

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

held at the Town Hall, Alton on Thursday 21st MARCH, 1991

7 p.m.

Present: Councillor P. Mann (Town Mayor)

Councillors Mrs. J. M. Martin
R. A. Booker
E. Jeffares
P. V. Mendham
G. P. Rushton
G. R. Slone
C. O. G. Smith
W. J. Tuck

together with approximately 17 members of the public.

1. Minutes

It was MOVED by Councillor Smith, SECONDED by Councillor Booker and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 29th March, 1990 which had been circulated at the meeting be confirmed as a correct record.

The Minutes were then signed by the Town Mayor.

2. Apology

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D. Crocker.

3. Town Mayor's Address

The Town Mayor, Councillor Mann, opened the meeting by welcoming members of the public, Councillors and Superintendent T. Farley of the Hampshire Constabulary who had kindly agreed to attend to give a talk on the Problems of policing the local community.

The Town Mayor said he had been privileged to serve as Town Mayor of Alton and appreciated the opportunity to meet many people and attend many functions.

He referred to the forthcoming elections in May when some of the much loved and hardworking Councillors would not be standing. He thanked them for their loyal and honest service over the years.

He was sure however that the longstanding principles which had been established by the Town Council would continue and pointed out that Alton was famous far and wide for its sporting facilities.

A number of organisations were currently being assisted by the leasing of land for the construction of premises. These included the Indoor Bowls Club at Chawton Park Road and the St. John Ambulance Brigade, 8th Alton Scouts and Westbrooke Guides on the former swimming pool site.

The Skateboard Club was now established in Anstey Park and the Town Mayor paid tribute to the parents who had pursued the matter to its final conclusion.

J. M. Mann

The Town Council was pleased to welcome Mr. Eddie Barnes as Head Groundsman during the year and he paid tribute to the work he was doing as well as other members of the Town Council staff.

He thanked County Councillor Barron for his close liaison with the Town Council and for attending Town Council Meetings to report on County Council matters.

The Town Council had had another busy year commenting on planning issues, as well as individual applications. Representations had been made on the Hampshire County Structure Plan, the East Hampshire Local Plan and the Traffic Management Plan for Alton.

The most controversial planning issue during the year had been the Sainsbury's application on the Phoenix Brewery Site in Drayman's Way. The Town Council held the view that on balance this would be of benefit to the town.

The Town Council had made a number of grants to organisations and each application was considered on its merits.

Safety surfacing had been provided on the play equipment in Anstey Park.

The Council had considered several issues not directly under their control but of public concern i.e. under-age drinking and drinking in public places, control of dogs, the Mary Rose Ward at the Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital, Alton Library and the reduction in funding for adult education.

The Town Council was concerned about the environment and carried out tree planting schemes each year. They were also pleased that a can bank had at long last been provided in Alton.

A modest increase in the precept had been made for 1991/92 amounting to an additional 16p per poll tax payer.

The Town Mayor paid tribute to the voluntary organisations such as Lions and Round Table who held charity events during the year.

He also paid tribute to the Town Hall Staff who had given him every assistance during his term of office.

The Town Mayor concluded his address by inviting Superintendent Farley to speak and said there would be an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions afterwards.

4. Superintendent Farley - "The Problems of Policing the Local Community"

Superintendent Farley then gave a most interesting talk on the problems of the local police.

He stated that the number of crimes had increased by 29 per cent in the Alton Division in the last year, a large number of which were petty crimes.

The public should be aware of the problems and take precautions to look after their own property.

Superintendent Farley was asked questions on such items as byelaws for drinking in public places, litter, sale of alcohol in supermarkets and parking on pavements.

He responded on the question of byelaws prohibiting drinking in public places by stating that it would be very difficult to enforce and it would mean families could no longer hold picnics and at the same time enjoy a glass of wine in a public place.

However it was his aim to prevent under-age drinking.

J.M. Mark

Superintendent Farley concluded by stating that if any member of the public had a problem or complaint it would be dealt with by the Police and an answer would be given.

The Town Mayor then thanked Superintendent Farley for attending the meeting and giving up so much of his time.

5. Public Participation

Members of the public from within the electoral area of Alton were then invited to ask questions on matters relating to town affairs.

Mr. Genender enquired as to the future use of Chawton Park Road as it was a very popular area for dog owners and he hoped it would continue.

The Town Mayor explained that it was proposed to lease approximately one-third of the area to the Indoor Bowls Club and the rest of the land would remain an informal area for the immediate future.

Mr. Carr said that the "Industrial Estate" sign at the Gateway Junction was still in the wrong place and he felt that the railings should be continued along the river bank adjacent to the Army and Navy Stores. He referred to a heap of tarmac on the pavement outside the Dukes Head which had been there for some considerable time and to damaged pavements generally in the town.

County Councillor Barron apologised that the industrial sign had been overlooked and gave an assurance that it would be shortly be resited; the damage to the pavements in many cases was caused by heavy lorries, and they would be repaired in the fullness of time. The heap of tarmac at the Dukes Head would be removed shortly.

Mr. Carr then congratulated the staff on the condition of the Public Gardens and thanked the present Council for their last four years of service.

He then referred to a number of gravestones in the Alton Cemetery which were leaning and asked whether they could be straightened up. Also the fence on the boundary of the old Cemetery was in need of attention.

Mr. Boxall was sorry to see that the Bank Car Park Public Conveniences were to be demolished.

Mrs. Mann asked whether anything could be done about the Keebab Van which was parked on Crown Hill and the Town Clerk said the Enforcement Officer of the District Council was taking proceedings.

Mr. Gowman in his capacity as Tree Warden said it was the intention to plant a screen of trees around the Cemetery and to plant specimen trees in the Churchyard.

Mr. Boxall referred to Guy Radford's property in Normandy Street and deplored the fact that the site could not be redeveloped.

Mr. Self asked how much longer Amery Hill would be closed for access only and it was explained that the Traffic Order had not yet expired.

Mrs. Self asked when the Community Hospital was likely to be completed and County Councillor Barron said the completion date was sometime in 1991.

Councillor Booker said the Town Council was well represented on the recent committee looking into the closure of the Mary Rose Ward and gave an assurance that members were very vigilant on matters of this nature.

It was expected that a new unit would be opened within eighteen months by either a Charity Housing Association or a private Nursing Home.

J. M. Moch

There being no further questions Councillor Booker proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Mayor for the way he had chaired the meeting.

The Town Mayor then thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed.

J. M. Hart

Town Mayor.

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