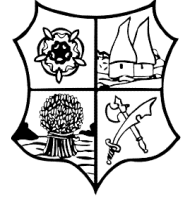


ALTON Town Council



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Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HD

Town Clerk: Leah Coney

16th March 2023

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the **FULL COUNCIL** on **Wednesday 22nd March 2023 at 7.00pm** at the Town Hall when the under mentioned business will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

LConey

Leah Coney
Town Clerk

To: All Town Councillors

Councillor Matthew Bayliss
Councillor Ginny Boxall
Councillor Suzie Burns
Councillor Sharon Cullen
Councillor Paul Crossley
Councillor Annette Eyre
Councillor Graham Hill
Councillor Lewis Jones
Councillor Pam Jones
Councillor Annie Lancaster
Councillor Richard Platt
Councillor Graham Titterington
Councillor Jonathan Waugh

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 22nd MARCH 2023
TOWN HALL, MARKET SQUARE, ALTON - AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Town Mayor's announcements
- 3 Leader's announcements
- 4 Minutes of the last meeting held on the 1st February 2023
- 5 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensations - Councillors are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest. You must withdraw when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter
- 6 Questions to the Council. Members of the public are invited to make representations.
- 7 Event Grant Application – Victorian Cricket
- 8 Alton Climate Action Network Neighbourhood CIL application
- 9 Capital works and expenditure:
 - a) Path at Flood Meadows
 - b) Anstey Park Pump Track Flood Lighting
 - c) Fire Doors at the Assembly Rooms
 - d) Additional Play Area Inspections
 - e) Festive Lighting
 - f) Will Hall Farm path improvements
- 10 CALA Community Building
- 11 Alton Assembly Rooms Lease 2024
- 12 Internal Audit report to July 2022 - February 2023
- 13 Alton Energy Advice Café
- 14 To receive the minutes from the following Committees: -

Planning & Transport

CONFIDENTIAL

- 15 Lease Agreement. Edgar Hall – Dementia Friends / Mens Shed.

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL – 22nd MARCH 2023**

REPORTS BY THE TOWN CLERK

ITEM 7 EVENT GRANT APPLICATION VICTORIAN CRICKET

FOR DECISION

Enclosed in Members bundles is a grant application from Alton Victorian Cricket – held annually in June, requesting assistance with funding the staging of the event, specifically the provision of public toilets for the event.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the grant application as tabled for £400

ITEM 8 ALTON CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

NEIGHBOURHOOD CIL APPLICATION

FOR DECISION

This item was held over from the Policy and Resources Committee meeting of the 25th January in order to allow for a workshop session for Councillors, with ACAN, to be arranged to discuss the climate change agenda for the town in more detail as well as the Eco Streets project for which Neighbourhood CIL funding is sought. The workshop was held on the 15th February and the Council wishes to thank Jenny, Phinna, Stuart, Scott and Eleanor for their time and presentations.

Members have now had an opportunity to consider the Eco Streets project in more detail and are invited to determine the Neighbourhood CIL application before them.

The application initially scored 31/53 (not 29/53 as previously stated) and did therefore not meet the recommended benchmark set at 35.

The Town Clerk was subsequently asked to re-score the application with the consultation element of the funding request removed as this seemed to be an area of concern in terms of adherence to the funding guidelines. The outcome was a score of 34/53, the improved score based on the lower percentage of contribution and cost v benefit. The Town Clerk has referred back to EHDC who have confirmed it is for the Town Council to determine the qualifying score; EHDC has awarded below a score of 35 in the previous round of funding but has also refused below this level as well.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to consider approval of the ACAN neighbourhood CIL application and the level of funds to be awarded.

ITEM 9 – CAPITAL WORKS AND EXPENDITURE

FOR DECISION

The following capital works and expenditure are tabled for approval using funds approved by Full Council on the 1st February (Budget and Precept 2023/24 minute 191 refers) for works to be carried out in the new financial year.

