

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

held at the Assembly Rooms, Alton on Thursday 24th March, 1983
at 7 p.m.

Present: Councillor G. D. Stratford (Town Mayor)
Councillors J. D. Mitton
G. R. Slone
C. O. G. Smith
D. E. Townsend-Rose

together with approximately 15 members of the public.

69. Minutes

It was MOVED by Councillor Smith, SECONDED by Councillor Mitton and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 1st April, 1982 which were read to the meeting by the Town Clerk, be confirmed as a correct record.

The Minutes were then signed by the Town Mayor.

70. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. A. Bartlett, J. H. Cleaver, J. R. Crockett, Mrs. V. A. Lane, P. G. Mancini and A. P. Mosely.

71. Town Mayor's Address

The Town Mayor welcomed those present and said the object was to allow everyone who was in the Town Council's electoral area to have a say as to what they would like done and what they thought should be done.

He said that the Town Council was a small authority which basically looked after the parks and open spaces and the Assembly Rooms, as well as allotments. It was an organisation to keep an eye on other organisations and to prod them when it was felt they needed prodding.

The most important issue during the year was the decision to keep Treloar's Hospital open and to give it a longer tenure than it otherwise had.

He regretted that the litter problem was no better than last year but the Town Council in liaison with the East Hampshire District Council hoped to improve the situation by providing more litter bins and in conspicuous colours. He pointed out it was a sign of the times and that until the public took their litter home, the position would not improve.

Unfortunately the roads and pavements were even worse than last year due to the public authorities carrying out various works. Work had however begun on part of the High Street and the resurfacing should be completed in the next year.

He was sorry that a decision had to be taken during the year to close the open air pool, but this was inevitable in view of the facilities at the Sports Centre.



He then referred to the precept which had enabled the equivalent rate levy to be kept the same for several years.

The Council was pleased to receive the John Ambrose Award for Kings Pond during the year and he paid credit to the members of the outside staff responsible for Kings Pond.

He paid tribute to the Town Clerk and said that Alton owed him a great debt for his work as Town Clerk.

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 any questions on town affairs.

72. Public Participation

Mrs. Harckham said that the pavements in the town were still deplorable and she had written to the Divisional Surveyor who had assured her that within the next fifteen months the situation should improve. She referred to the ghastly appearance of the site on Crown Hill and the derelict property between Vicarage Hill and Amery Hill. The churchyard wall was falling down and she felt it was dreadful for the centre of a town to be so vandalised.

She complimented the Town Council on the appearance of the Public Gardens but regretted that parking spaces were being diminished because of various developments and felt that any further reduction in parking spaces should be strongly resisted.

Mrs. Harckham hoped the Town Council would be vigilant in their comments on planning applications. She also expressed a desire for the vineyard at the back of Amery House to become an open area.

Mr. Lockyer agreed with Mrs. Harckham's comments regarding pavements. He also objected to the parking of cars on pavements in the town. This had been a particular problem in Normandy Street where contractors' vehicles had been parked on the pavement during construction works.

Mr. Gostelow said this was also a problem in Victoria Road and the Warden of the old people's flats had been successful in getting some vehicles moved.

Mr. Lockyer pointed out that there was no waiting restriction after 6 p.m. and he thought if publicity could be given to people being prosecuted for parking on pavements, this might help.

The Town Mayor asked the press to assist with publicity.

Mr. Paul Buck said he thought a number of the public had double standards in that they wanted old buildings preserved but did not resist the loss of the Victorian Post Box in Lenten Street.

Mrs. Harckham thought this Post Box should be saved and she felt the Alton Society would be willing to pay to keep it.

Mr. Wilson reiterated that the roads and pavements were in an appalling state. He felt the Town Council should push the County Council and the Statutory Undertakers to carry out reinstatement works and that records should be kept to ensure that this was done.

Councillor Mitton said the County Council reinstated the surfaces and charged the appropriate Statutory Undertakers. One had to allow a period for the ground to settle.

Councillor Townsend-Rose confirmed that this was so.

The Town Mayor said that this was discussed frequently at Town Council Meetings and members were well aware of the problem.

