

## South Downs Local Plan Examination - Save our Village Green Position Statement

## Introduction

1. We do not need to repeat our fundamental concerns with the Local Plan, its lack of evidence to support the strategy and selection of sites with particular regard to Steep. Our points below relate to matters that have emerged since our original submissions to the Regulation 19 Local Plan which we consider for the Inspector to be aware when considering matters relating to Steep.

## Steep Parish Council

2. Unfortunately, it has come to our attention that Steep Parish Council has been acted with a conflict of interest in the Local Plan process and in its representations to the Local Plan. This has further highlighted the shortcomings and flawed approach of SDNPA's own Local Plan making process.
3. In Steep Parish Council's representations to the Regulation 19 Plan (see Representor ID 53, comment # 367 submitted 14 November 2017) the PC states that "The Trustees of the Steep War Memorial Village Club (the charity which is responsible for the Village Hall) also support this change." What they failed to mention is that the Steep Parish Council *is* the only Trustee of the Steep War Memorial Village Club. This has been confirmed by checking Charities Commission records.

Data for financial year ending 05 April 2017

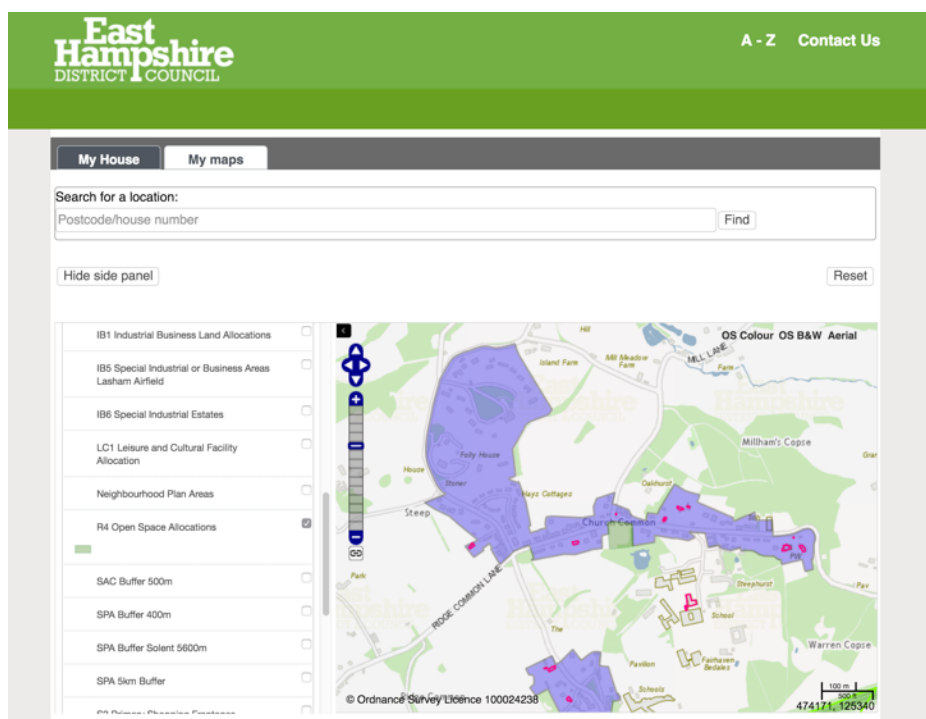
**The Steep War Memorial Village Club**

Overview	Financials	Documents	People	Operations						
<div><div>1</div><div>Trustees</div></div> <div><div>Trustee board</div><table><tr><th>Trustee</th><th>Other trusteeships</th><th>Charity status</th></tr><tr><td>Steep Parish Council</td><td>None on record</td><td></td></tr></table></div>					Trustee	Other trusteeships	Charity status	Steep Parish Council	None on record	
Trustee	Other trusteeships	Charity status								
Steep Parish Council	None on record									

