



THE ALTONIAN

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The Official Newsletter of Alton Town Council -
published quarterly to keep you informed

Serious foul play plagues young players

No excuses for feckless faeces dumpers

Young sportsmen in Alton have called "foul" on dog owners who persistently fail to clean up after their pets.

Alton Youth Rugby Club members are fed up with having to go through the motions on their Anstey Park pitches before they can play or practice, and have thrown their support behind East Hampshire District Council's campaign to tackle dog mess. EHDC's dog wardens are out and about urging dog walkers to pick up after their pets as part of a new nationwide campaign, launched this autumn.

Steve Jenkins, the Alton under-13 team coach, said that dog fouling is a regular problem. "Before training we do a big sweep of the area but if the grass is long it's easy to miss, and then you can have a pile of boys covered in dogs' mess, which isn't nice for them," he explained. "There are a number of dog waste bins around Anstey Park so there's really no excuse for it. We're looking for dog owners to take responsibility and pick it up rather than leaving it on the pitches," insisted Mr Jenkins.

"It's unpleasant, anti-social and selfish, not to mention illegal, to leave your dog's waste on public land," stressed EHDC dog warden Dave Griffiths. "It's especially unfair to leave dog waste on sports pitches where young people are likely to play. We take this very seriously at EHDC and urge all dog owners to do the responsible thing and pick up after their pets. They can drop the bag in either a dog waste or general litter bin, although not a recycling bin. Just leaving a bag of dog mess on the ground is not complying with the law."

In the past, in an effort to get the message through to the culprits by using a light-hearted approach, Alton Town Council erected signs reading: 'Fouls on the pitch are one thing but fouling is another. Be a sport and clean it up!'

Our youngsters may be sporting, but now not so light-hearted.



Back row: EHDC Dog Warden Dave Griffiths and Alton Rugby Club under-13 coach Steve Jenkins; front: players Max Rhodes, Matt Butler and Max Hegt display the spoils of their collection

Grit news for many Alton residents

The efforts of residents and Alton Town Council to improve pavement and road safety in wintry conditions have paid off.

When Hampshire County Council announced earlier this year that additional grit bins could be provided in areas where residents were prepared to "self help on local roads", the Town Council asked for suggestions and volunteers via The Altonian. The responses were then compiled into a "residents' applications waiting list" before being assessed against HCC's official assessment criteria. From this, the council was able to submit a formal request for extra bin capacity at specific sites in the town.

The county authority has now confirmed that Alton is to receive an additional 14 grit bins, with installation of them due to get under way as this newsletter went to press, which is welcome news indeed. However, all at the Town Hall recognise that, with the majority of residents in Alton either having to negotiate an uphill climb or downhill descent, there will be many people disappointed that their road is not amongst those that have been successful.

Once all of the new bins have been set up, though, Alton will have a total of 36 grit bins distributed across the town, which is a significant improvement on the position in winters past.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON FRI NOV 26th - MARKET SQUARE - FROM 5.50PM

YULETIDE FESTIVAL - SUN 5TH DEC - TOWN CENTRE 10-4PM

LATE NIGHT SHOPPING - THURS 16 DEC 'TIL 8PM

CAROLS AROUND THE TREE - MARKET SQUARE THURSDAY DEC 23rd 7-8PM

Seasonal message from the Town Mayor

I have particular pleasure in writing to you at this most special time of year.

My first six months have flown by, as all mayors seem to find, and apart from a relatively quiet August I have been kept much more busy than when I was previously mayor in 2001-02. I hope that my greater experience has helped me play a fuller part in the life of the town I am proud to serve, but you of course must be the judges as to my effectiveness.

Selecting highlights is so difficult as engagements vary greatly, with the private conversation or brief encounter often able to make a more heartfelt impact than a high profile event. I treasure and value them all. I suppose the most daunting was when asked to make the opening address at the Jalsa Salana annual worldwide conference at East Worldham. There were several thousand in the gigantic marquee, multiplied by those linked outside, but the honour and respect shown to all guests was indeed humbling.

