misinformation that may cause concern. I want to ask, is it something you can do to make a statement to all Steyning residents that can be expressed in the press? Residents are getting sick and tired of these lies that are being expressed.
A – A lot of what has been said has been countered by minutes. It is very difficult to counter dissembling distortions of the truth, but the truth is in the minutes. In view of this leaflet, some of it does need to be answered.
2. Q – When I was on the Council in the 1990's the builders left the Abbey Road Open Space because it was a flood plain, a covenant has been put on the area so it cannot be built on. The Parish Council had to sign a covenant to say that no building would ever occur and that will be in place in perpetuity. Question – regarding MPF the original skate park put there in 2000, which has never been graffitied, it should be taken into consideration, it could be upgraded legally?
A – It could be resurfaced under Permitted Development, the noise issue needs to be taken into consideration. Information regarding covenants is useful.
3. Q – In my experience a covenant does not prevent development.
A – I'm not a legal expert.

4. Q – Regarding item 12.1 land swap, could you open that part of the meeting, there are questions that people would like to ask?
A – This is a Parish Council meeting, we will not be opening it up to the public.
5. Q – Are there guidelines regarding opening the meeting at your discretion? This is how this Parish Council has developed. The public won't have any chance to discuss it.
A – That is an unfair statement, It's nothing about 'this parish council has developed', all we did was move question time, question time has always been question time, the public are not part of the Parish Council meeting, you have the opportunity to submit written questions, you have plenty of opportunity to voice your opinion. We are elected to make those decisions.
6. Q – Regarding land swap, why portray deregistering as administrative tidy up? On the audio recording of 8th Sept, Cllr Barling spoke regarding the Police Station being put on the Asset Register, and referred to clubs relocating, the land swap is not about the clubs re-locating, your solution creates a threat to the clubs. Will the Parish Council publish it's legal advice regarding VG status? Other Parish Council's rejoice in having VG status because they know it cannot be developed. If clubs lose VG status, they lose the highest protection. You can't say what will happen in the future.
A – We have not yet debated or discussed it, I hope your answer will be provided when item 12.1 is discussed.
7. Q – We are very grateful for the time to ask questions. If people talk about democracy, can we remember when there was a vote and the majority said yes? And we are still arguing about it?
A -The VG status has implications, which is why the application was withdrawn, we don't know where it will go.
8. Q – regarding land swap, will the whole MPF or just sections of it be subject? Will the play area still be ok?
A – Land swap was suggested by member of the public, we have issues, there are contrary views, but this council has received legal advice, we are the landowner, we can give permission to build or not to build, the Parish Council will be liable if it ends in court. The compromise was to come up with land swap.
9. Q – many people doubt that it will be limited to club area. Why is the skate park area not on the agenda?
A – You may believe it, but is not a fact.
10. Q – Have you taken into account the huge cost of moving these clubs?
A – We're not moving clubs, just proposing to swap the land the clubs stand on.
11. Q – Regarding land swap, during the 8th Sept meeting, he suggested that the Police Station was placed on a register and land swap took place, this leaves MPF unprotected, what is there to stop land being sold off for development?
A – We have not made any decisions.

Cllr Rogers explained that, following the Localism Act, a Community Asset Register gives the Parish Council the option to consider trying to purchase the asset. If the money cannot be raised, the asset will remain with the Police authority.

Written questions from members of the public:

1. A request from the Chairman of FoMPF that Steyning Parish Council should adopt a neutral stance to the application for a skate park at the Leisure Centre and therefore, in the event of the current appeal reaching an outcome in favour of the proposal, allowing SPC to co-operate in the proposal for a skate park at the Leisure Centre.

A – The Parish Council has already voted against any involvement in the leisure Centre site and any reversal of this decision would have to be debated in council at the appropriate time.

2. Regarding Abbey Road – concern expressed by a resident that a piece of open green in Abbey Road is going to be developed by the Parish Council – information obtained from a website that refers to ‘land grab by the Council’. Is there any truth in the rumours, can the Parish Council reassure residents in the area that nothing is planned?

