

291 Questions and representations from Members of the Public

Representations received in writing together with responses were published with the agenda papers in respect of residents:

1. Sally Stoodley – planting of daffodils and crocuses on verges and roundabouts. Referred resident to EHDC
2. Rob Broughall – enquiry as to when the road through Anstey Park will be closed by the scout hut again. The Committee Chair to advise that the decision to remove the barrier was taken by the Open Spaces Committee on 24th November (Minute 204 refers) and in line with Standing Orders the decision will not be revisited for 6 months
3. Anthony Furnival – issues at Kings Pond. The Town Clerk has already responded advising his e-mail and concerns circulated to all members of the Open Spaces Committee and confirming the Tree Reports undertaken are available on the council's website which advises works required
4. Mr Heighington – raising his concerns as a new resident on the Crest Nicholson development over the road from the park about the noise and possible use of drugs at the Alton Skate Park. The Town Clerk has responded.
5. Mr Murray – suggestions for the newly acquired open space known as Will Hall Meadow. The Town Clerk has responded

Representations received after the agenda was published:

6. E-mail correspondence from Councillor Gideon Cristofoli:

*Please note: The friends working group have been renovating existing wooden signs which could be repurposed to have a more explicit message about
Please keeping dogs on leads and please only feed the birds in the water.
2 or 3 of the unpainted wooden bars on this sign could be replaced with these messages
The rat problem appears to have been solved and so I would urge the removal of the unsightly plastic signs now*

7. Mr. Anthony Furnival:

Dear all,

I will not be in attendance at OSC. Below therefore is a brief representation on three agenda points. I apologise this email was sent at the 11th hour - I assumed given the date of the cancelled meeting that this one would be a week or two later.

1) TREE PLANTING

Unless I've missed it - Kings Pond does not appear to be getting any new trees despite many being cut down recently - given that trees provide habitat for a number of birds - I'd urge consideration to planting a handful of new trees on the site. Whilst small trees won't remedy the habitat loss immediately - they will in the long run and big picture thinking is needed here.

2) RAT TRAPS

Lifting traps as proposed in the early breeding season for rats will allow the population to swell. For your information rats tend to have 5 - 6 litters a year, each producing 8 - 12 pups who themselves reach sexual maturity in as little as 8 weeks. Could you consider keeping some traps in selected locations that are unlikely to cause harm to baby birds. This has some risk - I accept that but feel that so long as common sense is used - most of the risk can be mitigated whilst still addressing rat population growth.

Just to illustrate this - if you were only to catch one female rat in the early stages of this period where you propose to have no traps - that's up to 72 less rats being born! Trap 2... that's up to 144 less. Proactive policy is needed rather than reactive policies in July when numbers have swelled.

3) PSPO

I note the evidence request by EHDC - I believe I sent Leah a photograph of one of the injured birds which was taken to Hart from there last year following a dog attack, she also has my witness statements. I'd urge councillors at EHDC to commit to pushing for this change in order to protect wildlife and young children.

Questions received on the evening are as follows:

8. Mr John Quincey – advised the Committee that drug use is also prevalent at Kings Pond and that he had personally invited the police to come to his house overlooking the pond to witness it first-hand. This offer had not been followed up by the police.
9. Mr. John Quincey: the e-mail received had been circulated to councillors in advance of the meeting which included four photographs as indicative evidence of what could be achieved if Kings Pond was favoured with the £40k presently earmarked for the cycle track. David Dodd had very kindly commissioned artists impressions to show what is achievable and he will present these on Wednesday next. In the mean-time, the following are advance copies. Mr Dodds presented to the Committee both photographs and mock ups of what could be achieved at two locations; the feeding station by the Kings Pond bungalows and at the southern end of the pond (by the Culvert). The Chair enquired if this information could be sent to Aquamaintain who are shortly to commence the review of the Kings Pond Management Plan – to which Mr. Dodds gave his permission. Mr. Quincey stated that he looked forward to this review and hoped that this time the Council would act upon the recommendations contained within. Mr. Dodds asked the Council's position regarding his proposals for dredging and Councillor Burns confirmed that all information received would be referred to Aquamaintain as she had previously indicated. Mr. Quincey also advised that "Solo" was being chased by the Cob (his father) but unfortunately due to the prevalence of Avian Flu in the area, Swan Rescue could not assist by removing "Solo" to a safer environment.
10. Mr. Quincey raised a question in respect of the survey undertaken by Paula Catt and the concerns raised by some responses in respect of rats at Kings Pond. The Chair advised that the traps have been lifted following expert advice and recommendation from the Contractor but that this would be kept under constant review. In response to the request for the removal of the signage regarding rats made by Mr. Quincey, Councillor Burns advised that there was no move yet to remove the signage but advised, again, that this would be kept under review.

292 Grounds Team Report

The Committee received the Grounds Team Report and noted its comprehensive content.