More tricky was chairing the public meeting in September, called in response to the threats to the Curtis Museum and Allen Gallery, but generally with the good nature of all concerned I survived, just. The celebratory occasions are far more pleasurable, as when collecting those well-earned awards at the regional 'In Bloom' event with Greg Burt, our dedicated deputy town clerk. Greg of course masterminds not only Alton's participation, but also our concurrent town competition. May I again congratulate all who put in many hours of dedicated 'green-fingered' work to produce such magnificent displays. Picking the winners is so difficult but special congratulations to all trophy recipients.

Public events involving all ages are for me the most enjoyable, with Last Night of the Proms an outstanding success this year; others like the Lions' 'Good Old Days' and the Herald Classic Cars Show spring readily to mind. I always get a warm feeling when meeting the younger generation, from the summertime Teddy Bears' Picnic to Pirates' Day in the Assembly Rooms, but especially when young talent is on display as with the Lions' Peace Poster competition or entries in the Wordsfest writing and spelling challenges.

As I write, Alton is striving to ensure that our museum and gallery facilities remain open on a regular basis for everyone.

Support from Altonians, and indeed from further afield, has been fantastic, such that with honest endeavour from county and other sources, I have every expectation we shall maintain these valued services, though probably with changes to the current format. Such challenges bring out all that is most admirable in the 'Alton spirit' but the friendly face and positive community participation in a wide range of activities are just part of the simple magic that makes our town such a wonderful place in which to live, study, work and play.

We are all challenged, on a personal basis and as a town as we enter a period of increasing austerity, so while it may be natural to be caught up in our own problems, we should not forget others within our community and beyond who are less well placed to withstand the results of cutbacks. I therefore also welcome charity involvement amongst my mayoral activities, being especially appreciative of the good public support for my coffee morning in aid of Macmillan nurses.

Attending the opening of the new HQ for the British Kidney Patients Association again reminded me of the needs of so many in various fields of medical expertise. However, especially now we remember our service personnel and their families, many of whom will be thinking of loved ones serving their country in far lands amidst most difficult environments. My thoughts and prayers are with them all.

It is not easy for all families to get together and honour the true spirit of Christmas. So in the coming weeks, let us not forget those less fortunate than us, as it can be a most difficult and emotional time of the year for many, whether through illness, bereavement or loneliness.

Christmas is of course a time when families do make that extra effort to come together, so like many of you, Margaret and I look forward to celebrating with our children and grandchildren. For me grandchildren give particular joy, but also remind me of the tenancy of our time on earth. So let us all strive on a personal, town and world-wide basis to make the future better for all mankind.

I wish you all a peaceful and joyous Christmas and a healthy 2011.

David Willoughby

Light up someone special's 2011 with an Alton calendar

A stunning calendar has just been launched in Alton to help raise funds towards the town's Christmas Lights display.

'Alton Past & Present 2011' shows scenes from the Alton of yesteryear (by kind permission of Hampshire County Council's Museum Service), alongside an image taken from the same spot today. Created and compiled by Alton photographer and designer Martin Saban-Smith and priced at just £5, they are now available from the Town Hall, Assembly Rooms and Market Street Gallery.

Cllr Pam Bradford, Chair of the Town Council's Recreation Committee. "The Christmas lights cost around £16,000 to put on each year and are enjoyed by many. Whilst many local businesses support our annual appeal for help, we thought it would be nice to do something that enabled residents to support the lights as well. I think that they will make great presents, especially to send through the post to friends and family, and what's more they are in aid of a good cause that everyone can enjoy," suggested Cllr Bradford.

"Taking photographs in more or less exactly the same spot as my predecessors did many years ago was certainly challenging," commented Martin Saban-Smith "However, to then compare them proved to be very

interesting. It's great to see that the town has more areas that have hardly changed at all than it has those that have changed completely."

Deputy Town Clerk Greg Burt, who coordinates the lighting display, joked that: "We did consider a Calendar Girls-style theme, but we couldn't find sufficient volunteers!"

We're sure there will be plenty of volunteers to buy this collectible item, which should display the charms of Alton worldwide.