4. This is misleading given that the PC is effectively in control of part of the site on land south of Church Road.
5. As the Inspector will be aware, the only way that potential sites for consideration as Local Green Spaces could be put forward was either through a Neighbourhood Plan or where an NDP is not being prepared, it must have been put forward by the Parish Council. Steep is not currently in the process of preparing a NDP therefore the only opportunity for candidate Local Green Spaces to be considered by SDNPA was through sites being put forward by Steep Parish Council.
6. As we understand it, the request for potential Local Green Spaces was sent to Steep Parish Council by SDNPA and the PC did not put forward any sites for consideration. There was no consultation by SDNPA or the PC on this matter, nor was there any evidence prepared by either organisation to consider what the green space needs of

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the village were. Given that Local Green Spaces are the only potential green space designation in the Local Plan this is a complete failing of the Local Plan to consider or make adequate provision for green space in the village. Throughout this process there was never a mention in the Council's SHLAA or other evidence that the site proposed for a housing allocation was currently designated as a an 'Open Space / Village Green' in currently adopted Development Plan.



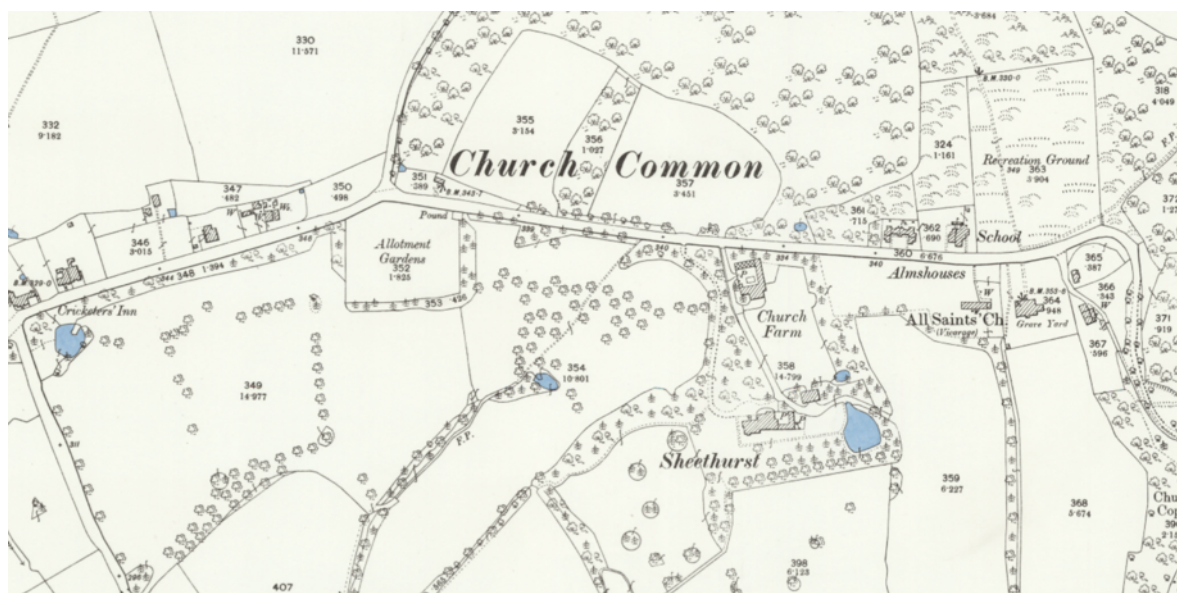
7. The site in question meets all of the criteria for being designated as a Local Green Space as set out in NPPF Paragraph 77 (2012):

*“The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:*

- *where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- *where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- *where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land*

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The following historic maps clearly show the historical significance of the site and its historic cultural heritage use as Allotment gardens for the village.



8. Given that the Parish Council had a conflict of interest it clearly would not have put forward the site in question as a Local Green Space. As a result, there are no Local Green Spaces proposed in Steep.
9. Please see the plan below which maps the walking distances from the two public open spaces in Steep. The only designated open space in the adopted Local Plan is the site in question south of Church Road.

