

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ALTON TOWN ELECTORS' MEETING
HELD AT ALTON TOWN HALL ON 14 MARCH 2007**

Present: Councillor D Crocker - Town Mayor
Ms P J Bradford
A B Chick
R J F Evans
R T Fitzer
Mrs P Jones
P V Mendham
A Patel
J F Smith
D J Willoughby
8 members of the public and press

In attendance: S J Parkinson - Town Clerk
G C Burt - Deputy Town Clerk
Andrea Harrison - PCSO
Carl Stevens - PCSO

1 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor reminded all those present to switch off or silence their mobile phones.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2006 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

3 Town Mayor's Address

The Town Mayor gave a summary of his year in office, the important issues that the council had addressed and the many events he had been invited to attend.

A full copy of the address is appended to and forms part of these minutes.

4 Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2006

Copies of the accounts had been distributed and the Mayor invited questions.

The Town Clerk explained the council's current policy of rebuilding its reserves. Councillor Evans asked the Town Clerk to confirm that one of the council's tenants had a protected tenancy and not an assured shorthold tenancy as stated in the notes to the accounts. The Town Clerk confirmed this.

There were no other questions on the accounts.

RF

5 Update on CCTV

Councillor J F Smith reported that the council had resolved to take the lead on delivering CCTV for Alton within two years. £26,000 was already ring-fenced towards this project and a further £15,000 was being applied for. Other potential sources of funding had also been identified. A number of monitoring options had also been looked at. In summary, steady progress was being made and it should be possible to deliver some form of scheme within the timescale set out.

Mr S Lewis reported that the Chamber of Commerce was keen to see progress and hoped that the project would take less than two years. PCSO Stevens emphasised the need for high resolution images for evidence purposes.

Dr J Willis was concerned that CCTV may not be the best answer and felt that other avenues should be explored. Cllr R J F Evans said that he used to support that view, but felt that the town had changed and that late night drinking had had a detrimental impact.

Cllr Ms P J Bradford felt that the Town Council's security patrols had been a wise investment and were well supported. Cllr Mrs P E Jones asked what effect the new dispersal order was having. The PCSOs confirmed that things were getting better.

The two Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) gave a short presentation on their role in supporting the police. In particular, they provided a visible reassurance and focussed on low level crime. They had powers to issue fixed penalty notices, confiscate alcohol and tobacco and detain a person if necessary. There were 7 officers in the area, 4 covering Alton and one each for Four Marks, Ropley and the Bentley/Binsted area. Their target was to spend 80% of their time on patrol.

One resident was concerned at gatherings of young people near Cut Pound late at night.

Dr Willis complained about the poor quality of recent footway repairs and the recent work at the bridge in Borovere Lane. The Deputy Town Clerk agreed to investigate.

There being no other business, the Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending and brought the meeting to a close.

The meeting finished at 7.10pm

R Fitzes
7/5/08

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT FROM TOWN MAYOR 2006/7

It gives me great pleasure to report the final year of this particular group of town councillors. Whatever happens on 3rd May at the local elections there are bound to be changes to its make-up. So there is an opportunity for any interested electors living in Alton to become involved in the affairs of the town.

What makes Alton very special is the character and community spirit in this relatively small and friendly market town, and it has been for me a particular pleasure to visit so many local groups, charities and businesses who speak highly of the ethos and character of the Townsfolk.

In the beginning of my year in May 06 I found myself a little dispirited by the lack of public involvement from particular age groups and said so in the introductory Altonian newsletter. There was a response from two of three young families who rang me up and asked what I thought they should do? I replied that they must find a group or organisation where they can combine some activity that serves the community but at the same time gives them another social outlet. I am pleased with the response to this and have noticed particularly that more young families are getting involved.

Much of my work as Mayor is routine, but I have had many invitations to long serving societies who have over the past year celebrated anniversary events. I well remember the Orchard House 25th year celebrations, the re-opening of the Royal British Legion Hall after their disastrous fire, and the launch of the St John Ambulance first responders open day. The commemoration of the War Memorial at Lasham Airfield, the first Convention of the Ahmiddaya Muslim Association at Worldham in July and the visit to a large mosque in London, together with the traditional visit to RAF Odiham, and to the EHDC Reception (thanks to my willing deputy Robyn she attended on my behalf). I appreciated the chance to meet local people at the Hard of Hearing Club, The Blind Club, The Rotary Club and enjoyed the Community Centre Day Care Centre's Christmas Party the welcome to the new Methodist Minister and the Southern Region bowls presentations, the Amery Hill open day event and The Sports Council Awards. The Christmas festivities both for the switching on the lights and the Yuletide Festival (I have not seen the Town so full since the last carnival event nearly 15 years ago), together with the Town Carol concert at the Maltings were especially joyful.

New businesses are starting up and I was pleased to open the new Focus store, the new café on the Basingstoke Road and the new mobile phone shop in the High Street. You never know, we might also see the opening of the new M & S Food store before the elections.

Meanwhile unveiling the River Wey Sign, the Jimmy Dickenson plaque and the planting of bulbs both at St Lawrence and Wootey schools were good fun and helped to leave a legacy for the future.

RF