- a) **Path at Flood Meadow** – this was put out to public tender on the Government Contracts Portal and the Town Council website following the approval of the budget for the works for FY 2023/24 set by Council on the 1st February 2023 and is for the stretch of path from Tanhouse Lane to approximately 199m beyond, including two spurs onto the riverside path. The works are to replace the current tarmac path with another 1.2m wide tarmac path with edging.
Seven responses were received and scored as per the enclosed spreadsheet provided to Members. A number of respondents asked that their details were kept confidential in the interest of commercial sensitivity prior to award and thus the scoring document has not been published in the public report pack. Based on the scoring Members are requested to approve Company G at a cost of £37,517.14

- b) **Anstey Park Pump Track Flood Lighting** - this was put out to public tender on the Government Contracts Portal and the Town Council website.
Two responses were received and the evaluation is included in Members bundles. Only one returned a response for solar lighting (The other being LED which was outside the scope of the ITT and therefore scored 0%). The response received for solar lighting scored at 48% which in the view of officers is sufficient for a recommendation to be made.
Since the publication of the tender, the Council has been approached by an LED lighting company (who did not tender) who has advised that it is their belief that the technology to light the pump track safely with solar is not currently available and thus the council should only be considering LED at this time. Given the lack of adequate submissions for solar, Members are requested to confirm whether to re-issue the ITT for LED lighting or to set aside floodlighting for the pump track at this time, with the remaining funds allocated to an Ear Marked Reserve until such time as it is felt that solar lighting can adequately light the area.
- c) **Fire Doors at the Assembly Rooms.** Following an updated fire risk assessment (presented to Council as part of the non-financial risk assessments at the last Full Council meeting) and as per the agreed budget for additional works to the Assembly Rooms, three companies were approached to provide new fire doors for the Assembly Rooms. (Other works to rehang existing doors have already been actioned) Only one has returned a price and given that the works need to be carried out promptly, the quotation from Lockmaster is tabled for Members approval at a cost of £12,590. Once this work is completed there remains outstanding upgrades to a small number of internal doors at the Assembly Rooms which will only be undertaken should the proposed changes to the building as per the district CIL submission not proceed (as those existing doors would be removed as part of the works)
- d) **Additional Play Area Inspections.** Following changes to the Grounds Team structure for 2023/24, funding was approved in the budget setting process for additional outsourcing of play area inspections with written reports every two weeks in addition to the monthly independent reports and daily visual inspections undertaken in-house by grounds staff. These cover all play areas, stakeparks, trim trail and pump track. Three companies were approached to provide this service. Our current monthly inspector responded to say he does not have the capacity to increase his inspections which will remain at monthly. Playsafe returned a quotation of £269.55 per fortnight and Sawscapes with a price of £240.00 per fortnight, dropping to a fixed price of £175.00 per fortnight on a three-year contract. Given the added value of the fixed price three-year option, as the total value exceeds £10,000 this is tabled to members for approval.
- e) **Festive Lighting.** Following the purchase of a number of new festive column lights last year, it is proposed to extend for a further year, the current agreement with the Council's current installer (SparkX) who erect and take down all of the lighting, including string lights, all building lights and column lights at a cost of £11,923.00 (original contract from 2019 was £12,727.23 per annum) This is within the allocated budget for 2023/24.

In addition, the Council is requested to consider the replacement of one of the Council's Christmas Trees with a "faux" Christmas tree for the Assembly Rooms lawn. The increase in cost of transporting real trees has increased and the quotation for this year's trees supplied and installed is enclosed in Members bundles at a price of £2,975 per tree.

Whilst the cost of real trees has been increasing year on year, realistic "faux" trees have remained unaffordable. Enclosed in Members bundles is a brochure for the Nordica which, with a stand and baubles is currently £24,427 to purchase. However, we have recently been advised by the Company who make these (and provided us with the Marmots and our custom-made bio-print column lights last year,) that an ex-hire Nordica is available for £12,213.50. This represents a pay back of just over four years compared to a real tree which may be acceptable to Members, is recycled and more sustainable. There is only one available at this price so it is proposed to retain a real tree in Market

Square but a smaller one than in previous years to prevent the felling of a more mature tree (we currently install a 18 – 20ft tree, it is proposed to reduce this to 12 – 15ft which can be transported in a conventional vehicle rather than a lorry with high-ab to bring the cost down significantly.

