

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ALTON TOWN ELECTORS' MEETING
HELD AT ALTON TOWN HALL ON 5 MAY 2010 AT 6:00PM

Present:	Cllr A B Chick	-	Town Mayor
	Ms P J Bradford		
	Ms B Carpenter		
	D Crocker		
	Mrs P E Jones		
	A G Patel		
	R A Saunders		
	J F Smith		
	D J Willoughby		
	A Joy	-	HCC/EHDC
	11 members of the public		
	1 member of the press		
In attendance:	S J Parkinson	-	Town Clerk
	G C Burt	-	Deputy Town Clerk
	Mrs S Brown	-	Admin Assistant
	A Todd	-	Hampshire Highways East

19 **Town Mayor's Announcements**

The Town Mayor:

- 1) Announced that he would like to explain that the meeting is the annual meeting of electors for the town of Alton, a meeting which we have to hold by law. It is not a council meeting. Our responsibility as the Town Council is to facilitate the meeting, and the Town Mayor must take the chair if in attendance. Officers take minutes of the meeting, which are then presented to the next Town Council meeting for noting, and to consider any issues that may have arisen that are within the remit of the Town Council. Any resolutions made at the meeting are not binding on either the Town Council or any other authority.
- 2) Informed the meeting that he will be starting cyclists off on their ride from the Cairn, outside the Assembly Rooms, to Belgium where they will be raising funds for the Help for Heroes charity.
- 3) A presentation was made to Karolina Kowalska, a resident of Alton, who saved an elderly lady's life whilst holidaying in Bognor Regis.
- 4) The Town Mayor also reminded everyone to turn off or silence their mobile phones.

20 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R J F Evans, Cllr Mrs R L Fitzer and Cllr R T Fitzer.

21 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

22 **Town Mayor's Address**

The Town Mayor delivered his report for the year, a copy of which is attached to and forms part of these minutes.

23 **Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2009**

The Town Clerk presented the accounts for the preceding financial year. No questions were asked.

24 **Update on road and footway repairs in Alton**

The Town Mayor welcomed Mr Alan Todd from Hampshire Highways East.

Mr Todd informed the meeting that £3 million per annum for roads in East Hampshire, which includes repairs, potholes, grass cutting, white lining and resurfacing for ten roads a year, but there are 1,000 roads in East Hampshire. Hampshire County Council allocated £10 million into bringing roads into repair after the severe winter damage. £1 million is anticipated for East Hampshire, £100 million over the next ten years for upgrading highways.

Cllr Carpenter commented that residents in rural areas did not want their roads or potholes repaired as this prevented the roads becoming rat-runs, could the town have some of their share?

Mr Todd reported that every road is inspected at least once a year; Hampshire County Council had a duty to keep roads safe.

Cllr Smith enquired if Hampshire County Council is being pro-active on pot-holes. Mr Iain Hopcroft, Highways Manager for East Hampshire, has 400 miles of road to oversee with only two men maintaining the roads.

Cllr Ms Bradford asked about weed-killing spray and wanted to know why the gutters could not be swept to remove the soil that encouraged the weeds to grow in. Mr Todd informed the meeting that Hampshire spends £201,000 per year on spraying weeds.

Cllr Mrs Jones wanted to know which was a more effective way of contacting the Highways Team, sending an email or telephoning.

Mr Webster-Brown wanted to know if work is inspected after contractors have left a site. Mr Todd confirmed that all utility companies must conform to the New Roads and Street Works Act, but only a percentage is inspected.

Mr Hill felt that there is a lot of inspecting and reporting of pot-holes problems but not a lot is actually getting repaired or fixed. He reported that there are pot-holes of 5cm to 8cm deep in Vicarage Hill, Normandy Street and Anstey Road and wanted to know if they would get repaired this year. If there is not enough money how can the public act to get more money allocated. Mr Todd stated that this was not just a local issue but a national one. Cllr Mrs Jones suggested that the public lobby their County Councillor.

Ms Cantoni commented that the road from Cuckoo's Corner out towards Binsted School was disintegrating and wanted to know if the road would be resurfaced. Mr Todd confirmed that it will be done this year, resurfacing costs £12 per metre² and re-dressing is less than £2 per metre².

Mr Soutar asked how the work on roads is prioritised. Mr Todd explained that Mr Hopcroft would mark the defect on a plan, a "rater" would inspect and rate the defect, and for example the A31 would get a higher score than Wooteys Way. The budget is allocated over highest priorities and it typically takes 18 months to get works into the programme.

Cllr Crocker wished to know if the pavements in the town were being ignored because of the higher need of road maintenance. Mr Todd stated that there was no extra money forthcoming for pot-holes, therefore pavement repairs were to continue as usual.

The Deputy Town Clerk felt that repairs to the footpaths in the High Street do not last and the job is not done properly. Mr Todd explained that replacing individual paving slabs cost £50 per hour, whereas replacing a job lot could be done for as little as £2 per slab.

Mrs Wilson enquired is Alton likely to have a Traffic Warden again. Cllr Smith explained the decision process and Cllr Joy explained the Chief Constable could empower the PCSOs to issue tickets temporarily.

25 Electors' Questions

Mrs Webster-Brown asked if a decision had been made on whether a Saturday Market would be in the High Street or Market Square. The Town Clerk explained that the Market Square was not an option.

Mr Soutar wished to know what role Alton Town Council played on the Alton Town Partnership. Cllr Willoughby explained there were two representatives from Alton Town Council on the Alton Town Partnership and had been involved and informed of proposals as they were brought forward. He reiterated the need for volunteers to serve on the Alton Town Partnership.

Ms Scholfield expressed her concern on the amount of litter at the approach to the railway station. The Deputy Town Clerk informed her that the road is owned by Network Rail and the issue has been raised with the Station Manager. He had explained that there is currently a 'freeze' on new expenditure but would try and get rubbish bin installed.

Both Cllr Joy and Cllr Mrs Carpenter explained that discussions of the station site had been happening for some time but a key player was needed to get others on board such as Waitrose. Cllr Joy confirmed that a Waitrose planning application had been received the previous week.

The Town Mayor then thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting finished at 7:15pm.