

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

held at the Assembly Rooms, Alton on Thursday 24th March 1988
at 7 p.m.

- Present: Councillor D. Crocker (Town Mayor)
- Councillors G. R. Slone
E. Jeffares
P. Mann
Mrs. J. M. Martin
C. O. G. Smith
W. J. Tuck
-

together with 12 members of the public.

87. Minutes

It was MOVED by Councillor C. O. G. Smith, SECONDED by Councillor E. Jeffares and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 2nd April, 1987 which were circulated at the meeting be confirmed as a correct record.

The Minutes were then signed by the Town Mayor.

88. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. J. M. Barrett and R. A. Booker.

89. Town Mayor's Address

The Town Mayor opened the meeting by welcoming both members of the public and the Council.

He stated that he was honoured to have been elected unanimously as Town Mayor following the local elections in May when many new Councillors had been elected. He was grateful for their total support which had made his job a great deal easier.

All Councillors whatever their persuasion had felt the need to work together and he felt they had set an example for other Councils to follow.

It was particularly pleasing to have Councillor C. O. G. Smith elected as Chairman of the East Hampshire District Council which was of great benefit to the town.

He also appreciated the liaison with County Councillor Barron who attended Town Council Meetings and was able to refer items of concern back to the County Council.

He referred to the achievements of the Town Council during the year, the most significant of which was the restoration of the Town Hall and the provision of a clock in memory of the late Town Clerk - Ewart Ings.

He hoped the building would set a standard for other developers to follow in the area and give a style to that part of the town.

CJS

There had been a number of planning applications during the year for housing schemes on which the Town Council had made strong comments. He was pleased to report that this would mean a tidying up of several areas which had been derelict for several years.

Probably the most controversial application had been the development of the Flood Meadows site. This application had been opposed by the Town Council and the application refused by the District Council. The applicants had however gone to appeal and the Town Council had made written representations and were represented at the public hearing.

Approval had been granted for the development of the supermarket on Crown Hill and the Cattle Market in the Market Square. He hoped these schemes when completed would enhance the town's facilities and make it a worthwhile place in which to shop.

Confirmation of the First Alteration to the Mid Hampshire Structure Plan was still awaited and he had attended the examination in public at Andover together with the Town Clerk and made representations regarding the Western Bypass.

He was hopeful that the Town Council's preference for an outer route would be accepted, as it was felt this was the only real solution to Alton's traffic problems.

As far as sport was concerned, the Town Council continued to support and encourage many clubs in the town as did the Alton and District Sports Council.

Many organisations had received grants from the Town Council throughout the year which had been as varied as the Pre-school Playgroups Association to the Churches of Holybourne and Beech.

The Town Council had suffered certain damage during the October storms and despite the extra work undertaken by the staff there was still a good deal of work to be done.

The Supermarket situation continued to be one of concern but he had had several meetings with the Chamber of Commerce and the Dee Corporation and the company was being very co-operative in trying to secure an improvement.

Vandalism continued to be a problem as did litter and he paid tribute to Councillor Mann and his wife for the work they were doing to encourage people to tidy up the town.

He was happy to report that the legal formalities had now been completed and the Swimming Pool site was now back in the ownership of the Town Council and the Swimming Pool Committee of Management had been dissolved.

The Town Council now had a responsibility for the area and would have to make a decision as to its future.

The Council continued to hold Surgeries on one Saturday morning each month in the Assembly Rooms when two Councillors were on duty.

The Town Mayor concluded his address by inviting members of the public to ask questions on town affairs.

90. Public Participation

Mrs. J. Mann remarked that the litter situation in the High Street had greatly improved since the appointment of a second road sweeper and she wished to thank him for this improvement.

Mr. R. A. Carr referred to the removal of the direction signs at the High Street/Drayman's Way junction, particularly the "Industrial Estate" sign and asked when these could be replaced. He also noted that the arrow signs were no longer illuminated. He referred to kerbstones which had been removed on the corner of Albert Road with Whitedown, and the

state of the footpath at the entrance to the Public Gardens in Westbrooke Road. He also noted there were a number of vacant allotments at Borovere and wondered whether this land could be used for residential development.

County Councillor Barron informed the meeting that as far as the High Street/Drayman's Way junction was concerned it was the County Council's intention that the bollard would be made smaller and the signs replaced. As far as the broken slabs were concerned this was a matter for the Contractor carrying out the work. The Albert Road kerbstones were in hand.

The Town Mayor said the surface of the pavement at the entrance to the Public Gardens would be inspected to check which authority was responsible. As far as the Borovere Allotment site was concerned, representations had been made to the District Council for this area to be included for residential development in the review of the Local Plan.

Mr. Thomas asked whether the Town Council would be giving any thought to a Traffic Management Programme for the Town Centre.

The Town Mayor explained that such matters were usually dealt with by the County Council and the Town Council then asked to comment.

Councillor Smith gave an assurance that the Town Council was always given an opportunity to comment on any proposals whether it be from the County Council or the District Council and its remarks were taken into account.

Mrs. Harckham was concerned about the decentralisation of the County Surveyor's Department and the problems experienced regarding who deals with what.

She was concerned about the corner of the New Odiham Road if the Flood Meadow development went ahead, also the amount of heavy traffic using Highridge as a shortcut. The surface of the road had deteriorated badly and had not been resurfaced to her knowledge in 29 years.

She was also concerned about the number of heavy lorries which would be coming into the town during the construction of the new developments.

The Town Mayor said that the construction traffic for the Cattle Market would be restricted to Cross and Pillory Lane.

Councillor Barron said that a review of traffic management in Alton was taking place at the present time, and these new developments would be taken into account.

Mr. Armstrong asked what the procedure was for monitoring street lights and Councillor Barron replied that classified roads were inspected annually and unclassified roads bi-annually.

Mr. Armstrong felt there was a need for a car bank in Alton and the Town Mayor said he would enquire whether the District Council would be prepared to provide one.

Mrs. Harckham raised the question of a Library in Alton and wondered whether the former Bus Station site would be suitable.

Councillor Smith said the Library was a function of the County Council but the Leisure Services Committee of the District Council had been pressing the County Council for some time to provide a new Library. It was however in the County Council's long-term plan.

Mrs. Harckham referred to the future of the stallholders who had to relinquish their position in the old Cattle Market and the Town Mayor assured her they would be found spaces, but it would probably have to be in the Lady Place Car Park. Cross and Pillory Lane had been suggested but this would not be possible for sometime as it would have to be used for construction traffic gaining access to the new development.

gph

Councillor Mann said that the campaign for "Pride in Alton" was only a beginning and it was hoped to provide facilities in Alton for young people.

Mr. Genender enquired about the Tourist Information Office and the Town Mayor said the District Council had been asked to provide one.

Mr. Carr suggested the Auction Mart could be used for the market stalls as a temporary measure and the Town Mayor promised to investigate.

Mr. Armstrong referred to the high cost of hiring the Assembly Rooms which had resulted in one Alton club folding up.

The Town Clerk said the hiring charges compared very favourably with other halls in the area.

Councillor Slone, in proposing a vote of thanks, complimented the Town Mayor for the able way he had conducted the meeting.

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

G. J. Slone

Town Mayor.

30th March 1989.