Mr. Wilson felt the Annual Town Meeting should be held later in the year so that the accounts could be made available.

The Town Mayor explained that the meeting had to be held between 1st March and the 1st June. The accounts were closed off on the 31st March and he would bear this point in mind.

Mrs. Harckham enquired as to whether the Council had a tree planting programme and the Town Clerk replied that there was no specific programme but over 400 trees had been planted at Anstey Park and the Public Gardens in the last few years.

Mr. Bushnell said that a number of Alton commuters were concerned regarding the changes in the British Rail timetable whereby 10 coaches on the 17.38 from Waterloo to Alton would be reduced to 6 in the near future.

The Town Clerk agreed to liaise with the Chairman of the Line Users' Association who was objecting on behalf of the commuters.

Mr. Genender who had recently moved from North East Hampshire enquired as to the Town Council's attitude to the Alton Enhancement Scheme.

The Town Mayor said the Town Council did not agree with everything in the scheme but there were two representatives from the Town Council on the Committee. He said they would welcome a copy of Mr. Genender's views.

Mr. Carr was pleased that lorries had been diverted from Ackender Road. He said that the pavements were bad in places.

He also felt there should be a sign indicating Ackender Road and also a sign beyond Key Markets indicating Basingstoke and Reading.

Mr. Buck said he felt there should be a "Market Street" sign at Boots Corner.

Mrs. Fletcher said she thought there should be a sign indicating Treloar's Hospital at the Whitedown Lane junction to assist traffic coming from Odiham and Basingstoke.

Mr. Bushnell was concerned about the junction of Wilsom Road/Ashdell Road and felt it could be improved by having a "Stop" sign rather than "Give Way".

Mr. Crocker agreed and said the traffic flow was very fast along Ashdell Road.

Councillor Townsend-Rose said this problem would be reduced when the slip road to the bypass from the Selborne Road was constructed.

Mrs. Harckham thought that if the Butts road was closed it would create more of a problem.

The Town Mayor explained that this was the reason the Town Council was against the closing of The Butts. It was felt it would increase the traffic passing under Butts Bridge and using the roundabout.

Mrs. Fletcher pointed out that there would be even more traffic when the Community Hospital was built on the Treloar site.

The Town Mayor said the Northfield Lane link was the solution.

Councillor Smith agreed.

Mr. Bone, a resident of Chawton Park Road, said that the diversion of traffic from Ackender Road had caused considerable annoyance to the residents in Chawton Park Road. It had become a race track.

He could not easily get out of his drive and he could not sleep due to the traffic noise.

The Town Mayor said the Town Council had supported the suggestion to close Chawton Park Road beyond the Sports Centre but the County Council had said it was too long a cul-de-sac.

Councillor Mitton said that to close The Butts road and Chawton Park Road would create more traffic under the bridge and the whole thing would get "snarled up".

Mr. Bone said the traffic was too fast on Whitedown Lane, whilst Mr. Genender felt the speed limit should be enforced.

Mr. Genender wondered whether the Town Council could put up warning signs such as "Remember your Speed" but it was pointed out that traffic signs were the responsibility of the County Council.

The Town Mayor then asked those present whether they were in favour of closing off The Butts to traffic.

No-one present indicated that they were.

Mr. Gostelow was concerned at the contractors' lorries crossing the footpath from Alexandra Road for construction works at the Sixth Form College. He feared children could be at risk.

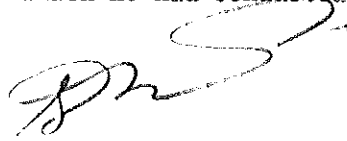
The Town Mayor suggested this was considered in a year's time when the work should be completed.

Mr. Carr said that if the outpatients department was moved to Treloar's Hospital as had been suggested this would create even more traffic in Chawton Park Road, and should be opposed.

The Town Mayor feared this was already a fait accompli and that it might well be followed by the Health Centre being moved.

There being no further questions or comments, the Town Mayor brought the meeting to a close and said it was nice to have a town where people took notice of what was going on.

Councillor Smith then proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Mayor for the humorous and kindly manner in which he had conducted the meeting.



Town Mayor.
12th April, 1984