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10. The following excerpt from the Sites and Settlements: Route Map for housing allocations (April 2018) indicates landscape sensitivity on the site and how development here could cause potential harm to the character and settlement pattern of Steep. Steep is a linear village with built form fronting Church Rd along its entirety. To accommodate access, a number of dwellings and associated parking, development of this size and number here would alter forever the historic settlement pattern of Steep and result in a layout which is not distinctive to the character of the village.
11. The density that the policy supports would also impact on the existing historic landscape features: hedges, trees and field pattern. The boundary trees along the east are likely to be constrained and could result in the loss of boundary trees to accommodate development.
12. The established native hedgerow along the boundary of Church Road would have to be removed to allow for access to the development and/ or individual dwellings.
13. The existing biodiverse rich ditch/water course running (source- Ashford Hangers) north south along the site would inevitably be removed to accommodate access into the site and result in unacceptable hardstanding.



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4.21 Steep

4.21.1 One housing allocation site is proposed in Steep: Land South of Church Road and Mill Lane (Policy SD93).

4.21.2 The site has medium landscape sensitivity for development of any density or depth owing to the surrounding settlement character which should be conserved. The existing boundary trees along the eastern boundary are likely to be a constraint to development and would need to be assessed carefully to avoid overspill effects into the field adjacent and loss of boundary trees affecting this area as well. However the site is considered suitable for a carefully-designed residential development to help meet the aspirations of the Parish Council in respect of local needs.

Alternative Site in Steep

4.21.3 One alternative site was identified in the SHLAA in Steep, Land East of Hays Cottages (SHLAA Ref: EA094), which is not suitable. The site has high landscape sensitivity, is exposed to views, in a local beauty spot and poorly related to the settlement pattern and sensitive historic fieldscape pattern. The site does not relate well to the existing settlement pattern and as such development on the site would have a potential adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape.

Local view

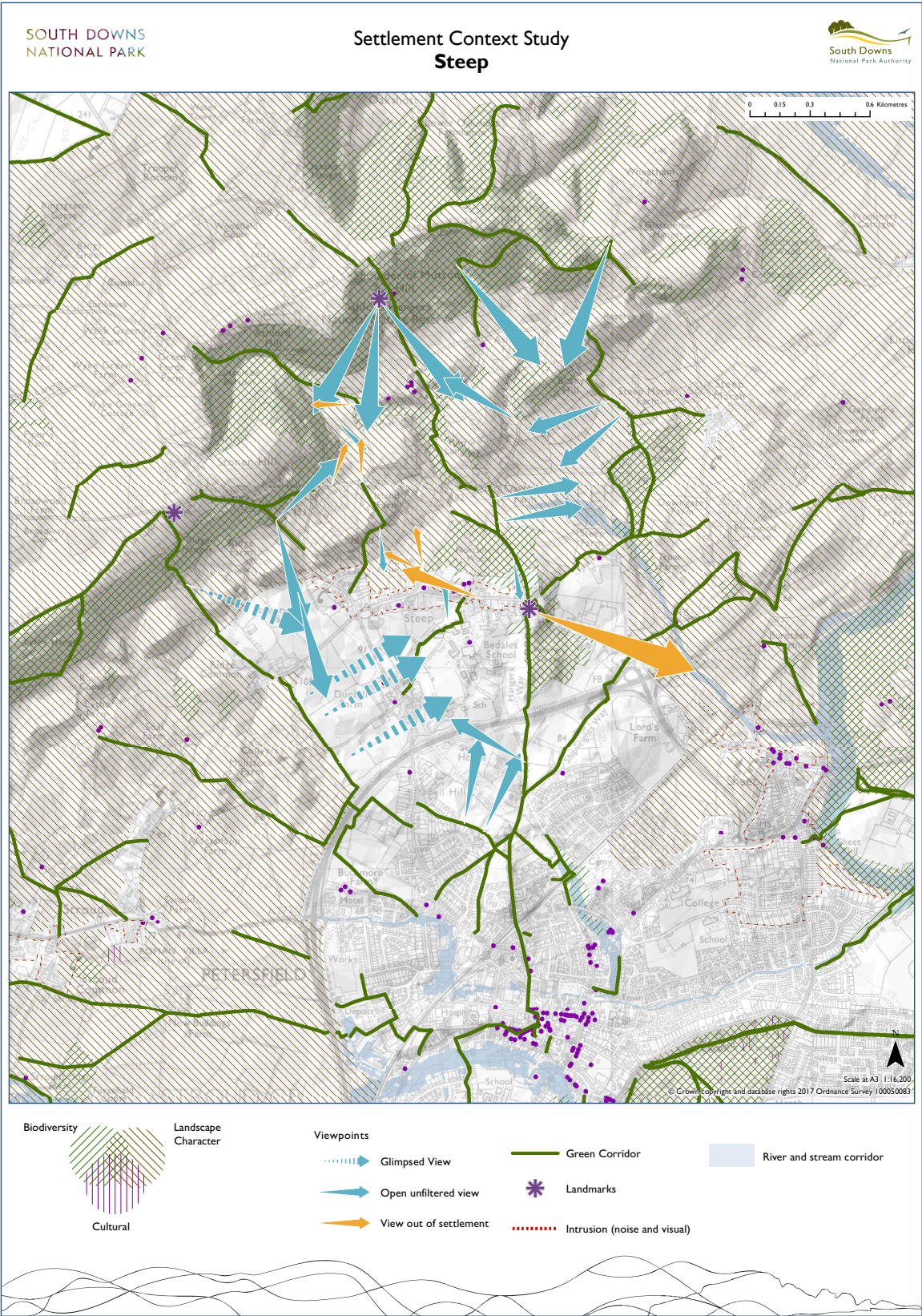
4.21.4 Steep Parish Council has welcomed the allocation as the better of available alternatives for modest development in Steep. However a collective of local individuals has objected to the allocation, citing the Parish Plan, and also the current designation in the East Hampshire Local Plan Second Review 2006 (Saved Policies) as an 'open space/village green'.

