

M I N U T E S
of the
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

held at the Town Hall, Alton on Thursday 22nd April, 1993
at 7 p.m.

Present: Councillor R. A. Booker (Town Mayor)
Councillors Mrs. J. L. Mann
D. G. Grenham
J. M. J. Janes
P. Mann
Mrs. J. M. Martin
P. M. G. Whitmarsh
together with two members of the public.

1. Minutes

It was MOVED by Councillor Janes, SECONDED by Councillor Paul Mann and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 2nd April, 1992 which had been circulated at the meeting, be confirmed as a correct record.

The Minutes were then signed by the Town Mayor.

2. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrews and Bicknell.

3. Town Mayor's Address

The Town Mayor, Councillor Booker, opened the meeting by welcoming his fellow Councillors, Members of the press and public and County Councillor Barron to the meeting.

He explained that this meeting gave members of the public an opportunity to ask questions or comment on town affairs.

Any points raised would be noted and considered at the next ordinary meeting of the Town Council.

The Town Mayor then referred to some of the many items which had been dealt with by the Town Council during the past year and referred in particular to the campaign which had been launched following the announcement of the Basingstoke Health Authority that orthopaedic care was to be withdrawn from the Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital.

Because of his strong feelings about this issue he had readily agreed to become Chairman of the Alton Health Group - an organisation which was formed to make representations to the Health Authority. An appeal had also been launched.

The support for the campaign had been overwhelming and had come from all sectors of the community and crossed all party lines.

The most significant change in the town during the year had been opening of the new Sainsbury's superstore which he considered to be a great asset.

JM

He hoped that with the completion of the enhancement scheme of the Turk Street Car Park and the covered walkway due to be completed this year that this would encourage Sainsbury's shoppers to come into the town centre.

A scheme had been prepared for the redevelopment of the old General Hospital and the Old Eggar's School sites in Anstey Road to provide a mix of nursing units, sheltered housing and low cost housing, and he looked forward to the scheme being developed by a Housing Association.

The Town Council had held a public opinion survey during the year regarding the opening of the Public Gardens at night, which had revealed the majority being in favour of this decision.

Three additional football pitches had been marked out on the extension to Anstey Park to cope with the additional demand.

Approximately £10,000 had been made available for grants to various organisations and a no smoking policy had been introduced in the Town Hall and Assembly Rooms.

Vandalism still posed a problem but all credit was due to the staff who took prompt remedial action.

A good relationship had been established with the local police and liaison meetings were held from time to time.

The Town Council supported County Council proposals to introduce Prohibition of Access Orders in the Ackender Road area and looked forward to the completion of the Inner Relief Road in 1994.

Signs had been funded by the Town Council at either end of Holybourne and Beech stating "Please drive carefully through the village" following concern about the speed of traffic through the villages.

New sewage pipes had been laid across The Butts which had necessitated considerable excavations. However the Town Council would be ensuring that the reinstatement was carried out to its entire satisfaction.

The Allotments Competition had once again been held and he had thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the judging.

He had planted a copper beech tree in the Public Gardens and was pleased to report that the Town Council had carried out a shrub and tree planting scheme at Jubilee Playing Fields.

The Town Council had been pleased to support "Shop in Alton Week" held in October and had agreed to the Christmas lights being erected a month early for this event.

The Alton Forum had recently been formed the object of which was to bring the three local authorities and various organisations together to consider issues of particular interest to the town. There would also be a marketing panel to look at ways of making the town more appealing for people to visit.

The Town Council had not increased its charges for facilities for the current year, and had approved a modest increase in its precept.

Two members of the ground staff had retired during his year of office, one being Mr. Peter Sadler after 13 years service and the other Mr. William Ruffell after 22 years service.

The Town Clerk, Mr. Peter Fraser would shortly be leaving to take up a post at Petersfield.

J.M.

He wished all three members of staff every success for the future.

The Town Mayor thanked County Councillor Barron for continuing to attend Council Meetings to report on County Council matters and wished him well in the forthcoming election.

The Council continued to hold monthly surgeries at the Assembly Rooms on Saturday mornings and also allowed a ten minute session prior to Council Meetings for the public to speak.

As this concluded his address, the Town Mayor then invited members of the public from within the electoral area of Alton to ask questions on matters relating to town affairs.

4. Public Participation

Mr. Carr complained that the new Prohibition of Access Order which had been introduced in the Ackender Road area was not working as there was just as much traffic using the road as there was before.

County Councillor Barron explained that it was anticipated there would not be as many problems once the order to include an additional area of Kings Road, Princess Drive and Highridge was implemented, but in any event the Order was for a temporary period. Residents' reaction would be taken into consideration before the order was confirmed.

Mr. Carr then asked whether consideration had been given to restoring the Cairn. He felt that the surrounding paving should be renewed, the rose beds raised, more plants should be planted on the Cairn and the stonework and plaque cleaned.

He suggested that the Cairn should be improved in time for the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the 1914 war which would be in 1994.

Mr. Carr also asked if a litter bin could be provided by the seat in front of the garage in Ackender Road and the Town Mayor said that as litter bins in the town were the responsibility of the East Hampshire District Council, this request would be passed to them.

There being no further questions, the Deputy Town Mayor, Councillor Mrs. Mann proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Mayor for the excellent way he had chaired the meeting and wished him well for his future wedding.

The Town Mayor then declared the meeting closed.

Town Mayor.