- f) **Will Hall Farm path improvements.** This was put to mini-competition utilising Lot 1 of the Hampshire County Council Landscape Framework, which currently consists of 4 companies. Two returned bids for the work which includes upgrading the self-binding gravel path, installing a flood alleviation scheme along a section of the path prone to flooding and creating a new pedestrian exit path to Brick Kiln Lane, all in accordance with the approved management plan for the site. Please note that the engineers from both companies who made submissions felt that boardwalks over the flooded areas would not solve the problem and both recommended a combination of path build up with a drainage solution as per the indicative drawing.
- The bids were scored as per the spreadsheet enclosed in Members bundles and as, due to the added value of the bid from Blakedown, who have advised a specification in excess of that requested due to the flood risk on site, they are recommended at a price of £41,869.69, funding for which will be taken from the ear marked commuted sum for this site, held in the reserves.
- g) **Tarmac works at Anstey Park.** This is to create 1) an additional tarmac path alongside the play area to access the Pump Track where a desire line has already been trodden and 2) to formalise additional parking spaces alongside the Town Council compound, opposite Energique to increase the formal parking provision in this area of the park. Due to the contract value being under £25,000 it is proposed to make this a direct award from the HCC Framework to Blakedown at a price of £23,187.46 as per the pricing schedule and breakdown in Members bundles. This is being funded from the approved budget for 2023/24 for pothole/tarmac works, funded from the Capital Reserve.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the award of contracts at the stated amounts below:

- a) Path at Flood Meadows - Company G at a cost of £37,517.14
- b) Anstey Park Pump Track Flood Lighting – no appointment
- c) Fire Doors at the Assembly Rooms -Lockmaster at cost of £12,590
- d) Additional Play Area Inspections – Sawscapes £13,650 over three years (£4,550 per annum)
- e) Festive Lighting - i) SparkX - installation/take down of existing lights £11,923.00
ii) Blachere – ex-hire faux Christmas Tree £11,000
- f) Will Hall Farm path improvements – Blakedown at a cost of £41,869.69,
- g) Tarmac works at Anstey Park – Blakedown at a cost of £23,187.46

ITEM 10 CALA COMMUNITY BUILDING

FOR DECISION

Following the last Full Council meeting, the Town Clerk was asked to investigate further the issues of concern namely, to consider the additional project costs arising as a result of the delays to the works programme by CALA for the shell and core and the implications for the subsequent fit out and the matter of the outstanding lease terms still to be resolved with Legal and General. The Town Clerk was also asked to investigate the implications should terms fail to be agreed or costs increase to an unacceptable level, if the Town Council chose to withdraw from the project.

Since the last meeting a further technical meeting has been held with CALA , Legal and General and the project team but CALA have been unable to provide a date for completion and hand over of the shell and core but they are currently estimating November 2023, although this programme has already slipped by 12 months from the original hand over date, so this date should not be viewed as definitive at this time. The technical meeting was advised that there is concern over not only the cost implication of further delays but also the impact on the Council’s proposed tenants.

Since the last meeting it is also able to be reported that there is now progress on site and a copy of the most recent site inspection report is included in Members bundles for information.

The project team are currently working on the production of the technical drawings to enable an accurate assessment of the current costs of fit out. Whilst the increase in material costs is unavoidable, we are waiting for details on the implications for the change in building regulations on the mechanical and electricals. Due to the council requesting an increase in the depth of flooring by 10mm at an earlier date to accommodate the requirements of Foodbank and the Council's insistence on an Air Source Heat Pump rather than the gas boiler originally proposed, the impact of the change in building regulations in respect of carbon footprint of the building, may not be as adverse as previously indicated.

In speaking to the CIL officers at EHDC, the project team understands that the district council will accept a supplementary bid for funding to meet the increased costs of the build and this is currently being prepared for submission and if successful, will mitigate the increases without recourse to local taxpayers which may provide a measure of comfort for Members as this project passes to the new council.

The Town Council will, however, need to approve an allowance for risk mitigation fees to cover changes to designs and project delays to November 2023. This has been costed at £14,035.10 with the project team suggesting that ATC approve £4,912.28 towards this with the remaining £9,122.81 being included as part of the District CIL submission.

