

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 4th OCTOBER 2017
AT THE TOWN HALL AT 7:00PM**

Present: Councillor Graham Hill - Chairman
Councillor Mrs Pam Jones
Councillor Mrs Sharon Cullen
Councillor James Voller

In attendance: Mrs Leah Coney - Town Clerk
Mrs Pat Harris - Finance & Administration Manager
Mr Ty Smith - Grounds Manager
12 members of the press and public

159 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman made the following announcements:

1. Reminded everyone present to switch off or silence their mobile phone.
2. Advised the hearing loop is in operation and devices should be switched to the "T" position.

160 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Miss Bisi Eni-Olotu, Mike Dicker and Derek Gardner. Councillor Gardner had advised the Chairman that he had been invited to attend the Eastbrooke & Wooteys Residents Association meeting.

161 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

162 Declarations of interest

The Chairman reminded members of their obligation to disclose any pecuniary interest in items on the agenda. None were declared.

163 To consider any requests for Dispensation to allow councillors with pecuniary interests to speak and vote

No requests were tabled.

164 Questions and representations from Members of the Public

1. Mr. Michael Gwynne, President of the Alton Lions spoke in support of the sponsored bench which they had commissioned with Mr Jonah Cleaver and distributed photographs of the finished product to councillors. He explained that it was the centenary of the Lions and they wanted to give something to the town and had decided on the 3.5 m long double bench (the drawings for which had been included in the Agenda papers). In noting the recommendation for its location, in conjunction with Mr Cleaver they believed that the Public Gardens would

now be more suitable as it would provide an additional attraction for children to climb on it as it was a tactile sculptured wooden feature and a location selected on the triangular piece of ground at the Westbrook end of the gardens. Mr. Gwynne confirmed that The Lions would be paying for the maintenance during its lifetime. In response to the Councillors Mrs Jones questioned whether it would have a plaque; Mr Cleaver advised it would be inscribed on the back of the bench. The Chairman's questioned whether it would be suitable for children to play on; Mr Cleaver confirmed it had no sharp edges.

Mr Gwynne confirmed that should approval be given that any correspondence should be addressed to former president Mrs. Sarah Donohue.

The Town Clerk advised that given the size of the bench (which Mr. Cleaver had stated this evening was now 4 metres in length), planning permission may be required as both The Butts and the Public Gardens lie within the Conservation Area and she would advise under clarification from the planning authority (EHDC)

Mr Cleaver confirm the installation methodology that would be employed and the maintenance regime required.

2. Mrs Walter spoke with reference to Agenda item 10 – Public Space Protection Orders and stated in her opinion the legal advice which the Town Clerk had received had been misinterpreted and had “missed the point”. She believed that there is a degree of ambiguity when the sign was uncovered and that with the sign having been temporarily covered this had seen no issues as to interpretation. She went on to suggest that Alton Town Council cannot enforce and therefore the sign should be kept covered up.

In responding the Chairman clarified the position in that Alton Town Council can recommend that a PSPO be drawn up but that it is EHDC's decision whether to impose.

Mrs Walter stated that she believes signage should accurately reflect the position and that at Kings Pond this is not the case, wanting that bit of the signage taken off and removed.

3. Mr. Derek Shaw, a resident of 35 years standing admitted that he had never been in the Council Chamber before this evening and wished to state his displeasure at Alton Town Council being “given the run-around” by EHDC on the new Sports Centre.
4. Mr Walter spoken with reference to Agenda item 10 – Public Space Protection Orders and quoted from the Agenda papers as to “effectually restrained” as opposed to “effectively restrained” and that in his opinion it is not the same. He stated that all of the information he provided at the last meeting had not been recorded in the Minutes for that meeting. He believed that the Agenda and the Recommendation in the report relating to this item as presented meant that councillors had already pre-determined the outcome of the item.

The Chairman responded and make it clear that all councillors come to the meetings with an open mind and that no decision reached by the committee members prior to the agenda item being discussed at the meeting. The proposed resolution on the agenda was the same as that which was deferred at the last meeting.

5. Councillor Mrs Jones asked that the committee respond to Mr. Shaw concern regarding the Sports Centre. The Chairman in referring the question to the Town Clerk confirmed that it is now in the public domain that Alton Town Council would be convening an open Public Forum on the Sports Centre next Wednesday, 11th October at 6.30 p.m. for a 7.00 p.m. start.

Everyone was welcome to attend to raise any concerns they have. Representatives from EHDC, SLM and Alton Town Council would be in attendance to answer questions. Display boards would be available to view giving attendees the opportunity to better understand the Reserved Matters Planning Application, (which the Chairman, Councillor Graham Hill confirmed had not yet been submitted).

6. A local resident raised a number of issues relating to Alton's open spaces:
- Greenfields Amenity Lane – had sort of paths which made it easier to walk the area; however almost all of the kissing gates are subject to wear and tear and the ground within becomes concaved and leads to water pooling. He felt that scalping, applied correctly would sort out the problem. The surface should be convex, not concave.
 - Flood Meadows – He had spoken at previous meetings and attended Public Consultations and felt that his views had just not been heard. He had requested an established footpath from Lenten Street to Brandon Close and nothing had happened.
 - Wey Walk – was it being proposed as part of the development of this walk for a fresh entrance to be established between Flood Meadows and New Odiham Road as the very narrow and poor surface of the existing pathway required upgrading and given the additional use following the development at Will Hall Farm, the council needed to consider its upgrade.
 - Flood Meadows – when will the paths across the open space be cut back to their former width?
 - Flood Meadows River Bed – questioned why the grounds team did not use mowers to cut back the bed of the River Wey given there is very little water flow at the moment.

The Chairman advised that within the published Agenda papers for the meeting there was a detailed report from Footprint Ecology on the proposed Management Plan.

