

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, Market Square, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1HD

Telephone 01420-83986, Fax 01420-542490

Email: info@alton.gov.uk Website: www.alton.gov.uk

Full details of all of your Town, District and County Councillors (including their email and/or fax addresses) can be found on the Alton Town Council website, along with a full range of essential local phone numbers and useful points of contact

Please note that a couple of errors crept into the centre spread of the last *Altonian*, for which we apologise. The correct details for Holybourne Ward are - Cllr Ms G Watts, 16 Farnham Cloisters, 41 Shortheath Road, Farnham, Surrey GU9 8SX - phone 01420 520810.

Residents speak loud and clear on Alton's future

On February 28th more than 400 Altonians attended an event at the Community Centre organised by Alton Town Partnership (ATP) so that they could listen, think, discuss and make their feelings known on two important issues that could greatly affect the future of our town.

The first was the number of new homes that Alton might be prepared to accept between now and 2026, along with where they might be built - a key element of the Core Strategy for East Hampshire, due to be completed in 2010 - the second was what can be done with the area around the town station.

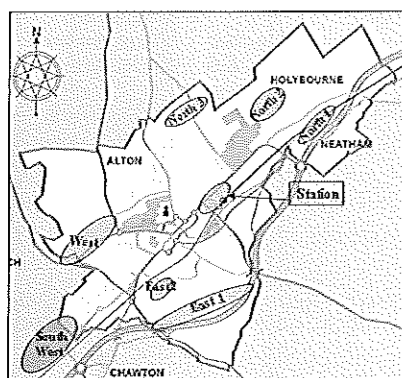
The conclusions -

Core Strategy - Housing

* East Hampshire District Council's Option CH2, which suggested focusing housing development on Alton and Petersfield with modest amounts at other places (Liphook, Liss and Four Marks) was slightly preferred to CH3, which envisaged a broad spread across right across the district.

* Of the potential sites suggested by ATP, the Station Area received the greatest support. This was followed by North 1, East 2 and North 3 in that order, but closely grouped. Least preferred were South West and West.

* Support for sites was based mainly on: ease of access, proximity to existing development, low visual impact and the need for regeneration.



* Opposition to sites was based mainly on: green fields/belt, violation of scenery/gate-way views and flooding/drainage issues - all key elements defined in the Town Design Statement.

* The need for significant infrastructure investment to meet the needs of a growing population, particularly for

road and rail links and sewerage /drainage, was emphasised.

* Above all there was a request for further and detailed involvement and consultation well before EHDC settled on this and other areas of the core strategy.

Alton Town Council has welcomed the report, as has EHDC, and an early meeting with those responsible for Core Strategy is in the pipeline.

So, more news as soon as we have it...

Station Approach

At the same event, the idea of breathing new life into the area surrounding the station received a big thumbs-up. Funded by Hampshire County Council, ATP (with professional advice) has worked with the landowners to develop preliminary regeneration concepts. These provided a start-point for a conversation with, and the involvement of, all Altonians interested in contributing their thoughts. The guidance we have received makes it clear that:

* There is huge support for regenerating Station Approach to include a mix of uses: employment opportunities; improvements to the existing transport facilities and services; new housing, particularly affordable housing for young Altonians and their families; adequate parking - including a suitably proportioned multi-storey car park; good access for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles; the inclusion of the Alton Health Centre within the scheme; leisure and entertainment with a strong 'community' element; and appropriate retail outlets.

However:

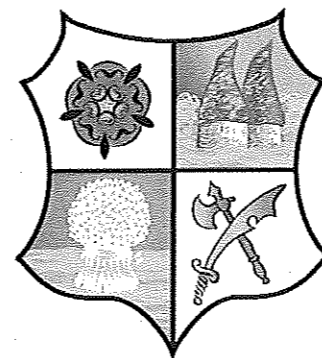
* Any development must take full account of environmental concerns and objectives.

* The design should reflect the character of Alton and be of high, long-lasting quality.

We have discussed the proposals and the results of the public consultation with Alton Town Council, where the prospect of regeneration was described as 'inspirational'. We have also sent the report to EHDC (where it has been warmly received by the planners) - further meetings are being planned. The Stakeholder Group is also meeting to consider in detail how the project can be progressed and the wishes of Altonians best met.

Both these reports can be viewed and downloaded at www.alton-in-partnership.org and, if you have any comments to make or questions to ask on either project, please email info@alton-in-partnership.org or call 01420 549684.