14. The following assessment Appendix C: summary site assessments for the SHLAA 2016 shows the total number of dwellings for both the excluded EA152 Land adj. Steep Village Hall and EA153 Land on south side of Church Road close to junction with Mill Lane (which now together form SD93) has potential for 8 dwellings. The number allocated in the policy 8-12 dwellings is therefore wholly unjustified.

Site Ref	Site Address	Settlement	Parish	Recommendation	Total Yield	0-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	Rejected/Excluded Reason
<b>Settlement Steep</b>									
EA094	Land east of Hays Cottages	Steep	Steep	Rejected	0	0	0	0	The site does not relate well to the existing settlement pattern and development on the site would have a potential adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape.
EA150	Bedales School	Steep	Petersfield	Excluded	0	0	0	0	Whilst 10-12 homes are proposed, it is likely that these would be dispersed across the whole grounds of Bedales School and would therefore count as windfall development of below 5 dwellings.
EA152	Land adj. Steep Village Hall	Steep	Petersfield	Excluded	0	0	0	0	The site is not considered to have capacity to yield 5 or more dwellings.
EA153	Land on south side of Church Road close to junction with Mill Lane	Steep	Petersfield	Has Potential	8	8	0	0	Not applicable
<b>Total by Settlement</b>					<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

15. The Settlement Context Study for Steep (2017) shows that there are significant open and unfiltered views out of the site and views out of the settlement which may be obstructed by future development. It also shows significant green infrastructure on the eastern edge of the site, which could also be compromised by development.

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## Open Space Sports and recreation study by East Hants District Council:

Typology	Sub Area 1: Horndean	Sub Area 2: Petersfield	Sub Area 3: Alton	Sub Area 4: Whitehill and Bramshott & Liphook
<b>Natural Greenspace</b>	Good access except in Clanfield where there is poor provision.	There are areas of natural greenspace around the area (located within Liss and Buriton), this includes MOD land which is accessible for the majority of the time.  Buriton and Liss also have identified areas of accessible natural greenspace.  There is also Queen Elizabeth Country Park.	Although this area contains the main settlement of Alton, in general, this is a very rural part of the District with access to countryside via footpaths and bridleways.	All the parishes within the area have access to natural greenspace.
<b>Allotments</b>	Access limited to the south of the settlement areas in Rowlands Castle and Horndean	There is provision in Petersfield, East Meon, <b>Steep</b> and Liss.	Provision identified in Alton, Wield and Bentley.	All the parishes have access to allotments.

