

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

held at the Assembly Rooms, Alton on Thursday
28th March 1985 at 7 p.m.

Present: Councillor C. O. G. Smith (Town Mayor)
Councillors Miss F. J. Bradford (Deputy Town Mayor)
Mrs. A. Bartlett
R. A. Booker
D. Crocker
G. R. Slone
G. D. Stratford
W. J. Tuck

together with approximately 15 members of the public.

76. Minutes

It was MOVED by Councillor Miss Bradford, SECONDED by Mrs. A. Bartlett and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 12th April, 1984 which were read to the meeting be confirmed as a correct record.

The Minutes were then signed by the Town Mayor.

77. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. M. Bushnell J. H. Cleaver and D. E. Townsend-Rose.

78. Town Mayor's Address

The Town Mayor, Councillor C. O. G. Smith, welcomed those present at the meeting and introduced the Town Clerk, Mr. Allan Kimble, who had been appointed since the last meeting.

He paid tribute to the former Town Mayor, Councillor G. D. Stratford, who had had a particularly difficult task during his three years as Mayor, and had dealt with the Council's affairs decisively, firmly and in a fair manner.

He then referred to a number of matters in the town which he felt were of concern to everybody.

The repaving of the High Street had been completed during the year but the recent bad weather had caused a number of potholes to appear in the road and footway surfaces.

The County Council were doing their best to repair these areas as soon as possible, but it would take a little time.

He referred to the Amery House Site on which a planning application was currently being considered and hoped that a scheme which would be mutually acceptable to the Planning Authority, the Town Council and local residents would be approved.

The Market Square Enhancement Scheme had now been agreed and should be starting shortly, together with the enhancement of the Town Hall which was now in the ownership of the Town Council.

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The Watercress Line was scheduled to run as far as Alton during the coming summer and the Town Council, whilst welcoming this, had expressed their concern to the company regarding preserving the environment.

The Council had also agreed to contribute £10,000 to British Rail for the provision of a "loop" at Bentley in order to safeguard the delay of passengers in the event of a breakdown.

The Town Council continued to give financial support to local organisations where possible and had agreed to let the Alton Cricket Club and the Alton Hockey Club have the use of the Harry Baker Pavilion at the Jubilee Playing Fields for a licensed bar.

A scheme was being considered for the provision of netball, tennis and five-a-side football at Anstey Park; also a BMX track at Chawton Park Road.

The Town Council had still not made a decision on a memorial to the late Town Clerk, Ewart Ings, but it was their intention to have some kind of memorial, and one possibility was being considered in conjunction with the Market Square Enhancement Scheme.

The precept would remain the same for yet another year but a small increase had been made in the Council's charges.

As far as allotments were concerned, it was proposed to revive the Allotments Trophy once again in an attempt to persuade allotment holders to maintain their allotments to a higher standard.

The Town Council has also given consideration to dog fouling, vandalism and litter and a meeting has been held with the Heads of the Senior Schools and the Police. This meeting had been very helpful.

The Council continued to hold monthly surgeries at the Assembly Rooms which seemed to be appreciated, and he felt it was useful for the public to attend these surgeries face to face with Councillors rather than telephoning.

The Town Mayor concluded his address by inviting members of the public who were local government electors from within the district of Alton to ask questions on town affairs.

79. Public Participation

Mrs. Harckham questioned the date of the Town Meeting as it clashed with the Annual General Meeting of the Alton Society. She felt it was a great pity that both meetings were on the same evening.

She mentioned a number of items which had been brought up at the previous Town Meetings such as the condition of the Amery House Site, the Crown Hill Site, litter, particularly along Old Odiham Road, which was dropped by children attending Amery Hill School and Alton College; the junction of Drayman's Way with the High Street which was in her view a danger to drivers and pedestrians alike. She felt that a crossing from the Methodist Church would help. She wondered what alternative arrangements would be made for parking if the Market Square Enhancement Scheme was carried out as parking was already difficult on Market days.

Mrs. Harckham also referred to the unsightly area in the Lady Place Car Park where the fence had fallen down.

The Town Mayor said that the schools were well aware of the Town Council's concern regarding litter and had agreed to co-operate in trying to deal with the problem.

Mrs. Harckham felt that credit was due to the children at Eggar's School who had cleared the River in the town from rubbish and debris.

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Mrs. West expressed her gratitude to the Town Council for their contribution to the Bentley Loop.

As far as the Amery House Site was concerned she felt it was a pity it could not be left as an open space.

Mrs. West asked if the Town Council had any proposals to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of V.E. Day on the 8th May and the Town Mayor said that no proposals were under consideration by the Town Council.

Councillor Crocker asked if Mrs. West could tell the meeting of the up-to-date position regarding the Northfield Lane link.

Mrs. West said she was on the Committee of the County Council looking into the Public Consultation and they were presently discussing how the plans would be submitted to the public. It was essential to get the right alternatives; she personally was against any improvements to Whitetown Lane as she felt the Western link "must go in".

Mr. Gostelow asked if the allotments could be let earlier in the year as it was often June or July before tenants started on the allotments which was rather late in the year. He also believed there were several vacant allotments.

The Town Clerk said that the accounts went out on the 1st April in accordance with the Allotment Tenancy Agreement, following which tenants were allowed a reasonable time to pay. If they relinquished the allotment it often meant it was nearer to June before the allotment was offered and accepted by another tenant.

Mrs. Genender enquired about the litter along the bridlepath near the Sports Centre in Chawton Park Road and the area between the railway bank and the Sports Centre.

The Town Mayor said the question of litter would be taken up with the District Council.

Mr. Buck mentioned that there was a notice of closure at either end of Market Street which was two years out of date.

The Town Mayor mentioned the "duck" signs which had been installed by the Town Council at Kings Pond and said that no fatalities of the duck population had recently been reported.

It was intended to have a "Trail" of Kings Pond sometime in the future which was being prepared in conjunction with the Curator of the Wakes at Selborne.

Mrs. West wondered whether an approach to the takeaway food shops might help asking them to remind their customers not to drop their litter.

She also wondered whether it was possible to have new notice boards outside the Assembly Rooms as the present ones were very untidy.

The Town Mayor said this matter was under consideration.

Mrs. West then asked whether the District Council could be persuaded to have a street map in the car parks for the benefit of the public.

Mr. Gostelow mentioned the speed at which vehicles drove into the car park of the Alton College and asked whether something could be done to slow them down.

The Town Mayor said that the Principal of the College was investigating this problem.

Mrs. James enquired about the dangerous condition of the bridge at Windmill Hill and felt that pressure should be put on the Watercress Line to repair the bridge as she felt it was very dangerous, particularly to small children.

The Town Mayor said that representations would be made to the Watercress Line.

There being no further questions the Town Mayor brought the meeting to a close by thanking everyone for attending and for the constructive remarks that had been made.

Councillor Miss P. J. Bradford proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Mayor for the manner in which he had conducted the meeting.


Town Mayor.

3rd April, 1986