There is much that can be achieved, and ATP is gaining respect and influence. We believe Altonians should and can have a direct say in what happens to their town. If you can help make a difference we'd be very pleased to meet you. ATP is about helping to make things happen that involve and benefit the whole community; it's about encouraging people and organisations to get together and work together. We appreciate how precious time is, how little we all can afford for it to be wasted and so we value any time that is offered, no matter how limited.



THE ALTONIAN

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The Official Newsletter of Alton Town Council -

published quarterly to keep you informed

Opening up debate on our open spaces

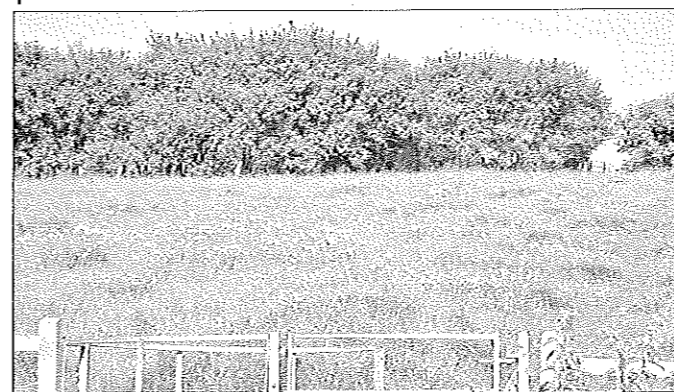
New Allotments? Better Public Gardens?

"Give us your views!" urge councillors

Residents' views are being sought this summer on two exciting projects which will affect open spaces in Alton.

Outlines of the schemes, one for a brand new allotment site in the town to meet an ever-growing waiting list and the other a new masterplan for the Public Gardens, will be on display at an exhibition in the Assembly Rooms on Thursday June 25th from 2pm to 8 pm.

The Town Council has been looking for some years for a site on which to create new allotments, but pleas to landowners to release space have all been turned down. This led the council to consider siting the new facility on land already in its ownership, which brought about the proposal for 40 new plots of varying sizes on land off Hawthorns, currently let for grazing (pictured). The council intends to include some raised beds to ensure suitable opportunities for those with special needs, along with some parking provision.



"The growth in allotment gardening is a national trend," said Cllr Beverley Carpenter, who chairs the council's Allotments Working Party. "It has been brought about partly by greater awareness of healthy eating and the need for more exercise, but also because few houses are now built with large gardens.

"The council has commissioned an outline plan for the plots with the help of the Alton Allotment Association and we now want to hear the views of local residents, particu-



larly existing and would-be allotment holders. They're the ones who will be using them, so we want them to make sure we get it right!" stressed Cllr Carpenter.*

At the same time a plan to guide the future of the Public Gardens will feature at the exhibition. The council has an overarching strategy for its open spaces and is now looking to have site-specific plans in place as well.

"The Public Gardens is perhaps our most prestigious site," reflected Cllr Pam Bradford, Chair of the Council's Recreation Committee. "The idea of a plan is not necessarily to change anything, but to ensure that when works are undertaken they complement each other, rather than to go about matters in a piecemeal and ad hoc way.

"The bandstand will soon need replacing and we want to plant new specimen trees, as well as replace fencing and other things," explained Cllr Bradford. "The plan will help us make sure that everything fits in."

Residents' views are being sought too on this adventurous plan, which includes the zoning of areas of the gardens for different activities, suggestions on where to plant new trees, ideas for improved entrances and the possibility of a permanent catering facility.

Comments on both schemes can be made on the day of the meeting or dropped in to the Town Hall thereafter.

* Members of the Alton Allotment Association will be available at the proposed Hawthorns site from 4pm to 6pm on June 25th, should anyone want to see for themselves exactly where the new plots are planned to go.

Feel like some fun in the sun? Opening in time for the summer holidays, try the newly refurbished Northanger Play Park

It's Time to Bloom - your entry form is overleaf!

In Bloom plea - "Help us retain our Silver-Gilt"

Hopes are high that Alton will retain its silver gilt award in the South & South East in Bloom competition this summer, following its elevation last year from silver. The town had won silver gilt once before, in 2003, and then lost it the following year, so everyone involved is keeping their fingers crossed that history won't repeat itself.

While ideally In Bloom entrants are supposed to try to look good all year round, the summer time is truly when any town looks its best, as it is bedecked with colourful baskets, the grass is lush and the trees are in leaf. This summer all the usual displays will be in place and it is hoped that new interpretation panels at the Public Gardens and St Lawrence Churchyard, complementing ones installed last year at other sites, will catch the judges' eyes.

