

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ALTON TOWN ELECTORS' MEETING
HELD AT ALTON TOWN HALL ON 25 MARCH 2009 AT 6:00PM

Present: Cllr A Patel - Town Mayor
Ms P J Bradford
Ms B Carpenter
A B Chick
R J F Evans
A Patel
R A Saunders
D J Willoughby
9 members of the public
2 members of the press

In attendance: S J Parkinson - Town Clerk
G C Burt - Deputy Town Clerk

13 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

14 **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.

15 **Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2008**

The Town Clerk presented the accounts for the preceding financial year. A question was asked about the large amount of unspent developers' contributions held by East Hampshire District Council, who were keen to see parishes using the money for projects. The Deputy Town Clerk responded that Alton had the best record in the district for spending such contributions and most of the contributions for Alton were already allocated.

16 **Presentation by Paul Le Feuvre, on the proposed new Alton Community Radio**

Mr Le Feuvre explained proposals for a community run, non-commercial radio station, broadcasting locally on the internet. This would be aimed at the over 50's to avoid competing with other stations and to cater for a market that was not currently covered. No advertising was allowed so grants and sponsorship would be required.



17 Update on installation of CCTV in Alton Town Centre

Councillor Willoughby reported progress on the funding and installation of a CCTV camera system for the town. Mr Wood asked who would control the cameras and was advised that they would be operated from the Winchester control room, but the local police could request specific action when necessary.

Mr Heelis asked what the visual impact on the streetscape would be. The Deputy Town Clerk responded that the 6 metre columns would be blue to match other street furniture.

18 Electors' Questions

Mr Gamgee asked why a burger bar had been allowed at Focus DIY and complained that rules on bonfires were not being enforced. Cllr Saunders responded that the Town Council had requested specific planning conditions be imposed on the burger bar and these had been agreed to. Cllr Carpenter thought that keeping a bonfire lit after sunset was an offence and agreed to investigate.


Mrs Wood asked when the pedestrianisation of the Market Square would take place. The Town Clerk responded that it was expected to come into force on 1 June. Mr Appleyard asked about plans to run Saturday Markets through the square and how it would impact on the café culture. The Town Clerk responded that these had not been finalised yet.

Mr Heelis noted that in 2002 the council had started the process that led to the Alton 2020 plan being produced. He asked if Alton had a plan for the future, apart from this document. Cllr Willoughby responded that the Town Council was reviewing its own strategy and working with partners to move Alton 2020 forward. Cllr Bradford expressed the view that the council and Alton Town Partnership should move forward together. Mr Gamgee agreed with what was in Alton 2020 and the Alton Design Statement, saying it set out a standard for the next generation.

Mr Wood asked who was responsible for litter not being cleared and was advised to contact East Hampshire District Council.

The Town Mayor then thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting finished at 7.25pm



Report on CCTV to the Alton Annual Meeting of Electors, 2009

Two years ago at this meeting, I reported that the Town Council had resolved to take the lead on delivering a CCTV system in Alton within two years. Whereas progress reports usually give reasons why no progress has been made, I am delighted to report that all the funding is in place, the necessary permissions have either been obtained or applied for, and that actual work on the ground started this very week.

The scheme will consist of 5 cameras, one on the Town Hall covering the Market Square area and the other 4 on dedicated poles in High St and Normandy Street. Work on putting in the concrete foundations for these was completed today, and the poles themselves will be installed next week, with the total project estimated to take twelve weeks. The images, which will be recorded constantly, will be transmitted via wireless technology to the Police Station, where they can either be viewed live or retrospectively, before being sent to Winchester City Council's Monitoring Suite. Here, they will be proactively monitored for seven days per week, twelve hours per day - the exact twelve hour window to follow the recommendation of the Police. The scheme has been designed to cater for up to ten cameras in all, so we can add additional cameras as and when needed, funds permitting.

We are very grateful to East Hampshire District Council, the East Hampshire Community Safety Partnership, Hampshire Police Authority, Hampshire Police and the many traders who have contributed financially to the £80,000 plus cost of the scheme. Of course, we hope that now we have actually started, even more traders may be willing to give, especially given that the Town Council will be meeting the annual revenue costs of £10,000 and £3,000 for monitoring and maintenance respectively.

