

# STEVENTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

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## MINUTES

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016, at 8pm in Steventon Village Hall.**

Contact: Rosina Forde, steventonpc@hotmail.com

**1. Present:**

As John Hamilton-Smith has been Steventon Parish Council's Chairman (now retired) for most of the current period 2015 - 2016, he was been invited to chair this Annual Parish Meeting and to deliver the Chairman's Report.

**a) Councillors Present:**

John Hamilton-Smith: Guest Chairman  
Jeff Dodgson: Treasurer  
Rosina Forde: Minute Taker  
Mike Everton-Browne

**b) Apologies for Absence: None**

**c) Members of the Public Present:**

There were thirty members of the public present.

The meeting opened at 8.05pm.

**2. Approval of Minutes:**

The accuracy of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**3. Matters Arising: None**

**4. Parish Council Chairman's Report for the Year 2015-2016 – John Hamilton Smith**

Over the past twelve months the Council have met on a bi-monthly basis together with a small number of hastily convened meetings to deal with issues of immediate importance: Mergers / HALC.

As usual our work has included the review of planning applications, Roads and Signage, Village maintenance issues, Tree and Ditch problems, Heavy Lorries.

Council Elections and Resignations have featured largely this year with three councillors, including myself, having to give up our work due to the pressures of caring for sick family members. Steps are now under way to recruit new councillors and we wish them every success

On behalf of our village and Steventon Parish Council I would like to record our sincere thanks to Mrs Anita Bown, Mr Jeffrey Dodgson and, of course our old friend Geoffrey Mann for their long and dedicated efforts to support this village and its parishioners. Also thank you to Mike Everton-Browne, who has served on the council for the last two years.

At this point I would like to thank our most recent member of the council, Mrs Rosina Forde for taking on the work of maintaining communications with the village and seeking to draw in new volunteers to replace those leaving.

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Steventon Parish Council also wish to record their thanks to the following Parishioners for their help and assistance during the year,

Mr Julian Pilcher for assisting in the auditing of our accounts.

Mrs Christine Smith for managing our Neighbourhood watch,

Mr Nick Harley and Jack for keeping the triangle grass cut and tidy.

Marilyn and Paul, Charlie and Rachael, Tim Sennitt and Jeff plus the cast of "Steventon goes West" for a successful show and keeping us all cheerful.

Future Issues: ----

During the last council year we were endeavouring to ease the problem of heavy Lorries using our tiny village roads. This has become a serious issue with damage being done to the verges and the water meters set into them. Also there has been an on-going problem with Lorries becoming stuck at the railway tunnels after which their reversing and turning manoeuvres have destroyed farm gates and road signs.

It is hoped that by continuing to keep pressure on to the roads and highways department adequate signage can be provided either to steer Lorries away from tunnels and areas where water meters are located or to ban them from these lanes altogether. A size limit on our lanes would certainly help to keep the excessively long and heavy Lorries away whilst still allowing our regular delivery vehicles their normal access.

John Smith.

## 5. Potholes

Jeff Dodgson raised the issue of potholes. He has been working hard trying to get them fixed. Jeff urged everyone to flood the Basingstoke District Borough Council (BDBC) with reports of potholes. There are two websites:

[www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com)

and the official site:

<http://roadenquiries.hants.gov.uk/roadproblems/highwaydefect/pothole.aspx>

Julian Pilcher requested that the potholes in Church Lane also be reported.

John explained that the BDBC had at the beginning of the year lent their Jet Packer, the machine used to fill potholes, to another area, but it was being returned this April.

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### 6. Finance Report – Jeff Dodgson

#### Steventon Parish Council

#### Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016

Outgoings	2015/16	2014/15
Tree Surgeon	350.00	
Insurance	265.00	265.00
Hall Hire	50.00	50.00
Steventon PCC (Church) annual grant	400.00	300.00
Audit Commission		78.00
Flowers (Marilyn Wright)	12.00	11.00
John Smith (Geoffrey Mann gift)	150.00	
Hall Hire (year in advance)	50.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1277.00</b>	<b>704.00</b>
<b>Income – cash paid in from Steventon Hall Committee towards Geoffrey Mann gift</b>	<b>75.00</b>	
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Cricket Club + Interest (previous year)	1055.38	1054.93
Current Account	908.21	512.14
Opening Bank	1964.19	1567.14
Cricket Club + Interest (current year)	1055.98	1055.38
B&BDC Grant	1100.00	1100.00
	2155.98	2667.59
Closing bank balances at year end	806.21	908.21

No assets were purchased during the year  
Insured value of bus shelter / tree seat is £7420

In addition to the Treasurers Account (balance £806.21) as at 31<sup>st</sup> March the Parish Council held £1055.98 in a Business Reserve Account in its name with NatWest received from the Steventon Cricket Club in accordance with its written instructions (copy on file) but briefly “at the Council’s discretion for the development of sport for the residents of Steventon..”