A sponsor has been found for the two raised brick planters in Lady Place Car Park: local landscape contractor P J Grace has kindly agreed to look after the beds, to a standard more befitting this high profile location.

Ongoing initiatives such as the Greening of Alton and Holybourne and the Alton Society's campaign to plant more trees around the town should help impress upon the judges that Alton takes on board that In Bloom is not just about flowers, but also wider green issues.

Each year what the judges look for changes, and this time there is greater emphasis on allotment gardening. This year's route will take in the Spitalfield & Wooteys site, and they will be told about the Town Council's plans for a brand new site in the Greenfields area, and also about the Allotment Open Day which the Allotment

Association is holding on June 13th to support the campaign.

It's hoped that brand new railings along the south eastern boundary of the Public Gardens, together with new steel litter bins throughout, will help the gardens retain their Silver ranking in the separate parks category.

Once again Alton Horticultural Society are organising a Scarecrow Competition, joined this year by a Pumpkin-growing contest, all aimed at encouraging younger green fingers.

Although the Town Council coordinates the campaign, as usual it really is a community effort with groups such as the Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Alton Society all pitching in to do their bit, along with many sponsors of roundabouts and hanging baskets.

Supporting the regional entry will be the local Alton in Bloom Competition, which is where, hopefully, you come in! All you have to do is make your home or business look spick, span and bright with flowers or plants and then complete and return the form below. It really is that easy...



Alton | In | Bloom

The huge array of civic silver which will be on show in the windows of Alton Craft Centre in the Market Square, plus certificates (Gold, Silver Gilt, Silver and Bronze) will be awarded in all categories and presented at Alton's answer to the Oscars, in the Assembly Rooms on Friday September 18th.

For further information, including details of sponsorship opportunities, please contact Greg Burt on 01420 83986.

Shop that trolley!

The Town Council is taking a lead in putting pressure on local supermarkets to introduce viable systems to limit the amount of shopping trolleys left around to clutter our attractive town. As councillors and staff ponder the options, please let the retailers know if you spot a rogue trolley so that they can collect it- M&S are on 89172 and Sainsbury's on 544252.

Aldi have already pledged to have a token system in place on trolleys before they open their new store.

New-look Rooms already a big hit

The recent refurbishment of the 'Lower Room' in Alton's Assembly Rooms has proved a wise and popular move - and it has introduced a new style of function room to the town.

Tired décor, curtains, heaters, lino and servery have all been swept away, to be replaced by new fixtures and lighting that can be used in several combinations to create different moods, in conjunction with stylish new Venetian blinds. New carpet, heating and white walls complete the fresh clean look.



"The new look is designed to make the room as flexible as possible for a multitude of uses," explained the recently appointed manager of the Rooms, Jason Passingham. "We're keen to capitalise further on the building's position on the High Street in the middle of town, so we want to provide a selection of spaces that can be used for as diverse a range of activities as possible. The new look particularly lends itself to exhibitions, seminars, small conferences and meetings for business and the voluntary sector."

The new-look Lower Room was officially unveiled to business and community leaders at a recent reception hosted by Town Mayor Cllr Allan Chick. This refurbishment is the latest in a succession of improvements at the council-owned listed building in recent years that further adds to its character, charm and functionality. The Assembly Rooms complex is now managed in-house again by the Town Council.

"The council is looking forward to building upon the work done by the out-going manager Dean Phillips in the last three years," stressed outgoing Council Leader, Cllr David Willoughby. "We've invested a great deal of resources in the building recently, for example refurbishing many of the rooms, rewiring the building and providing long-awaited new seating, and there is still much more to do to ensure that the building continues to be an important venue for entertainment, activities and social gatherings."

If you would like to view the new room, please drop in when passing or call Jason on 01420 82203.

Meet the Mayor



Alton's Mayor for 2009/10 is long-serving councillor Allan Chick. His Chaplain will be Revd Peter Doores and his charities are Arthritis Care and the Stroke Association.

News from the Town Hall

The Town Council is delighted to welcome new Administrative Assistants Samantha Brown and Pamela Ritchie to the staff, while bidding a sad farewell to Assistant Town Clerk Rita Wallis, who has left the Council after eight years. Also new are Assembly Rooms Manager Jason Passingham and Caretaker, Louise Whapshott.