We have talked about CCTV in Alton for the best part of ten years, and I am sure that the benefits that we hope it will bring will have been well worth the wait.

A Press Release is being issued next week to coincide with a Town Mayoral photo-call and in the meantime I am happy to try to answer any questions.

Councillor John Smith
Chairman of the Crime & Disorder Working Party



As Town Mayor of Alton, it gives me great pleasure to report on what I and the council have been doing in the past year.

An Altonian since the 1970's, I have sensed that Alton has a certain character that makes it the town it is today; to me, that characteristic is its community spirit. Having the privileged opportunity to visit so many local organisations, charities and businesses, all of which speak highly of the character and community spirit that Alton has to give, just shows how we as Altonians have made this the thriving town it is today.

When I took office back in May 2008, I knew that the year ahead of me was to be a busy one and so it was, with my first appointment being a trip to our twin town of Pertuis in Southern France. The trip was over four days, and across those days I started to realise that our partnership with other towns in Europe is an essential part of the town's identity. I was also personally delighted to have some students from our Italian twin of Montecchio as guests in my home during an exchange visit last year and I am now looking forward to visiting Montecchio myself in the near future.

Whilst every engagement for the Town Mayor is special, particularly for those groups and organisations that are celebrating or commemorating an important occasion, some are extra special, in that they are unique to Alton and help define where we have come from and where we are going. For example, helping judge the Alton Society's Ambrose Award which was won by Alton College's Burkoff Performing Arts Building, opening the Hutcheson's Whisky Shop in Westbrook Walk, switching on the Christmas lights, meeting people at the Yuletide Festival and representing Alton at the regional In Bloom Awards ceremony where Alton scored so well.

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However, even from this impressive list, one appointment stands out, and that was the laying of the wreath at Lord Mayor Treloar's grave in Shirley, Croydon. For me, this appointment was the most memorable because it made me think about how lucky we were to have benefitted from this unique man's foresight and hard work to bring an idea to fruition that would benefit thousands of people.

Throughout the year as businesses grow and seasons change I was pleased to have the chance to visit local schools to see their landscape projects, learn of their plans for the future, and opening the new Austen Building at Alton College. Projects which invest in youth today are sure to leave a positive mark on our town tomorrow.

Here at the Town Council, it's been another busy year, not only carrying out our day to day activities but trying to champion Alton issues at District or County Council level or with other more distant organisations, such as the owners of the former Post Office site in the High Street. As usual we have a host of projects either ongoing or coming to fruition soon. An order has now been placed for a brand new playground on Greenfields Amenity Land and we will be consulting shortly on plans for new allotments close by. Our application to Sport England for help with rebuilding the Finnimore Pavilion in Anstey Park has been submitted this month and we await their decision with fingers crossed.

In 2007 we started on the long road towards installing CCTV in the town centre at a cost of over £80,000. Work has now started and the Town Council is also taking on the annual maintenance and monitoring costs. I sincerely hope that townsfolk will appreciate that CCTV is now the only means of monitoring and making the public feel at ease. On a personal note, although I believe

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that CCTV will bring great benefits, we must also be ever vigilant that valued civil liberties are not given up lightly.

One sad note of my term of office is the imminent loss of yet more landmark and prominent trees in the Public Gardens and also at the Butts due to disease and resulting safety concerns. Another low point was the demise of Woolworths which seemed to be the high point of conversation over the Christmas and New Year period. That said, they say that as one door shuts another opens, and we are now looking forward to the arrival of Iceland there this July.

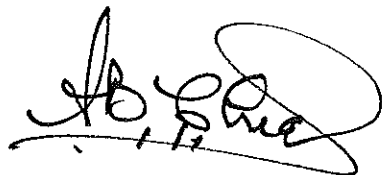
Finally I would like to thank the Town Hall and Ground Staff and my fellow councillors for their hard work and commitment during my term of office and no doubt into the future.

I would like also like to thank all those that have made me feel so welcome over the past year on so many occasions; it has been a real pleasure to serve my adopted home town and hopefully give something back to the community which has given so much to me and my family.

Councillor Atul Patel

Town Mayor of Alton

March 2009

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