2010 Town Calendar

Date	Event	Time	Venue
26th	Christmas Lights Switch-on	from 5.50pm	Market Square
27th	Townswomen's Guild Bazaar	10am-3pm	Assembly Rooms
Dec. 5th	Yuletide Festival	10am-4pm	Town Centre
11th	Christmas Ultimate Ladies' Night	from 7pm	Assembly Rooms
11th	Farmers' Market & Craft Market		High St/Market Sq
16th	"Jane's Birthday"	10am-4pm	Jane Austen Museum
16th	Late Night Shopping	'til 8pm	Town Centre
23rd	Carols Around The Tree	7pm	Market Square
27th	Hampshire Hunt	11-11.30am	The Butts

Twining broadens minds, tastebuds and address books

When you think about the South of France what springs to mind? Is it images brought to you from TV programmes that involve orange presenters? Books such as "A Year in Provence"? Wine? Lavender? Or Sunday newspaper sections and travelogues that show the best bits?

What images appear when you think of Northern Italy? Venice? Padua? Lake Garda? Ice Cream? Venetian Balls? Sunshine? Olives?

Are you interested in what the people who live in these areas are like? How they really live? What they do for a living? How are they different from us? In which ways are they the same? What exactly does go on behind those shuttered windows?

So many questions - but there is one potentially easy answer. The people of the delightful towns of Montecchio Maggiore in Italy and Pertuis in France are very keen to invite you into their homes and their lives to exchange their experiences and knowledge with you.

Alton's Town Twining Association, ATTA, organises regular bi-annual trips to each town. In return residents of both towns visit Alton, where we return their hospitality and goodwill. We realise that it is not always possible for people to return the hosting favour due to lack of space or time, but don't let that discourage you from getting involved, as we try to include all members in our exchange weekends.

ATTA also facilitates contacts with other organisations from both of these towns. Our schoolchildren are already involved in exchanges, with a growing range of groups such as the Alton Community Choir, Alton Morris, Treloar's Basketball Team and the Alton Junior Rugby Team paying visits and inviting their new friends back.



Dining out with our Pertuis twinning friends

So - do you like to go off the beaten track? Do you like to try out your language skills? Would you like to see places that only the locals know about? Are you part of a local interest group that would like to visit counterparts abroad?

Don't just visit the place, visit the people!

We would love you to join us to experience much of this at first hand. Membership of ATTA costs only £8 per member, with no charge for children. We are building a programme of social events and looking for new opportunities to engage with both France and Italy. You can find out more about us on www.altontwining.hampshire.org.uk, and also keep checking on the "This Is Alton pages" for more news and events.

In the next *Altonian* there will be a more in-depth look at what you can expect from hosting or visiting one of our twins, and on the ways you can become involved! **ATTA**



A typical market day in Via Alton, Montecchio Maggiore

The latest news on Town Council projects

Finnimore Pavilion Replacement

As reported in the last edition, Sport England has confirmed that they will be helping Alton Town Council significantly with this exciting project. Now that tenders have been received, the council is working flat out to bridge the remaining funding gap, so that demolition of the existing building can start as soon as the winter sports finish in April 2011. Building is expected to take 36 weeks, and temporary changing rooms and other accommodation will be brought in to allow regular sports bookings to continue.

New Allotment Site

Work is now well underway, with drainage and access works complete, soil improvers being worked-in and fencing imminent. Contractors are working very hard to get the job finished before the weather deteriorates, so that the 40-plus plots can be let before the year is out, in readiness for the start of the 2011 planting season. The council is well aware that some real hardy gardeners will be keen to get on-site before Christmas to plant broad beans!

Public Gardens Play Area Refurbishment

Now programmed for spring 2011, with £47k of Public Open Space Developers' Contributions secured from EHDC. A decision on an application for a further £40k from the Veolia Trust is now awaited.

Assembly Rooms Roof Repairs

These have been completed.

Dropped Kerb at Jubilee Playing Fields for cyclists

Funded by Hampshire County Council, who originally asked for the Town Council to host one of its long distance cycle routes though the site, this has now been completed.

Trees at Kings Pond

Thinned this summer to allow more light to reach the under-canopy, but more work is still to be done, including removing many of those trees which have fallen into the pond

Public Gardens Railings (Westbrooke Road)

Start delayed but now underway.

Holybourne Playground

All unpainted wood is to be treated with a coloured wood preservative by the Community Service Team, to give the equipment an uplift.

Recycling Centre Opening Times

From 1 October - 28 February 8.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.

