

The Charity Commission concluded that the allotments in Steep were held on trust by Steep Parish Council, and, accordingly, Steep Parish Council was at all material times until the 2 July 2012 trustee of those allotments. Steep Parish Council was at all material times and remains trustee of the Steep Village War Memorial Club (2th Memorial Land"). Further, Steep Parish Council was at all material times and remains the Allotment Authority under the Allotment Acts.

Our first letter seeking documents from the Steep Parish Council was that dated 10 January 2020. The results of that and subsequent requests can be usefully summarised as follows:

Date of letter	Our request	Trustee's reply	SPC saying		
10 January 2020	Disclosure under <i>Schmidt v Rosewood</i> – asking for documents to be produced in advance of SPC meeting of 21 January 2020.	20 January 2020 (one day before SPC meeting).	This amounts to a request under FOI and will be treated accordingly and in 15 days from 20 January 2020		
27 January 2020	You have misunderstood the basis of our request. Disclosure under <i>Schmidt v Rosewood</i> is sought.	5 February 2020	We will treat the request as one under FOI.		
		23 December 2020	Denied your client is a beneficiary since he is not poor.		
29 January 2020 (error 2021)	23 December 2019, you stated that our client was not a beneficiary of the trust as he was not poor.				
7 February 2020	Entitled to documents but without prejudice pays trustees for documents.	11 February 2020.	All Minutes of Parish Council Meetings and Sub-Committees will be made available via an archive on the Steep Parish Council website. Paper copies of the Minutes 2000-2003 will be deposited at the Hampshire Records Office in the coming weeks.		Documents produced under FOI: materially redacted and incomplete. Not one mention of Venables.
6 March 2020	Please provide copies of the paper copies of the Minutes 2000 – 2003 and	11 March 2020			

	(a) The register of allotments from 1947; (b) The allotment rent ledger from 1962; and (c) The plans of the allotments from 1895;			
		30 March 2020	the allotment ledgers currently in the Clerk's office are large, bulky items and not easy to photocopy - these will therefore be deposited at the Hampshire Records Office as soon as it is appropriate, given the current health crisis. Our client has paper copies of typewritten minutes from: April 1978-September 1995, handwritten minutes of the Annual Parish Assemblies from 1985-19996 and typewritten minutes of the Annual Parish Assemblies from 1997-2002 and the AGM of 2002. Our client does not appear to have any other Minutes from 2000-2003.	
1 May 2020	All documents at HRO including the larger documents are routinely copied by staff and public alike by camera. Please use that method. "... our client used a camera in order to copy the minutes of the Parish Council which your clients had deposited with the Record Office and we ask you to do the same in respect of	15 March 2020 (sic) believed to be 15 May 2020	No. These documents will be deposited with the Records Office once it re-opens for business.	It is believed that the HRO was open on about 4/7/2020 for reorganisation and open to the public from about 20/7/2020 until 1 November. It was open thereafter for a short time

	the minutes referred to in your letter".			until 23 December.
24 November 2020	<p>Disclosure under Schmidt v Rosewood for documents relating to:</p> <p>a. The Memorial Land;</p> <p>b. Meeting(s) held by you as trustees;</p> <p>c. Meeting(s) held by you or any Councillor(s) or officer(s) of yours (including meeting(s) with any other person who is not a Councillor or Officer) relating to the Memorial Land;</p> <p>d. Any and all communications which you had (either severally or jointly) with the Charity Commission concerning the Memorial Land, including any and all communications with the Charity Commission concerning the trustee's recent wish to be given power to sell part of the trust assets; and</p> <p>e. Any and all such documents which are in the control, possession or custody of agents of you, including but not limited to Mr Robert Venables.</p>	10 December 2020; received 15 December 2020.	<p>[T]he trustees do not accept that beneficiaries of a trust are entitled to disclosure of trust documents "as of right". Their understanding is that it is at the trustees' discretion whether to disclose documents, taking account of factors including whether there is a legitimate expectation on whether those documents should be disclosed and whether the beneficiaries' interest is sufficient to warrant the disclosure.</p> <p>...</p> <p>... the trustees are committed to working with and for the residents of Steep. They welcome residents' interest in the work of the trust and want to operate transparently. The trustees meet regularly, and all business of the trust is reported to these meetings. The minutes of trustee meetings therefore give a good account of the trust's activities, and the trustees have agreed to provide your client with minutes from the last 3 years' meetings.</p>	
8 February 2021	I ask for an internal review of your Council's response to the request made for the following			

	documents to be provided to me: (a) The registers of allotments from 1947; (b) The allotment rent ledger from 1962; (c) The plans of the allotments from 1895.				
10 February 2021	I ask for an internal review of your Council's response to the request made by letter dated 24 November 2020.				
11 February 2021	Request by letter dated 10 February 2021 asking for documents referred to in the Minutes of the Trustees (Steep Parish Council). The material which you gave me on 5 February 2021 is heavily redacted. I have already requested you to conduct an internal review which includes the redaction. Pages of Minutes are missing.				
26 May 2021	Request by email asking: "Under cover of an undated letter, you disclosed the minutes of Steep Parish Council as corporate trustee of the Steep Village War Memorial Club but chose to limit disclosure to the minutes only for the "past 3 years". Please provide a copy of all minutes for all the preceding years.				