Bank = PC Account	806.21
Cricket Club Account	1055.98
<b>Total at Nat West</b>	<b>1862.19</b>

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## 7. Report from the Parish Hall Committee – Sally Bown

### Chairmans Report January 2016

Another fairly quiet time for the village hall, the nursery school has continued to be the main user of the hall, it seems that they have slightly reduced numbers of children but are still providing our main source of income.

Following the council change in policy on refuse collection and despite Anita's constant attempts to get the bin emptied we have now cancelled the contract. The nursery school now take away their own rubbish and hall users are asked to take away their own also.

We have had the hall repainted internally and done minor maintenance throughout the year. The committee donated £1000 to St Nicholas Church having received £950 from the village fete.

The hall again hosted the Harvest Supper, a spectacular Christmas Dinner for our older residents and Christmas drinks after the Carol service as well as meetings of the PCC, and the hall committee again organised the Bonfire Night (this covered its costs by the donations for the first time in a while). We hosted another popular 'Village Panto' in February last year and look forward to the forthcoming 'Steventon goes West' production which will no doubt fill the hall with laughter and hot air!

I would like to pass on my thanks to the entire committee for their continued work. The hall is a pivotal point in village life, we as a committee would welcome new members from the village as the current committee has been in place for well over 10 years.

## 8. Neighbourhood Watch Report 2015-2016 – Christine Smith

Once again I am pleased to report that there has been very little criminal activity in our law abiding and peaceful village. Most cases reported seem to be in Oakley, Overton and further afield. These are usually concerned with anti-social behaviour and thefts from houses, shops, gardens, outbuildings or cars. The only reported crime in Steventon has been the number plates stolen at night from a vehicle parked on a driveway.

Last year there were changes in our local rural policing and the boundaries.

We are now in the Basingstoke Rural South Neighbourhood, which was created to align with local ward boundaries for improved partnership working with the local authority. It is made up of Whitchurch, Overton/Laverstoke & Steventon, Oakley & North Waltham and Upton Grey & The Candovers wards.

Brian Adams is the police Inspector responsible for the Basingstoke and Deane rural police officers and PCSOs. (Police Community Support Officers)

Our area (Basingstoke Rural South) is now led by Sgt. Shaun Stinson

Our PCSO is Emma Page who has taken over this beat from Piers Ambler. The

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beat covers Overton, Steventon, Laverstoke and Freefolk.

I receive the Hampshire Alerts by email from the Hampshire Constabulary which report crimes in the county. Luckily most of these are not in our area.

Some advice form Neighbourhood Watch ----

Be sure to secure your out-buildings, such as sheds. Consider installing CCTV to look over your out-buildings, and try to avoid keeping valuables in external buildings.

Please report dangerous driving to Police. If it is safe and possible to do so, please try to obtain the registration number of the offending vehicle.

Theft from motor vehicles is particularly common at beauty spots or dog walking sites. Lock your vehicles and do not leave valuables on display.

Recently bicycle thefts have become common. Keep them out of sight or in a shed when on your property or padlocked when left in a public place.

Please continue to report any unusual incidents to the police, as if you do not report criminal activity it may be wrongly assumed that our area is crime free and is not in need of police resources.

Please report any suspicious people, vehicles or activities. The best way to report something is to call 101, the non-emergency number.

Contacting the police -  
Ring 999 to report and emergency  
Ring 101 to report a non-emergency

To contact Shaun Stinson, who covers our area of Basingstoke South  
Ring 01256405323  
Email - [shaun.stinson@hampshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:shaun.stinson@hampshire.pnn.police.uk)

To contact PCSO 16173 Emma PAGE - Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) –  
Overton, Laverstoke, Freefolk and Steventon  
Email: [emma.page@hampshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:emma.page@hampshire.pnn.police.uk)  
Website: [www.hampshire.police.uk](http://www.hampshire.police.uk)  
Address: Tadley Police Station, Mulfords Hill, Tadley, Hampshire, RG26 3HZ  
Tel: 101 Internal: 625-147  
Email - [Basingstoke.Rural.Police@hampshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Basingstoke.Rural.Police@hampshire.pnn.police.uk)

Christine Smith (Neighbourhood Watch)

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## 9. Co-option of New Parish Councillors

Three new Parish Councillors were co-opted onto the council to fill the recent vacancies.

Harriet Aldridge:

Proposer: Timothy Petransky. Seconder: Timothy Sennitt.

