

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

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held at the Assembly Rooms, Alton on Thursday 30th March,  
1978 at 8 p.m.

Present: Councillor C. O. G. Smith (Town Mayor)

Councillors J. D. Mitton  
J. H. Bennett  
J. H. Cleaver  
B. E. Perschky  
B. W. C. Taylor  
G. D. Stratford  
M. C. Walker  
Mrs. H. E. West

(Councillor J. H. Bennett was also present in his  
capacity as County Councillor for Alton together with  
5 members of the Public).

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43. Minutes

It was MOVED by Councillor Stratford, SECONDED by Councillor Mitton and RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 31st March, 1977 be taken as read and confirmed as a correct record.

The Minutes were then signed by the Town Mayor.

44. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. W. Beard and Mrs. A. Bartlett.

45. Town Mayor's Address

The Town Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed the public and the press and introduced Councillor J. H. Bennett in his capacity as County Councillor for Alton.

The Town Mayor remarked that although there were few members of the public present, he hoped this was because the public were generally satisfied with the service provided by the Town Council.

He referred to the points raised at the previous Annual Town Meeting and explained that they had been considered at subsequent meetings of the Alton Town Council.

He took the opportunity to mention that it was only Town and Parish Councils that were obliged to hold Annual Town Meetings which the public could attend and ask questions and hopefully be given answers.

This did not apply to District Councils or to County Councils and certainly not to Central Government, except of course at election times when the atmosphere was very different and rather charged.

The Town Mayor referred to the variety of matters for which the Town Council was responsible and referred to the co-operation received from the District Council in regard to Planning Applications that were of particular significance to the town.

He commented upon various successful representations that had been made such as on litter to the District Council and on car parking in Vicarage Hill to the County Council.

Much of the year had been spent in making representations in regard to the Health Services for Alton to which the Alton Town Council attached great importance.

There had been a public meeting arranged by the Community Health Council and subsequently a second Public Meeting called by himself as Town Mayor and Chaired by Mr. Michael Mates, M.P. at which they were most grateful for the contribution made by Mr. Michael Hunter the Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon.

There now seemed a remote possibility that the closure of the Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital in 1982/83 would be reconsidered and that if it were retained for orthopaedic surgery then perhaps the present limited general surgery would continue and these hospital facilities together might well determine that the Community Hospital would be located on the same site.

The outstanding feature of the past year had been the Jubilee Celebrations which he felt had been successful.

Unfortunately Alton also had its disaster in the explosion in Tilney Close but fortunately there had been no fatality.

The Town Mayor had been most impressed with the immediate response by all services and local authorities concerned, and he understood the damaged houses were now being rebuilt.

The Assembly Rooms had been redecorated and the improvements to Anstey Park were virtually complete.

The Town Council was now considering the building of a hard surface floodlit play area near the Sports Centre and bringing the Chawton Park Road Playing Fields into use.

Unfortunately the hard surface playing area did mean a choice between sport and allotments and such choices were always difficult to make.

He referred to his recent visit to St. Florine where he had been most impressed at the reception both he and other visitors had received.

Virtually the whole town had turned out to celebrate the visit and he felt certain the Town Council would be giving further consideration to the association between the two towns.

In concluding his report the Town Mayor said he and other members present would welcome any questions and would use their best endeavours to answer.

#### 46. Alton Resident and Ratepayers Association

Mr. Isaac the Chairman of the Association, although not an elector for Alton asked if he might speak and the Town Clerk told the Town Mayor that he had informed Mr. Isaac that in view of his particular standing on this occasion he would be able to ask questions or make comments on behalf of the Association.

Boyle

Mr. Isaac took the opportunity to say that the Association appreciated the good work which the Town Council did.

#### 47. Publicity

Mr. Isaac wondered if the small attendance was due to a lack of publicity and he felt that notices at the Assembly Rooms, the Library and the Community Centre would be helpful.

The Town Clerk explained that exactly the same notice had been given as in previous years by way of the press and a notice outside the Town Hall, but consideration would be given to Mr. Isaac's suggestion for next year.

#### 48. Planning

##### (a) Johnson's Corner

Mr. Isaac regretted that no development had taken place and wondered if any District Councillor present could inform him of the latest position.

Councillor Mrs. West said as far as the District Council was concerned they were waiting for the developer to go ahead.

Councillor Taylor recalled that it had now been 22 years since it had ceased to be a Drapers and over the years had slowly become derelict.

##### (b) Vacant Plot - Crown Hill

Mr. Isaac wondered in whose ownership this plot of land was as it had been rumoured to be owned by the District Council but it was unsightly and a harbour for litter.

The Town Clerk recalled it had previously been owned by the Urban District and he believed transferred to the District Council.

Councillor Stratford thought the District Council only owned the frontage but was rather inclined to agree with the Town Clerk that exchanges of land had taken place at the rear so that a rear service access and car parking area for shops and offices on Crown Hill could be provided from Vicarage Hill and Councillor Mrs. West assented with this view.

##### (c) Former Council Offices in High Street

Mr. Isaac felt that this property would deteriorate and possibly even fall into ruin and wondered if perhaps the District Council were not asking too high a price for its sale or lease and that it could in fact be used for other purposes.

The Town Mayor reminded Mr. Isaac that it was a listed building and that he thought it was under offer at the present time.

##### (d) Inwood Cottage Hospital

Mr. Isaac felt this to be another property on which action should have been taken.

Councillor Mrs. West said that a few weeks earlier Planning Approval had been given to a scheme that the Committee felt was quite acceptable and that tenders were probably being invited.

(c) Hoardings

Another complaint by the Resident and Ratepayers Association voiced by Mr. Isaac concerned the very narrow width of pavement left on the site being developed for Key Markets Ltd.

Councillor Stratford observed that although there were admittedly hoardings across the pavement, the previous site had been very run down and liable to vandalism.

Councillor Bennett remarked that where the frontage to a pavement was concerned hoardings were often necessary and he believed there would be some concrete underpinning that required the boardings to be as close to the edge of the pavement as they were but Mr. Isaac said there had been no action on the site for a number of weeks.

Councillor Stratford referred to a similar hoarding outside the Police Station and Magistrates' Court being constructed which he felt was even worse.

Councillor Bennett said that if such sites were to be developed there had to be a measure of inconvenience.

49. Heavy Vehicles through Town

Mr. Isaac felt he was voicing the views of many people in Alton when complaining on behalf of his association about the large number of heavy vehicles using Turk Street and the High Street.

The Town Mayor said that as regards the High Street Relief Road the reason for the delay was that there had been difficulty in assembling all the necessary land in order to construct the road.

They were almost in a position to start the work.

Mrs. West felt the only real answer was the Northfield Link for which she continually pressed.

The Town Mayor and Councillor Taylor concurred.

50. Beech

The Town Mayor remarked that he was pleased to see two members of the Public from Beech who were also present at the previous evening's meeting at Beech called to consider Parish status and he reminded them that Beech along with Alton already had a Parish Council and that this was the occasion of the Annual Town Meeting and he wondered if they had comments to make as regards Beech, but none were forthcoming.

51. Conclusion

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending but regretted that more of the public had not been present, though he hoped the reason was satisfaction with the Town Council and its efforts.

52. Vote of Thanks

The Deputy Town Mayor then proposed a vote of thanks to the Town Mayor which was well received.



Town Mayor.

29th March, 1979