A – This rumour is misleading and it is untrue. We would like to reassure the residents around Abbey Road and any other residents in Steyning who may have heard a similar rumour, that the council has not discussed or debated ANY development of the Abbey Road open space, particularly as it is part of a flood plain. The council will be debating later in the agenda the possibility of a land swap for land currently occupied by the clubs and their facilities, and if the land swap was agreed by council and the application was successful, the Abbey Road open space would become a Village Green.

3. Cllr. Lloyd advised that the letter was lengthy and the key points were:

Q - I am gravely concerned about what the SPC are proposing and so should the cricket club, bowls club, tennis club and all Steyning residents who clearly love the Memorial Playing Field just the way it is. The SPC should publish online the comprehensive legal advice that it has received on the MPF village green status, in full and without delay. If it does not do so Steyning residents will have no option but to reach their own conclusions.

The SPC will state that they have been forced into this land swap position by the village green status of the MPF but both the cricket club and tennis club already know that village green status has no impact on their right to improve/replace their buildings (Open Spaces legal document)..... which makes it absolutely clear that "small building work like football nets, rugby posts, tennis-courts, play equipment, seats, benches, shelters and even sports pavilions are all OK."

It is believed that the advice that the SPC have received is very likely to have been selective and partial and that it can be easily proved to be deficient.

A - Cllr Lloyd advised that the legal advice was given to the clubs in early 2013. Having taken this legal advice on the law regarding village greens, particularly regarding the clubs buildings and activities, the council as the landowner is responsible in ensuring that it, the clubs and people who use the village green, do so 'lawfully'. However, the council is aware that there are independent contrary views on what the clubs are able to do 'lawfully' but having taken advice the council will act on that advice, until such time as it changes. Not to do so would be irresponsible and any 'unlawful' development could result in the council being taken to court. The Open Green Spaces document that was mentioned, is purely advisory and it would be unwise for the council or, the clubs to solely rely on its *interpretation* of the law.

The council has already had meetings with the clubs and they know they must consult with the council, as landowner, for permission to re-build, or extend existing premises, so that the council can help them to achieve such changes 'lawfully'.

The advice we received was not selective or, partial, but covered all the necessary issues that the council believed affected the clubs. The council has also suggested to the clubs that they should seek independent legal advice where necessary. The council as the landowner, has the right to do all that is necessary to protect itself from costly legal challenges and seeking advice and acting on it, was the first step. There seems to be some misconception as to the intentions of the council. Apart from the skate-park proposal, that has been withdrawn, the council has not made any declaration of intent, at any council or committee meeting on developing any part of the village green for housing or, commercial purposes. To contend that "a few leading members of the SPC, not all, have a hidden agenda to demolish the Steyning Cricket Club in order to make way for car parking or housing/commercial development on that exact site and to thereby force the cricket club to base themselves in the Police Station purchased from the proceeds of the land sale" is completely unfounded and misleading, because the council is a corporate body and, any issue of importance, which the development of the MPF of this scale would certainly be, would be fully debated openly in council, and subject to public scrutiny and consultation.

The issue of the land swap will be dealt with under item 12.

The Meeting was convened at 7.55pm.

MINUTES

1. **APOLOGIES** – Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Bowell, Cllr Barling, PCSO Slaughter and Police Inspector Clare McKnight. Cllr Cockman would be late, due to a HDC meeting.
2. **DECLARATIONS** – Declarations of interest were received – Cllr Muncey and Cllr Willet, as members of the Cricket Club, declared personal Interests regarding 12.1.
Cllr Staines, as a nearby resident, declared a personal interest regarding 12.1.
3. **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**
Cllr Marshall **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Toms that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 13TH October 2014, be accepted as a true record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman. **Agreed.**
4. **MATTERS ARISING AND ACTIONS** – the Clerk advised that:
 - 4.1 The application to have the Police Station placed on the Community Asset Register was currently being processed by HDC.
 - 4.2 A letter had been sent to local groups advising of the Community Initiative Grant and other sources of funding available to local groups and organisations.
5. **POLICE / NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN REPORT / LAT REPORT**
 - 5.1 The Neighbourhood Warden's provided a report:

Anti-Social behaviour
We received a complaint about noise levels from a public house due to a live music event. We alerted staff to the resident's concerns and they agreed to turn down the sound levels. We advised the resident concerned to contact environmental Health officials should she wish to lodge a formal complaint. We did not receive any other such complaints regarding the event.