NOTED

293 Allotments Report

The Committee received the Allotments Report. The Committee were in favour of water preservation measures being put in place and welcomed the water troughs being placed at each

of the allotment sites. The Town Clerk advised of concerns raised from the Allotment Association in respect of potential stagnant water but confirmed that the purpose of the troughs is for watering allotment plots with the use of watering cans.

NOTED

294 Will Hall Meadow Draft Management Plan

Enclosed in Members bundles was the draft of the proposed management plan for Will Hall Meadow which had been reviewed by Charles Kaye and Louise Parker from the Friends of the River Wey group. If approved it can then proceed to public consultation. Once the public consultation is complete and any changes made, the plan will be resubmitted to the next meeting of this committee for formal adoption. Charles Kaye advised that the Friends of the River Wey group found the Management Plan to be a well-balanced report which had clearly included the areas that had been highlighted to them when the Plan was being drawn up which included:

- (i) Problems with the entry/exit points at the Brick Kiln Lane end of the site
- (ii) The marsh land special environment and the need for the protection of this
- (iii) Need to have all of the space south of the river to be managed “together” given that this area was reliant on the co-operation and co-ordination of two management plans i.e. Alton Town Council and the developer’s chosen management company which is due to be confirmed in June of this year (with the developers retaining responsibility until that time). The Town Clerk confirmed that the council’s responsibility commences 8 metres from the river.

On the proposal of Councillor Suzie Burns, seconded by Councillor Graham Hill it was

RESOLVED to approve the draft plan for Will Hill Meadow

295 South East Water River Wey Habitat improvements

Members received the officers report following a site meeting held with representatives of South East Water and the Environment Agency last week (16th March) to hear outline details of a funding bid being made by South East Water in 2025 to undertake works to improve the water quality of the River Wey. A report and map detailing the proposals (which are subject to a public engagement session at the Assembly Rooms on the 5th April between 1pm – 3pm).

Members also noted from the officers’ report that members of the Friends of King’s Pond had separately met with a dredging company to ascertain the cost of surveying the pond with a view to scoping potential options to address their concerns over silting and water quality; the details from which accompanied the agenda papers.

It was further noted that the Town Clerk had taken the opportunity to discuss with the Environment Agency representative separately the concerns raised by the Friends of King’s Pond over silting and water quality as well as the review of the management plan and had requested further engagement with the EA over these matters going forward.

On the proposal of Councillor Graham Hill, seconded by Councillor Lewis Jones it was

RESOLVED to

- 1. Approve a letter of understanding that states Alton Town Council (as landowner of Will Hall Meadow and Flood Meadows), is agreeable to co-**

operating with SE Water in respect of any resulting projects arising from a successful funding bid.

2. **Send a Member of the Open Spaces Committee to the Public Engagement session with South East Water on the 5th April to be held at The Assembly Rooms, alongside the Chair of the Friends of King's Pond to discuss options and potential inclusion of King's Pond within the planned funding bid.**

Councillors Suzie Burns and Graham Hill will attend on behalf of Alton Town Council. Mr. John Quincey will represent the Friends of Kings Pond.

296 Project Grant Request Alton WI

Members considered a grant application on behalf of the Alton WI in respect of tree guards for Windmill Hill (£100) and Flower bed maintenance at the entrance to the High Street (£50)

On the proposal of Councillor Ginny Boxall, seconded by Councillor Lewis Jones it was

RESOLVED to approve the project grant for £150

297 Dementia Friendly Alton – Works in the Public Gardens

An approach had been received from Dementia Friendly Alton to develop a Butterfly Walk in the Public Gardens. The proposal would be to undertake this work in 7 sections and a plan for each section accompanied the approach made. Sections 2 and 7 were prioritise as the first tranche of work to be undertaken. Officers met with representatives of the Group during a site visit on the morning of 30th March to discuss the proposals in more detail. A brief resume of the meeting was tabled by the Town Clerk who confirmed that Dementia Friendly will be undertaking clearance, relocating some of the shrubs to a more suitable location and planting new shrubs. The Ground team together with the Community Enhancement & Project Officer will be providing up to 4 days of assistance in spreading the self-binding gravel that had been donated to them and creating another seating area and clearing remaining debris from the storm back in February, together with assisting with planting. In respect of the request for a new bench Dementia Friendly have been provided with the contact details of Benchmarque who had designed and made a number of solid oak benches on the Council's open spaces.

On the proposal of Councillor Suzie Burns, seconded by Councillor Graham Hill it was

RESOLVED to

1. **Approve the proposals for the Butterfly Walk as tabled.**
2. **Provide assistance from the Grounds Team and the Community Enhancement & Projects Officer - The level of officer support up to 4 days (to accompany the £1,000 grant previously approved)**
3. **Grant consent for an accessible path surface for the Dementia Friends Sensory Garden subject to the production of a project plan and confirmation that this project is fully funded by Dementia Friends Alton**

298 Current Projects

The following updates were received:

298.1 Cycle Hoops

Fourteen new cycle hoops have been purchased to be installed across a number of Town Council owned public spaces courtesy of a District Councillor Grant from Councillor Richard Platt. The preferred locations for installation is provided by Cycle Alton as follows:

