

M I N U T E S

of the

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

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held at the Assembly Rooms, Alton on Thursday 2nd April 1987  
at 7 p.m.

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Present: Councillor Miss P. J. Bradford (Town Mayor)  
Councillors D. E. Townsend-Rose  
Mrs. A. Bartlett  
R. A. Booker  
A. M. Bushnell  
D. Crocker  
G. R. Slone  
C. O. G. Smith  
G. D. Stratford  
W. J. Tuck

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together with approximately 20 members of the public.

84. Minutes

It was MOVED by Councillor C. O. G. Smith, SECONDED by Councillor Mrs. A. Bartlett and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 3rd April, 1986 which were circulated at the meeting be confirmed as a correct record.

The Minutes were then signed by the Town Mayor.

85. Town Mayor's Address

The Town Mayor addressed the meeting by stating that she was very honoured to have been elected Alton's First Lady Town Mayor and had been pleased to have the opportunity of meeting many people and to get to know what goes on in the town.

She mentioned a number of items which had been dealt with by the Town Council since the last Town Meeting which she felt were of particular interest.

One was the question of litter and the Town Council had agreed to meet the cost of providing extra staff by the District Council and as from 1st April the programme for litter clearing and street sweeping would be enhanced.

It was hoped an improvement would be noticeable in the near future.

The Town Council had been able to give financial assistance to many organisations in the town during the year which it was hoped would be seen as an encouragement.

The Town Hall restoration was well underway, although the Town Council was very disappointed that the District Council had postponed the Market Square Enhancement Scheme which would not now follow the completion of the Town Hall.

A decision had been made to erect a Cupola and Clock on the Town Hall to commemorate the former Town Clerk - Ewart Ings.

The Caretaker of the Assembly Rooms had retired during the year and a successor had been appointed. He had settled in very well and the Assembly Rooms was running smoothly.

On Planning, the Mid Hampshire Structure Plan was being revised followed by the East Hampshire District Plan. The Town Council would be given an opportunity to comment on the policy which would remain basically one of conservation and restraint.

The Town Council continues to comment on every planning application in its area, the most notable of which had been the Supermarket Scheme on Crown Hill. Problems had arisen over the historic building included on the site, and whether it should be preserved.

The Town Council were taking action to obtain legal possession of the Swimming Pool land so that a decision could be made as to its future use.

Two leaflets had recently been produced - a Tourist Leaflet and a Kings Pond Trail, which it was hoped would prove useful to residents and visitors alike.

Vandalism continued to be a problem for the Town Council, but all damaged property was repaired as soon as possible.

The Allotments Trophy had been held once again and the standard of cultivation was very high among the winners.

Representations had been made to the District Council regarding the revised car parking policy and the waiting times in car parks would remain unchanged.

An area of the Public Gardens Compound had been leased to the District Council for car parking which would soon be in use.

A seat had been provided in the High Street donated by Alton College, also a seat at The Butts donated by Lovell Construction and swings in the Public Gardens donated by Alton Round Table.

The Town Council regretted the decision of the County Council to widen Whitedown Lane instead of providing a Western Bypass for Alton. The Town Council would continue to press for the outer route at every opportunity.

Monthly surgeries were held at the Assembly Rooms on Saturday mornings to enable the public to see a Councillor if they had a problem.

The Town Mayor then referred to the impending elections when there would inevitably be a number of changes on the Town Council.

Some longstanding members were not seeking re-election and the Town owed them a great debt for their service to the Council over many years.

The Town Mayor concluded her address by stating that she was extremely proud to be Alton's First Lady Town Mayor and she then invited members of the public to ask any questions they may have.

86. Public Participation

Mr. Carr referred to the items discussed at last year's meeting and said he was pleased that an improvement had been made in the service at the Post Office.

He was also pleased that the potholes in the pavements in Ackender Road had been repaired but there was a hole in the road left for around 18 months which required attention.

Mr. Carr also referred to the removal of the Traffic Width signs on the Basingstoke Road leading to Ackender Road and the direction signs at the High Street/Drayman's Way junction.

He wondered whether any decision had been made regarding a pedestrian crossing at this point.

There was also the question of pavements being damaged due to parking of lorries.

The Town Mayor said the question of parking of lorries on the pavements was a police matter as it was illegal.

County Councillor Barron said the question of the signs had been taken up with the Area Surveyor who had given an assurance that they would be replaced as soon as funds were available.

The pothole in Ackender Road would be repaired as soon as the ground had settled.

As far as the pedestrian crossing and signs at the High Street/Drayman's way area was concerned, this was the subject of a traffic study which was being carried out.

Mr. Carr also enquired why there were derelict allotments at Borovere and the Town Clerk pointed out that certain allotments had deliberately been kept vacant due to the road improvement which would shortly take place.

Mr. Genender referred to the planning application for the Crown Hill Site and said that although the Alton Society did not wish to stand in the way of this site being developed, nevertheless they hoped it might be possible to preserve the historic building.

Councillor Townsend-Rose said that he attended the site meeting called by the Planning Committee and the Town Council's views had then been submitted in writing, which were basically that the Town Council would like to see the building preserved in the development if possible. They would however not wish to see the development jeopardised.

Mr. Genender said the Alton Society would not like to see the site remain derelict. They would like the building to remain in Alton and not to a museum such as Singleton.

Councillor Townsend-Rose doubted that it would be possible to move the building in view of the fact that the part which should be preserved was the timber frame on the first floor and the roof.

Mrs. Jelley said she had difficulty in understanding the cycle of Town Council Meetings and asked why a financial statement was not presented to each meeting of the Town Council.

Councillor Smith explained that Town Council Meetings were held every six weeks. He said that he had been attending Council Meetings for the past 21 years and in his experience it had not been the practice to produce financial statements at each meeting.

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The Town Clerk explained that questions of finance were presented periodically and that no financial item was considered without the figures being presented.

Estimates and accounts were presented annually and dealt with fully at that time.

Mr. Mann congratulated those responsible for producing the Tourist Leaflet and the Kings Pond Trail.

He also suggested that it would be a nice gesture if the Town Council made a donation to the St. John Ambulance, this being their Centenary Year.

Mr. Gostelow enquired why allotments which appeared to be unused could not be let, and someone he knew had been refused a plot only two weeks ago.

The Town Clerk suggested that as it was not possible to discuss specific cases without the records that Mr. Gostelow called in at the office to ascertain the exact position.

Mr. Gostelow accepted this offer.

Mrs. Mann wanted to know what action was being taken regarding dog fouling on pavements.

The Town Clerk pointed out that the pavements were under the jurisdiction of the District Council and there were byelaws covering dog fouling and litter but they were not easy to enforce.

Mrs. Mann said she felt that the public could be encouraged to use "Pooper-Scoopers" and it was pointed out that these could be purchased at pet shops in the town.

Councillor Booker referred to the pilot scheme taking place at Gosport which he understood was proving successful.

Mr. Mann referred to the speed of traffic entering Alton College and Councillor Smith said there were "sleeping policemen" at the entrance but this problem was being considered at the time of the alterations to the car park.

Mrs. Genender referred to the problem of litter at the back of the Sports Centre.

She thought there might be an improvement in the area if more litter bins were provided in the Sports Centre Car Parks and along Chawton Park Road.

As this area was under the District Council, the Town Mayor said that a letter could be sent to the District Council requesting an improvement.

There were no further questions.

Councillor C. O. G. Smith, in proposing a Vote of Thanks, complimented the Town Mayor for the very fair and just manner in which she had conducted the meeting.

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



Town Mayor.

24TH MARCH 1988