

## M I N U T E S

of the

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

held at the Assembly Rooms, Alton on Thursday 1st April, 1982  
at 7 p.m.

Present: Councillor G. D. Stratford (Town Mayor)

Councillor Mrs. A. Bartlett  
J. H. Cleaver  
J. R. Crockett  
J. D. Mitton  
G. R. Slone  
C. O. G. Smith  
D. E. Townsend-Rose

together with approximately 12 members of the public.

65. Minutes

It was MOVED by Councillor Mitton, SECONDED by Councillor Smith and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 26th March, 1981 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.

66. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. V. A. Lane, P. G. Mancini and A. P. Mosely.

67. Town Mayor's Address

The Town Mayor welcomed those present and explained the requirement and purpose of the Annual Town Meeting. He said he would keep his address fairly brief so as to give the public as much opportunity as possible to make their comments.

He referred to the untimely death during the year of Brian Perschky, who had been a good Councillor for Alton and for the ward he represented. This had meant a by-election and he was pleased to welcome the new Councillor David Townsend-Rose.

He said a public enquiry had been held the previous December into the Alton Area District Plan and the outcome was still awaited.

A public meeting had been held the previous week by the County Council to discuss the traffic proposals for Alton. It was mainly confined to the problems of Ackender Road and Whitedown Lane but other traffic problems in the town were also discussed. This had enabled the County Representatives to learn of the doubts and fears of the residents of Alton, which should have a considerable effect on their decisions.

The Town Mayor then dealt with the various points that had been raised at the previous Annual Town Meeting and how they had been followed up.

On the question of the continuation of the Open Air Swimming Pool he said various possibilities had been explored including the possible leasing of the Pool to anyone or any organisation interested, but the efforts had been unsuccessful. There was not enough demand and the

Town Council had to bear in mind the availability of the Sports Centre and the cost of the Open Air Pool. He accepted that in its day the pool had been popular but time had passed on. Bathers to-day liked warmer water and the facilities offered by the Sports Centre which should be patronised.

He then mentioned the question of Civic Pride and a letter received from Mr. Stan Fletcher in which it was suggested that a local organisation such as the Alton Society might like to take a lead in trying to obtain an improvement in the town.

The Town Mayor said that although the town still had many derelict areas, some improvements were gradually taking place. He noted particularly the site in Cross and Pillory Lane next to the local presence office which had now been developed, and to the premises formerly occupied by Warren's which hopefully would be redeveloped in the not too distant future together with the vacant site on Crown Hill and one in Normandy Street.

He agreed there was too much litter in the town which he thought had been brought about by the advent of so much packaged food.

The Town Mayor reminded the public that the Town Council had kept the rate at 5p in the £ and although they had been criticised some years ago for having too high a rate; Alton was now well below Petersfield.

The bus shelters had been erected in the High Street and were much appreciated by the public.

The Council had received many requests from various organisations for assistance in providing premises, land, or money, or even all three but it was not possible to help everyone and the Council believed in helping those who helped themselves as opposed to "lame ducks".

The Town Mayor concluded his address by reminding those present that the meeting was restricted to local government electors from within the district of Alton and he then invited those present to comment or ask questions on any aspect of the town's affairs.

#### 68. Public Participation

Mr. Gostelow felt that despite the letters which were sent to allotment holders asking them to keep their allotments in a better condition, that the standard was still not very high, although there was some improvement.


Mr. Gostelow wondered if some manure could be delivered to Spitalfields Allotments as they still had not had any.

Mr. Ings explained that it did cost money and it was only given as a favour but that he would endeavour to see some was delivered as soon as possible.

Mrs. Harekham felt she would like to compliment the Town Council this year on the attractiveness of the Public Gardens.

She wondered how long the cars were going to be allowed to park in the car park at Kings Pond. These cars belonged to the workmen employed on the new brewery building. The Town Clerk said the Brewery had promised to see the Contractors reinstated the area and re-seeded the verge when the contract was completed.

Mrs. Harekham again referred to untidy areas in the town. In particular the Amery House site and the entrance to Princess Drive from Queens Road where the recently burnt out house was located. She said litter was also very bad in the Old Odiham Road and presumed the reason was the number of school children using the road.



Mrs. Harckham also said the footpath from Queens Road to Princess Drive running along the back of Highridge was used as a dumping ground and that horses were being ridden along the path.

Mr. Gostelow said that ponies were using the footpath from Youngs Road up to the Allotments - also motor cyclists.

The Town Mayor explained that there was very little the Council could do to stop people dumping rubbish but he would bear the points in mind.

Mrs. Harckham then referred to the deplorable state of the pavements in the town which were unsafe particularly for the elderly and wondered if the use of asphalt might be cheaper than paving slabs.

Mrs. West - the County Councillor for Alton - said that if the areas were pinpointed that the Divisional Surveyor would investigate.

Mrs. Fletcher referred to the bad road surface in the High Street and Mrs. West replied by explaining that Southern Gas would be relaying a pipeline throughout the town and that until this was completed there was no point in wasting money by resurfacing. They would however look into any areas which were particularly bad.

Mrs. Harckham then referred to the heavy lorries which still came through the town and wondered how long it would be before they were stopped.

The Town Mayor said was it not possible to stop them coming through the town until the link road was provided. Traffic coming from Basingstoke to Bordon had to come through the town.

Mr. Bartlett, a Police Sergeant, explained that there were business premises in the town at which a number of lorries were perfectly entitled to collect and unload but even though there were width restrictions designed to prohibit unauthorised lorries, it was impossible for the police to stop every lorry as they just did not have the manpower.

Mrs. Donna Reeves then referred to the Open Air Swimming Pool. She said she spoke for many people who were saddened and annoyed because of the closure of the pool. They felt it had been run down deliberately so that the prospect of it re-opening had lessened. Had money been spent in the past the present situation would have been avoided. A large number of people from that end of the town would use the pool if it were open and she recalled it used to be open for a much longer period than just six or eight weeks.

The Town Mayor took note of Mrs. Reeves' comments but said that although letters in the press had urged the public to write to the Town Clerk in support of the continued opening of the pool only two such letters had been received.

To open the pool, even for a limited period would cost the Town Council £10,000, quite apart from considerable capital expenditure that was desirable.

He said anyone could have the pool for nothing if they were prepared to run it; indeed they would receive the support of the Council.

Councillor Smith said whilst he was sorry no-one had come forward he had to admit the amount of vandalism was hardly conducive to easy maintenance. The Town Council had striven hard to keep the local rate down and it did not feel justified in spending so much money on the pool when it was needed for many other schemes. He really did think the Town Council had given the people of Alton a fair chance to come forward and help the Council run the pool, but not one suggestion had been forthcoming.

Mrs. Reeves then referred to the speed limit signs in Wilson Road. She said the residents were concerned that the limit ended short of a few houses at the Worldham end of the road and it was feared a child could be killed in crossing the road.


The Town Mayor promised to investigate.

Councillor Cleaver referred to the dangerous crossroads at Wilson Road, particularly since the town centre relief road had come into operation and Councillor Smith recalled a site meeting that recognised the problem and met five years ago.

Mrs. West said the County Surveyor was well aware of this dangerous junction and she had spent some time there when the relief road was opened.

There being no other questions or comments the Town Mayor brought the meeting to a close and once again expressed his appreciation to those who had attended.

Councillor Derek Mitton proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Mayor for the way in which he had conducted the meeting and for giving everyone present the opportunity to speak. His vote of thanks was endorsed by Councillor Smith.



Town Mayor.

24th March, 1983