1. Anstey Park – 2 by the children’s play area/ entrance off Anstey Lane
2. The Butts – 2 at town end
3. Flood Meadows – 2 each at Lenten Street entrance
4. Kings Pond- 2 at entrance nearest Coors, by railway bridge
5. Windmill Hill- 2 (location to be agreed on ATC owned land)
6. Holybourne play area- 2 at entrance to play area
7. Jubilee Fields x 2

On the proposal of Councillor Lewis Jones, seconded by Councillor Ginny Boxall it was

RESOLVED to approve the locations as above, ready for installation of the cycle hoops

298.2 Tree Planting

Members received information on the tree planting that had been undertaken by the Town Council during the current year, which is as follows:

- Jubilee Skate Park – 120 Beech re hedgerow planting alongside Northfield Lane – ATC funded
- Lower Field (Redrow development) – 2,000 re hedgerow planting around the perimeter - mix of Rowan, Hazel, Whitethorn and Blackthorn – ATC funded
- Windmill Hill – in association with the WI – 130 mix including birch, wild cherry, hazel, rowan, hawthorn and dogwood - The Woodland Trust for provided the trees
- Barley Fields – in association with ALFI – 13 native fruit trees

Replacement trees planted after felling:

Anstey Park (1) Beech
The Butts (2) Tulip tree and Purple Beech
St Lawrence Churchyard (1) Flowering Cherry
Public Gardens (2) Ornamental Cherry
Treloar Heights (1) Purple Beech

NOTED

298.3 Noticeboards and metal signs

Further to the last meeting, the Finance and Administration Manager applied to District Councillors for funding towards the approved notice boards. Grateful thanks were expressed to Councillor Dolan (£1,000), Councillor Boxall (£308) and Councillor Hunt (£420.50) for £1,728.50 towards the total cost of £2,169.

In addition, following the liaison meeting held with the Friends of King's Pond, costs had been obtained for a small number of metal notices with Dogs on Lead messaging (this has been requested by the Friends of King's Pond and is also appropriate for Flood Meadows along the riverside walk.). The quote obtained is £16.00 per sign plus the cost of installation brackets.

Subsequently, a further request had been received from Councillor Matthew Bayliss for signs to be erected in the Public Gardens following his observing a member of the public parking in the adjacent car park, letting her dog go into the Public Gardens and doing its business and returning to the car. The lady in question did not venture out of her car or make any attempt to clear up the offending "deposit".

The Committee were in agreement that the additional signs would be appropriate on each of the entrance gates to the Public Garden noting that a slight amendment to the wording would be required for this location to exclude the reference to wildlife

On the proposal of Councillor Graham Hill, seconded by Councillor Ginny Boxall it was

RESOLVED to approve the small metal signs as per the design tabled from Signway Supplies at a price of £16.00 per sign plus the cost of appropriate bracket fixings, with officers determining the number of signs required

299 King's Pond

299.1 Liaison meeting with Friends of Kings Pond

The Committee once again confirmed that all information received from the Friends of Kings Pond could be forwarded to Aquamaintain who are due to commence the Review of the Kings Pond Management Plan in April

299.2 Rat Control

It was noted that the contractor for pest control had advised that with no evidence of rat activity at Kings Pond and with bird nesting season about to start that the service be suspended. However, it was noted that this would be re-instated in July or earlier at the discretion of officers.

NOTED

299.5 PSPOs

Members noted the latest update from East Hants District Council that this had been referred to their legal department to ascertain whether an amendment to the existing PSPO was possible.

NOTED

300 Request for trading permission at Barley Fields Car Park

A request had been received as to whether a local pizza company would be granted permission to trade from the Barley Fields car park on a Wednesday evening from 5.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m. In advance of the Open Spaces Committee meeting, via Councillor Paul Crossley the Barley Fields Residents Association had been canvassed and the updated responses received via social media; 77 in favour, 3 against. It was noted that the vendor had requested a slight amendment to the hours to allow for setting up to 4.00 p.m. -8.00 p.m.

On the proposal of Councillor Lewis Jones, seconded by Councillor Suzie Burns it was

RESOLVED to approve a Licence to Mr. Ross Kirkpatrick trading as Doe Pizza for a trial period of 8 weeks from 4.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. on a Wednesday evening, with a review following feedback from local residents and officers. The fee to be £25 per week.

301 Friends of King's Pond Meeting Minutes

The Minutes of the Friends of King's Pond Liaison Meeting Minutes drawn up by officers were received. Mr John Quincey as Chair of the Friends of Kings Pond group advised that the group had been disjointed recently and as a consequence there are no meeting notes available, which the Committee noted.

NOTED

302 Friends of the River Wey Meeting Minutes

Charles Kaye presented a summary of the priorities for Flood Meadows to aid the Council with its budgeting which are contained in the Minutes. The Committee thanked Charles for his attendance and succinct summary.

NOTED

303 Walk Alton Meeting Minutes

The Meeting Notes were received as tabled without amendment:

NOTED

The meeting closed at 8.33 p.m.