From 1 March - 31 March 8.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.

From 1 April - 30 September 8.00 a.m. - 7.00 p.m.

Open seven days a week all year round, excluding December 25th & 26th and January 1st - Hampshire County Council's Recycling Centre at Omega Park, Alton. Tel: 01420 542572

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL

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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

New event for Christmas

A brand new community event joins the town's busy Christmas programme this season.

Called simply 'Carols Around the Tree', it does exactly what it says on the tin! The Salvation Army Band will be leading the occasion around the town's main Christmas Tree in the Market Square, on Thursday December 23rd from 7-8pm.

Hopefully, you will have done most of the shopping, wrapping and decorating by then, so what better way of starting to wind-down for the big weekend than to wrap-up warm, sing your hearts out (song sheets provided) and get into the true Christmas spirit. Make a night of it and bring your family, work-mates or neighbours along. See you there!



I could do that!

Are there things about your community that you would like to see changed? asks *Cllr Beverley Carpenter*. Do you believe local people should decide what is best for them? Would you stand up for your neighbours if they needed your help?

Next May, all of the councillors on East Hampshire District and Alton Town councils must either retire or submit themselves for re-election. If you have ever given a thought to serving your community as their representative on one of your local councils, now is the time to do something about it. You won't have to give up your job or surrender your social life and you will find, like thousands before you, that being a councillor is not just rewarding and satisfying - it's fun. Why not get in touch with one of the local political party offices and discover how you can get involved?

The small print:

Local government candidates must reach 18 years of age before the close of nominations (early April), be a British or Commonwealth citizen or a citizen of a member state of the European Union, and be resident in the United Kingdom. In addition, candidates must either be on the register of electors for the council area in which they are seeking election; or have lived or worked in that council area for at least the last twelve months; or have occupied, as owner or tenant, land or property in the council area.

You will be ineligible if you hold a paid office or employment with the council you wish to stand for, or if you hold a politically restricted post with any other local authority. You will also be ineligible if you are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order, or if you have been convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to not less than three months imprisonment (including a suspended sentence) in the last five years.

You may have heard that the government has told all councils that they must not produce more than four newsletters per year; Alton Town Council only produces *The Altonian* four times per year anyway.

The total cost per household to design, print and deliver this to your door has been just under 20.5 pence. We hope that you think this represents good value for money but, as always, your views are always welcome.

Getting tots to talk

Parents in Alton are being encouraged to get their little ones talking by taking them along to the Assembly Rooms for weekly Talking Tots classes.

The award winning, interactive classes are run by Kirsty Payne, a former Speech and Language Therapist. She uses fun games, rhymes, songs, brightly coloured props and pictures to develop young children's listening, attention and communication skills as well as their social confidence. And, vitally, with more and more headlines about children entering school with poor language skills, Talking Tots teaches word meanings and narrative (story telling). The classes also focus on sound awareness to help develop literacy skills. All this is going on while the children (and carers) are having a fantastic time, laughing a lot and making new friends.

Depending on the age of your child, Talking Tots offers three expertly designed classes, each carefully organised to build on your child's skills. Children can start from as young as 12 months and classes continue right up until the youngsters go to school.

If you would like to know more about Talking Tots and the classes, contact Kirsty on 07786 279863 or kirsty@talkingtots.info.

Coming to their census?

In just a few months time, residents of Alton will take part in the nation's biggest survey, as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) carries out the 2011 Census in England and Wales on Sunday, March 27th.

Every ten years a census takes a numerical snapshot on a single date to gain an accurate picture of the population. The census statistics that ONS produces help councils to correctly target funding and public services (such as education, transport, schools and housing) where needed. That's why it's crucial that all Altonians take part (and by the way, it's compulsory).

In March your 2011 Census questionnaire will arrive by post and can be returned using a pre-paid envelope or, for the first time ever, can be completed online via a secure internet site. The questionnaire should take around ten minutes for each person's details to be entered and the information you provide will help shape our community for years to come.

The 2011 Census team is also recruiting in the area, and you can register your interest in jobs on their website. For more information on the roles, dates of employment and pay rates, visit www.censusjobs.co.uk or, if you want to know more about the 2011 Census, go to www.census.gov.uk