We have been monitoring various vehicles belonging to residents in Steyning and Upper Beeding that have been seen in suspicious circumstances across all three parishes. It is believed from the intelligence received that they may be involved in drug dealing. We are keeping logs of sightings and any suspicious activity and passing this information onto the Police .We have stepped up our patrols in the various hotspots.

The October school Half term was relatively quiet and we took part in operation Davos with Police and partners to ensure that Halloween Festivities went off peacefully. We received no calls regarding any associated anti-social behaviour. We have been informed that a young male has been driving his mother's vehicle without a licence. We have been monitoring the movements of this vehicle and the allegations have yet to be substantiated.

We have also received reports from officials at the Boarding House that students have witnessed some anti-social driving in the Fletchers Croft Car park in the early hours of the morning. We have asked that students keep any eye out and pass on any vehicle details to us. We have relayed this information to the Police.

We had the occasion to ask two small groups of teenagers to leave the Swing Park area at around 11.00pm on Friday Oct 18th where they had gathered in small groups.

Community

We attended a first meeting following a conference on loneliness and isolation. We are now assisting with social and recreational activities at Dingemans on a Thursday.

We are also undertaking an online NVQ Level 2 Mental Health Awareness certificate with Central Sussex College and hope to complete this by the end of November.

Wardens clarified that young people being asked to leave the MPF had not caused an offence. Wardens regularly undertake patrols of the MPF, in liaison with Police.

Cllr Rogers confirmed that she would set up a multi-agency meeting to investigate allegations of drug taking.

5.2 A Police report was provided:

Between Sunday 12th November and Friday 17th November, a property located on Roman Road in Steyning was burgled. It is believed that access was gained through a rear kitchen window of the property.. An investigation was conducted and a list of stolen property has been circulated to local shops & traders to raise awareness.

At approximately 23:00 hours on Sunday 19th October 2014, the front windscreens on five vehicles were smashed and vandalised in Steyning. The vehicles were parked on the following roads; Coxham Lane, Shooting Field & Middle Mead. There is no evidence to suggest that these vehicles were targeted and no property has been recorded stolen. Local police patrols have been stepped up at these locations in order to deter criminal activity.

On Sunday 09 November, I will be attending Steyning Parish Church to lay a wreath on behalf of Sussex Police for the Remembrance Sunday Service.

The Neighbourhood Wardens and I continue to patrol key areas in Steyning including, the Memorial Playing Fields and Fletchers Croft.

5.3 LAT Report – at the Finance & Community meeting of 4th November, Cllr Ness-Collins reported that LAT meetings had not been necessary since the Neighbourhood Wardens had been in place, a measure of their success.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

6.1 Cllr Muggeridge provided an update on the Neighbourhood Plan process. Steering Group members attended a visioning workshop and now have an improved understanding of the topographical and physical constraints of the area. Some assets of the parishes had been identified. A Public Meeting took place, with over 200 attending from all parishes., with a brief, but informative presentation and explanation of public involvement, followed by a lengthy Q&A session. To date, 50 volunteers have offered to assist by joining focus groups.

Further applications are welcome. The next step is to select steering group members and form focus groups, in order to arrange meetings. Cllr. Lloyd requested Cllr. Muggeridge to pass on his congratulations for a well-run Public Meeting. Agendas and Minutes for the Neighbourhood Plan process are available on the community21.org website.

7. COMMITTEE MINUTES, REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Planning – Minutes of 21st October and 4th November 2014.

Cllr Alexander provided a summary of recent actions.

Cllr Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Muggeridge that the minutes be accepted by Full Council. **Agreed.**

7.2 Highways and Lighting – Minutes of 28th October 2014

Cllr Alexander provided a summary of recent actions.

Cllr Rogers expressed concern that item 4.9 should not suggest that a decision has been made, but Councillors agreed minutes accurately represented the meeting.

Cllr Alexander **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Muggeridge that the minutes be accepted by Full Council. **Agreed.** The Chairman confirmed that when costs are obtained, the matter will go back to committee to be debated. Any decision to proceed with urinals would be discussed by Full Council

7.3 Finance and Community – Minutes of 4th November 2014

Cllr Lloyd provided a summary of the meeting of 7th October.

Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Toomey that the minutes be accepted by Full Council.

Cllr Lloyd provided a summary of recent actions on the meeting of 4th November 2014.

Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Toomey that the minutes be accepted by Full Council. **Agreed.** Cllr Muncey requested that there should be a reduction in the budget for 2015 / 16, since legal provision may not be required. Cllr Lloyd noted the request.

7.4 Steyning Centre Management Group

Following recent advice received from SALC, and in the interests of openness and transparency, the Steyning Centre Management Group had agreed at their meeting of 21st October to recommend to F&C and to Full Council that the Management Group should be restructured as a Committee.

Cllr Toms **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Ness-Collins that the Steyning Centre Management Group should become a Committee. **Agreed.**

7.5 Following Full Council agreement to item 7.4, Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Hopkinson that revised Terms of Reference for the Steyning Centre Committee be agreed by Full Council. **Agreed.**

Standing Orders will be re-drafted for consideration by Full Council. Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Toomey that Committee members should include Cllrs Toms, Staines, Howell, Marshall, Lloyd, Hopkinson and Trundle. **Agreed.**

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair will be the first items of business at their next meeting.

7.6 Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Alexander that Cllr Willet should join the Highways & Lighting and Finance & Community Committees. **Agreed.**

8. COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS PLANS

8.1 Councillors received the Five Parishes Community Plan and the Steyning District Community Business Action Plan produced by the Steyning & District Community Partnership. Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Willet that the plans be accepted. **Agreed.**

Councillors noted that of the 500 businesses registered in Steyning, some may only be registered with Steyning accountants, rather than being local to Steyning. Councillors noted a comment regarding the Steyning Centre. The Committee will explain and publicise what is offered at the Steyning Centre.

9. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

9.1 Cllr Rogers reported that the Isolation & Loneliness group were identifying gaps in provision. Details of groups will be sent to the Clerk. HDC are hosting a Dementia Friendly event on 14th November at 7.30pm supported by Alzheimer's Society.

9.2 Cllr Cockman reported that a Steyning based organisation, Charity at Home, is run by the Church. Some residents had contributed their winter heating allowance.

10. ITEMS FOR PRESS RELEASE

None for this meeting.

11. INFORMATION – the Clerk reported that:

11.1 Steyning Parish Council had received Notice of an Application to Appeal against a First Tier Tribunal decision. Consideration of the application has been stayed pending the decision of the Court of Appeal regarding the cases of Dransfield and Craven.

12. CLUBS ON VILLAGE GREEN 65

12.1 Councillors discussed the option of swapping land in Abbey Road with the land occupied by the clubhouses (and terraces), tennis courts and bowling green on the Memorial Playing Field in order to take them out of Village Green 65 and minimise potential future legal issues. Councillors referred to legal advice obtained by the Parish Council in January 2013 which informed that demolition and reconstruction of club buildings would not be acceptable, a new Tennis Club pavilion would not be allowed. Further advice was received in August 2014. Clubs had received independent and conflicting advice. The Parish Council must act upon their advice until such times as it changes. Councillors must be mindful to avoid being taken to court, since it would be costly. The options are:

- a) to do nothing, except request that clubs indemnify the Parish Council.
- b) to issue a protocol and enforce it.
- c) to de-register part of the Village Green and undertake a land swap.

After discussion Cllr Rogers **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Staines, that Councillors take a pause until full legal advice is received, ask clubs of their intentions with regard to renovating and/or rebuilding their club houses, and then revisit the proposal. **Agreed.**

Cllr Muggridge asked for the minutes to record that no decision had been made with regard to a land swap.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

13.1 None for this meeting.

14. MEETING DATES

14.1 **Date of next Full Council Meeting - 7.30pm 8th December 2014.**

14.2 **Date of Annual Meeting of the Council – following advice from NALC, that the first meeting cannot take place before Wednesday 13th May, Cllr Lloyd proposed, seconded by Cllr Alexander that the meeting would be rescheduled to Monday 18th May 2015. Agreed.**

Due to lack of time, further business was not discussed by Councillors. Nominations for the Millennium Award will be discussed at an Extraordinary meeting of 19th November 2014.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm

Signed: Date: 8th December 2014
Chairman