Tony Carter:

Proposer: Susan Carter. Seconder: Thomas Sanderson.

Peter Lees:

Proposer: Julian Pilcher. Seconder: Caroline Lees.

The new Councillors stood up and briefly introduced themselves to the meeting. Many congratulations to them and good luck with their future work on the Steventon Parish Council.

Julian Pilcher thanked the retiring Parish Councillors: John served 25 years, more recently as Chairman; Anita served 6 years, more recently as Secretary; Jeff served 20 years, more recently as Treasurer. Geoff Mann who had now left the village was also thanked. Thanks and much gratitude was expressed for all their hard work

## 10. Why things are changing for Parish Councils - Steven Lugg

Steven Lugg, Chief Executive Officer of the Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC), gave a talk on why things are changing for Parish Councils. He described how conditions had changed for the sector, described the current challenges, and challenged the village to review how it wishes its parish council to run in the future to make it resilient and able to respond to needs.

Steven talked about the following topics.

There are 263 parishes in Hampshire, and Steventon is not the smallest; there are six other small parishes in the Test Valley. Twenty one parishes hold Parish Meetings rather than Parish Council Meetings. The largest parish in Hampshire is Andover with thirty thousand people.

At HALC there is one full time officer, Steven Lugg, and six part time officers with different skills and expertise. HALC has 93-94% full membership of the Hampshire parish councils.

Steven told us that it is a time of change for parish councils, and decisions need to be made on how to take the village forward. Local authorities were initially formed in 1894, with most of the current laws coming from the 1972 Local Government Act. Very little changed until 2008/2010 when authorities were given more power and duties. Three things happened: The financial crash in 2008 (which caused many problems), the Localism Act in 2010/2011, and Devolution. One effect of the financial crash is that we are reluctant to pay more tax, which is approximately 36-38% of GDP.

The cuts that government are making mean that County and District Borough budgets are shrinking. There are statutory duties and discretionary, but in the future there won't be enough money for the discretionary duties. The large items that the County currently spends money on are adult social care (as we are living longer), roads and schools. The financial trajectory for the next ten years, with a budget of over one billion pounds, means that the money will be spent more and more on

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adult social care, and there will be little money for roads and schools.

Fifty years ago, the Hampshire County Council looked after discretionary items like village halls and footpaths, but the budget now is only £30 per village. There is less money now for fixing potholes and signage. The budget for waste disposal is shrinking. This exemplifies what parish councils need to be doing. If a substantial spend is required in the village then it will need to come from a local tax raising body. Steventon Parish Council currently chooses not to raise a precept; this needs to be a community discussion.

For the next 10-15 years we need to think about what we want to do. If councillors take on most of the work at no cost to the village, then this will probably become non-sustainable in the future as more regulations, legislation and duties are introduced. A parish councillor's main duty is as a risk manager.

The Basingstoke District Borough Council is very generous. They are currently the only borough in Hampshire that gives grants to parish councils and pay for elections. This cannot be guaranteed for the future. Steventon could build capacity by either raising a precept or by grouping with another village to work with. We would then have a bigger pot of money and more resources. Or we could carry on as we are, but Steven does not recommend it in the long run due to the reduced resources in the County and District Borough. We have the powers to take the future into our own hands.

A very lively debate took place during and after this session. Topics covered:

- Whether our past, audited and accepted accounts strictly followed the law?
- Do we need to raise a precept? This would pay for a Clerk and for large projects in the village.
- Does a small village like Steventon need a Clerk to deliver governance and services? Will we struggle to be lawful without one? From the perspective of a small village like ours, does it matter? Sensible people can do things in a sensible way with proper discussion.
- Instead of raising a precept, the Parish Council is allowed to raise funds for projects (as long as it does not make a profit).
- Can the chairman be the Proper Officer (usually the role of the Clerk)? A role requiring the Officer to be impartial, objective and oversee regulation and governance of the parish council.
- Can the Proper Officer be personally liable? No, unless negligent or dishonest, but there is a corporate risk.
- Do we need a Parish Council at all or could we just have Parish Meetings? Parish Meetings do very little, but Parish Councils have duties like reviewing planning applications and looking after footpaths etc.
- What are the sanctions for not following the law? We could end up spending a lot of time on issues raised by disgruntled parishioners, for example regarding Freedom of Information or a planning application. Sanctions would not be expected for parish councils with a budget of less than twenty five thousand pounds.
- A new Transparency law was introduced last year requiring that certain information must be made available on a website, strictly speaking a Parish Council specific website.

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## 11. Next Meeting

The next meeting, the Annual General Meeting, will be the first meeting of the new Steventon Parish Council. We will be choosing a Chairman, Financial Officer and will be assigning other roles and responsibilities.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_