



ALTON TOWN COUNCIL USE OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES (2021)

Over the last 12 months and most likely related to the increased emphasis on meeting outdoors during the covid-19 pandemic, Alton Town Council has been inundated with requests from people and businesses wishing to use our public open spaces for a variety of purposes. Given that this trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future, the Council has decided that these activities need to be regularised.

In conformity with the climate change emergency in 2019 and the commitment by Alton Town Council to create a carbon neutral estate by 2030, this policy document reflects that pledge, whilst seeking to support and encourage activities which improve mental wellbeing and physical exercise.

In addition, the Town Council is also committed to supporting businesses in our Town Centre, seeking to encourage people to use their High Street through the Shop Local campaign to help counteract the sharp contraction in the retail sector experienced during 2020 and the first part of 2021.

Activities which in themselves are seen as “kind” to the environment will be promoted on our open spaces, using natural sources of energy and reducing pollution and littering.

Outdoor classes.

The Council will permit, free of charge across all open spaces (except those managed through the use of livestock i.e Northanger) commercial and free to attend classes of either physical activity or mindfulness. These classes can have a maximum attendance of 20 people. Organisers are responsible for their participants and should ensure they have adequate public liability insurance for their activity. No loud music will be permitted and organisers should ensure that they do not obstruct pathways or cause nuisance to other open space users. When using sports pitches (i.e Jubilee Fields and Anstey Park) organisers must ensure they do not encroach onto marked areas or interfere with football, cricket, rugby or other organised sports taking place.

BBQs and Camp Fires

The Council continues to ban the use of BBQs and camp fires across all sites. Disposable BBQs and naked flames are a fire hazard, charcoal barbeques add to global warming and the littering associated with BBQs and camp fires remains a concern.

Drones

The Council will continue to consider approval of applications for the use of drones on a case-by-case basis. All applicants must demonstrate adherence to current Civil Aviation Authority Regulations in respect of legal and safe deployment of unmanned aircraft and will be required to produce their Flyer ID and Operator ID for any drone over 250g with or without a camera and all drones under 250g with a camera. For more information go to:

<https://www.caa.co.uk/consumers/unmanned-aircraft-and-drones/>

Metal Detecting

The Council will continue to issue upon application, free of charge, annual metal detecting licences for the open spaces located at Windmill Hill, Flood Meadows and King’s Pond.

Street Vendors

The Council will permit the use of the Town Council’s open spaces by street vendors where they can demonstrate that they are carbon neutral. This means, where vehicles or trailers are used for trading purposes, they must not use generators, gas stoves/ovens or keep their engines running (idling). Where vendors are permitted to trade, they will be charged a flat rate of £50 per week regardless of trading times, which will be limited to between the hours of 9am and 6pm each day. Vendors are requested to trade from hardstanding areas wherever possible to avoid damage to

Draft Version 1 22nd February 2021 for submission to Policy and Resources Committee with effect from 1st April 2021



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grass but must ensure they do not obstruct the use of parking bays or footways. All litter associated with their trade must be removed from site otherwise a charge of £50 will be made for every occasion when the Town Council grounds team has to clean up afterwards. Vendors trade at their own risk, must ensure they carry adequate insurance and all required health and safety and food hygiene certification for their business.

This policy will become mandatory from 1st April 2023 for all vendors including those at ATC hosted events and those operated by third parties, with a specific exemption for the Funfair and Circus at the Butts given the nature of their activities. Until such time as this section of the policy comes into effect, traders are requested to seek to minimise the use of generators and diesel engines wherever possible.

Sky Lanterns

Alton Town Council prohibits the use of Sky Lanterns from its open spaces due to the risk to farm animals and wildlife through ingesting the wires in the spent lantern frame, the risk to aircraft through distraction of pilots and the risk of fire from lanterns landing on property (e.g. thatched roofs), crops or areas of heath or bracken.

Public Spaces Protection Order.

The Town Council's public open spaces are subject to the District Council Public Spaces Protection Order and as such members of the public may be fined for not removing dog waste, allowing dogs to enter fenced play areas or not putting their dog on a lead when requested to by an enforcement officer.

Alton Town Council reserves the right to alter this policy at any time and/or to prohibit any individual, business or organisation from using the town's public open spaces if they violate any of the terms of this policy.

For a full list of the Town Council's open spaces please go to http://www.alton.gov.uk/Open_Spaces_6315.aspx