Alton's Town Crier has something new to shout about too- it's his brand new outfit. The holder of our honourable civic title, Stan Whitche, will look his very best for another busy season promoting events and activities in the town, thanks to his new regalia made by local seamstress Ella Goddard.

"The Town Crier adds much colour to our town, and is very popular with residents and visitors," said Mayor, Cllr Allan Chick. "It is important that his uniform reflects the importance of this very prestigious position and we are extremely very grateful to Mrs Goddard for all her hard work in doing such a splendid job."

ALTON IN BLOOM 2009 - OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Best Small Front Garden | 9. Best Retail Frontage |
| 2. Best Larger Front Garden | 10. Best Commercial or Office Frontage |
| 3. Best Domestic Patio, Window Box or Tub | 11. Best Licensed Premises |
| 4. Best Residential Premises | 12. Best Shop Window |
| 5. Best Neighbourhood, Street or Locality | 13. Best Scarecrow: for children 11 years or under [schools, groups, or individuals] - the scarecrow should be made of natural materials, and plastic faces are not allowed. No entry form is required, just take your scarecrow to the Assembly Rooms Garden on Saturday, June 27th. Entries will be accepted from 10am and the judging will take place at 12 noon. |
| 6. Best Public Building | |
| 7. Best Schoolchildren's Garden | |
| 8. Best Planted Unusual Container | |

Please be sure to circle your category

Name/organisation.....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

Please return this form to:

Alton Town Council

Town Hall, Market Square

Alton GU34 1HD

by 12 noon on Wednesday, July 1st 2009.

We wish you the best of blooming luck!

The Last Night of the Proms

Saturday 11th July 2009
Alton Public Gardens



Alton Concert Orchestra | Alton Community Choir | Alton Choral Society

Gates Open 6pm | Show Starts 7:30pm | Picnics Welcome

For more information, visit www.lnotp.co.uk or call Alton Town Council on 01420 83986

2009 Town Calendar

Date	Event	Time	Venue
Sat 20/06	Eggar's Big Band	3-4pm	Public Gardens
20/06 to 18/07	Jane Austen Festival		
Sun 21/06	Companion Dog Show	10am-5pm	Anstey Park
Sun 28/06	Victorian Cricket Tournament		The Butts
Sat 04/07	Amery Hill Presents.....	3-8pm	Public Gardens
Sat 11/07	Duck Race		Flood Meadows
Sat 11/07	Food Festival		High Street
Sat 11/07	Last Night of the Proms	7.30-10pm	Public Gardens
Sun 19/07	Alton Running Day & Bus Rally		Anstey Park
Fri 24/07	Punch & Judy Show	2 - 3pm	Public Gardens
Fri 31/07	Wobbly Wizzard	2 - 3pm	Public Gardens
Fri 07/08	Big Foot the Clown	2 - 3 pm	Public Gardens
Sun 09/08	Bagshot Concert Band	2.30-4.30pm	Public Gardens
Fri 14/08	Teddys Bears' Picnic	2 - 3pm	Public Gardens
Fri 21/08	Jester Giggles	2 - 3pm	Public Gardens
Sun 23/08	British Legion Fun Day	12 - 4pm	Anstey Park
Sun 23/08	Cactus Brass	2 - 4pm	Public Gardens
Fri 28/08	Stevo the Magician	2 - 3pm	Public Gardens
Sat 29/08	40's Day		Town Centre
Sat 29/08	Over the Wall Funday		Public Gardens
Mon 31/08	Live On The Lawn	2pm-Dusk	Public Gardens
04/09 to 06/09	Jay Miller's Circus		The Butts
Sat 05/09	Health Fayre		Assembly Rooms
Sat 19/09	Alton 8	10am-4pm	Public Gardens
Sat 26/09	Classic Car Show		Town Centre
28 & 29/09	Funfair		The Butts
30/09 to 04/10	Art Society Annual Exhibition		Assembly Rooms
01 to 04/10	Word Fest		Town Centre
Sun 04/10	Downland Challenge		Anstey Park
Wed 07/10	Dracula		Assembly Rooms
Sat 31/10	Halloween Ball		Assembly Rooms
05 to 07/11	AODS Show		Assembly Rooms
Sat 07/11	Remembrance Day	10.45am	Holybourne
Sun 08/11	Remembrance Day	10.45am	Crown Hill
Fri 27/11	Christmas Lights Switch-on	5.50pm	Market Square
Sun 08/12	Yuletide Festival	10-4pm	Town Centre