By way of explanation of the additional cost, the team has split the drawings into two sets for risk mitigation, which results in additional design fee for occupier fit out (Phase 2 only). This is intended to de-risk the scheme in case tenant requirements changed or there was a delay in agreeing tenant leases. Recent experience has shown that where projects have potential to be delivered in different phases it is beneficial split key approvals e.g. building regulations to avoid delays in issuing relevant certificates for completed sections or phases.

The technical drawings have been split as follows:

- Phase 1 - Fixed elements including all M&E services, toilets and kitchen. Gets the building occupier ready. Secures building completion certificate. Phase 1 technical/ architectural drawings, aimed at getting the building occupier ready, are covered by the fees that have already been paid. These are now being progressed.
- Phase 2 - Tenant/ occupier fit out - partitions and other fixtures. These are removable/ alterable elements. This can be done following issue of building completion certificate. Fees requested will contribute towards this element.

A further meeting has also been held with Legal and General and the respective parties' legal representatives to try to resolve the outstanding terms of the proposed lease which are currently unacceptable to the Town Council as the lease-holder and it is felt some progress has been made. Following the meeting annotations to the draft lease have been sent back to Legal and General and their response is awaited. The main clauses of concern are those that relate to assignment of the lease; given it is for 999 years this should be permitted in a way commensurate with the use class of the building but there is currently a block on any organisation which does not have equal standing to the Council, which would rule out a number of charity and not for profit uses. In addition, whilst an indicative figure has been given for the on-going service charges, these have also yet to be finalised and agreed.

The Town Clerk has also referred the matter of withdrawal from the project to HCC legal and their advice is enclosed in Members bundles. EHDC are aware of both Members concerns in respect of the outstanding issues and in the interests of transparency, the legal advice from HCC has also been shared with officers at District.

Given the legal advice and the progress made since the last meeting and an expectation of further progress within the next 3 months, Members are requested to consider confirming their renewed commitment to the project with a further report to the new council following the elections.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to confirm:

- 1) their continued commitment to the project with further review by the new Council once the increased costs to the fit out are finalised, a definitive works programme known and allowing officers a further 3 months to resolve the outstanding terms of the lease, in order that the final document can be presented to Members for approval.
- 2) The approval of expenditure of £4,912.28 to meet the costs of delays to the project and the cost of splitting the technical drawings (as detailed above) to de-risk the fit out programme.

ITEM 11 ALTON ASSEMBLY ROOMS LEASE

FOR DECISION

Following an introduction from the Alton Community Association, representatives of the Whitehill and Bordon Town Partnership (WBTP), who run the Forest Centre at Bordon and Pumpkin Panto who were based at the Assembly Rooms last Christmas, met with Councillors last month to consider the group taking a long-term lease on the building from 1st January 2024.

The draft Heads of Term will be circulated to Members under separate cover in advance of the meeting. Both parties are aware of the existing arrangement with the current licensees to occupy and the Community Association and the Clerk has been in regular contact with ACA to keep them apprised of the approach.

A scoping paper from WBTP is included in Members bundles and Mr Bone representing the organisation will be attending the meeting on Wednesday to answer any additional questions from Members.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested approve entering into an agreement with WBTP as per the Heads of Term agreement as tabled.

ITEM 12 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT JULY 2022 – FEBRUARY 2023

FOR DECISION

Enclosed in Members bundles is the Internal Audit report following the most recent visit from the auditor which is tabled for Members approved.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the report as tabled.

ITEM 13 ALTON ENERGY ADVICE CAFÉ

FOR DECISION

Further to the confirmation from ACAN that they were unable to continue with the Energy Advice café beyond 31st March 2023 but would be interested in continued use of the space on an ad-hoc basis including for Young ACAN, the Council is requested to confirm agreement that it does not intend to seek a commercial tenant for the premises for the next financial year and will allow the unit to be retained as a community space both for free use and paid hire. The Council has secured some fee-paying occasional use in the coming months from a local bank for a pop up shop and has raised the possibility of using the space for social enterprise uses as well as pop-ups, repair cafes, confidential meeting space for Citizens Advice or for EHDC outreach work for those needing help with cost of living. Members are requested to acknowledge and approve that this space will not be expected to provide a commercial income to the Council for the next financial year.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the continued community use of the Energy Advice Café unit and will therefore not advertise the unit for commercial letting (to be reviewed by Full Council in 2024)