Typology	Sub Area 1: Horndean	Sub Area 2: Petersfield	Sub Area 3: Alton	Sub Area 4: Whitehill and Bramshott & Liphook
<b>Children and young people's provision</b>	Horndean and Rowlands Castle have access to children and young people's provision. Clanfield only has access to children's provision.	No provision has been identified in Stroud, Langrish or Colemore. The rest of the parishes have access to play facilities, but only Petersfield, Buriton and Froxfield have some provision for young people.	There is access in most of the parishes, however, no provision was identified in East Tisted, Kingsley, Newton Valence and Shalden.	All the parishes within the sub area have access to equipped play provision. There is access to a facility for young people in Bramshott & Liphook, Whitehill, Grayshott and Headley.
<b>Informal Open Space</b>	Good access in Rowlands Castle and Horndean,  Access limited to the south of the area in Clanfield.	There is good access within Petersfield and Liss. The other parishes lack provision, however, are generally well served by a more formal space such as a recreation ground.  <b>Steep</b> and Stroud, where there is no access to a formal space, does have access to informal space.	There is access within most of the parishes with the exception of Worldham, Binsted, Chawton, Farringdon, Froyle, Lasham, Ropley, Shalden.	All parishes within the area have access to informal open space.

Table 7.1.1 Accessibility of Open Space by Sub Area

Typology	Sub Area 1: Horndean and surrounding area	Sub Area 2: Petersfield and surrounding area	Sub Area 3: Alton and surrounding area	Sub Area 4: Whitehill and Bramshott & Liphook and surrounding area
<b>Parks, Sports &amp; Recreation Grounds</b>	There is good access in Horndean which also has provision for football and cricket.  Good access in Rowlands Castle including provision for football, cricket and tennis.  Access in Clanfield is restricted to the north of the settlement area, where there is provision for football and cricket.	Most of the parishes and the town of Petersfield have good access to a facility, however, no provision has been identified in Colemore, Langrish, <b>Steep</b> and Stroud. The following observations are made in relation to the provision of outdoor sports facilities:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of provision is in Petersfield, which has access to rugby, football, tennis, and cricket.</li> <li>There is also access to football and cricket in Buriton, East Meon, Froxfield and Liss.</li> <li>Hawkey has provision for cricket.</li> </ul> <p>There are a number of private sports clubs across the area (including football, cricket and tennis). These generally have limited public access, but are an important local facility.</p>	There is access to a facility across most of the parishes, and towns with the exception of West Tisted, East Tisted, Farringdon, Kingsley and Newton Valence.  The majority of outdoor sports provision is located in Alton, which has access to a pool, football, cricket and tennis.  There is also football and cricket at Binsted, East Tisted, Four Marks, Medstead, Ropley and Selborne, and additional football in Beech and Froyle.  There are a number of outdoor sports facilities with limited public access, including private sports grounds and schools.	All the parishes and towns within the sub area have access to a facility. Provision for outdoor sport varies, with Bramshott & Liphook, Grayshott and Lindford all having access to football, cricket and tennis.  Headley has access to football,  Whitehill has access to rugby and football.  There are also a number of sites within the sub area which have provision for sport, but with limited public access, these have the potential to provide significant community benefit (e.g. Mill Chase Community School).

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16. In their representation, the Steep Parish Council also states that the site “has long been recognised as one of the better potential areas for modest development in Steep” this is at best disingenuous. The Church Road location has been a source of significant controversy in the village for more than 15 years. There has been no public consultation on changing its current status within the Local Plan from ‘Informal Open Space/ Village Green to one that allows for the development of 8-12 commercial houses. Furthermore, in the most recent Steep Parish Plan (2012), adopted by the Steep Parish Council, a ‘range of uses’ was considered, with no one selected. Indeed, one option was “leaving it as it is!”. See list below:

- *a building or covered space for people to meet which could provide refreshments;*
- *the opportunity to sell local produce;*
- *a National Park visitor centre/information point.*
- *Additional car parking;*
- *gardening allotments;*
- *housing;*
- *an orchard;*
- *a village shop/post office;*
- *a village green and*
- *leaving it as it is!*

Finally, the Steep Parish Plan records “a wish by many residents to create a more effective centre to the village”, for the land South of Church Road, which would be for “community benefit”.

Thomas Harding  
Save Our Village Green  
30 November 2018