In responding the Grounds Manager advised that some had been done but the path which dissects the area cannot be taken back further as the edges are crumbling which would render them more unstable than the current grass encroachment. The top path in Flood Meadows is much newer than the one referred to and is more stable and was able to be "taken back". He also stated that the grounds team regularly applied scalping's to the areas below the kissing gates at Greenfields and that the surface was left with a "crown" but this could not be too high otherwise the gates could not operate as intended.

Councillor Mrs Pam added that the Footprint Ecology report in the Agenda papers contained a management plan which focused on footways across Flood Meadows.

Councillor Graham Hill advised that the Wey Walk is a major project and is an item on the Agenda for discussion and therefore remains a "work in progress" project. It is a huge amount of work, ambitious in its creation and that as a council we have to be careful not to set false expectations as to what can be achieved and by when. Funding would need to be secured if the project was to be implemented and that it would be over a number of years.

7. Mr Cleaver referenced the memorial bench which he had installed at Kings Pond stating that its position under the tree was leading to its deterioration. Grounds Manager to note.
8. Ms Tanya Applegath requested an updated on signage to the council's open spaces and the progress being made. The Town Clerk advised that the question is - given the location of some of the opens spaces from the town centre -- officers are struggling to understand the

effectiveness of such signage. As a council we have to be careful not to add to signage clutter given the number of signs already in existence; if you were in the town centre, would you want to walk to Anstey Park, Jubilee Fields or Northanger and that a balance has to be struck. The questions which the council needs to satisfy itself with is what do we need; what it is the intended purpose and what is the cost?

It was suggested that perhaps the Town Council could consider updating its maps at the various sites to ensure they contained the locations of its open spaces as it was acknowledged that "Chandos Lodge" would not have been included.

9. Mrs Louise Parker

- Firstly, she wished to record her thanks to the Grounds Administrator for the work she has done on the Wey Walk in compiling the report presented and estimated costings for the project.
- In respect of Item 13 on the Agenda – Wey Walk requested that when the item came before the committee this evening that they should state what the proposed next steps should be, funding objectives and sources and the funding of a project manager.
- Earlier this evening she had received an enthusiastic phone call from a resident who had seen the article in The Herald but suggesting that the walk should go beyond the station and be extended to Omega Park. However in her opinion, scope creep could and should be resisted.

Councillor Graham Hill thanked her for her input and all the time and work she had put into the project thus far, which had not gone unnoticed.

Councillor Mrs Pam Jones in her observations stated that the footpath from the Station to Omega Park had prior to the development of The Lamports been a level walk; but now steps had been installed which made it a more difficult walk particular for those with prams and pushchairs and wheelchairs where alternative routing was required.

The Chairman drew the public session to an end at 7.45 p.m.

165 Neighbourhood Plan Actions/Policies update

There was no update at this time in relation to open spaces.

166 Grounds Team Report

The Grounds Manager gave a verbal update and apologised to the Committee for the lateness of his report which led to it not being included in the agenda papers when published.

Councillor Graham Hill thanked the Grounds Manager and his team for their work in presenting of the council's open spaces.

NOTED

167 Kings Pond

The Chairman sought agreement to taking the items under this Agenda item in reverse and the Committee considered Car Parking Restrictions first.

Car Parking Restrictions

Members were requested to consider the installation of a 4 hour limit on parking at King's Pond Lodge (Monday to Friday) in order to deter workers from using the free car park and walking to

the station or to the nearby industrial estates.

The Committee unanimously agreed and on the proposal of Councillor James Voller seconded by Councillor Mrs Sharon Cullen it was

RESOLVED

To implement a four hour parking restriction at Kings Pond with the appropriate signage being installed

Sponsored Benches for Lions Club

Alton Lions Club had approached the Town Council expressing their wish to donate a bench at King's Pond to commemorate 100 years of the Club. The Committee had earlier heard from the President of The Lions and the sculptor of the bench which has already been made and ready to be installed.

In concluding their discussions the committee unanimously agreed that The Butts provided an ideal location given its prominence as a gateway to the Town. Given the number of families that use the Butts Councillor Mrs Jones commended that this would provide something for the children to enjoy. With Members noting the bench may require planning or conservation area consent due to the overall size and that in giving consent, this will be subject to planning approval as required. On the proposal of Councillor Mrs Jones seconded by Councillor Voller it was

RESOLVED

The approval of a "Lions" bench and its placement at The Butts subject to planning approval as required.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thank The Lions for the general gift and that a formal letter be sent by the Town Clerk to Mrs. Sarah Donahue.

168 Public Space Protection Orders

At the last meeting, Members vote to defer a decision on the signage denoting that dogs must be kept on leads at its Kings Pond site, but that in the meantime they would temporarily cover over the "dog on lead" symbol located on the entrance signage at King's Pond. Officers until further advice had been taken.

The Clerk's report advised that she had contacted the Assistant Head of Legal Services at Hampshire County Council in respect of the correct interpretation of the current bylaw and whether the sign showing a dog on a lead could remain. Enquiries were also made with Alton Police in respect of Community Protection Notices and whether in their view, such an order might be appropriate for King's Pond.

The Chairman recommended that this item should not be deferred again and that the committee needed to make a decision. Councillor Mrs Pam Jones stated that she had previously agreed to a deferment pending further information and the outcome of the Public Consultations which took place and that as councillors, they had a need to consider all aspects of life, whether human or animal or wildlife and in her opinion the matter of recommending to EHDC the establishment of a PSPOs should now be taken. Members all agreed that Alton Town Council needed to include a request that No Dogs Allowed in Children's Play Areas. Therefore, on the proposal of Councillor Mrs Jones seconded by Councillor Voller it was

RESOLVED to

1. Direct East Hampshire District Council to consider the creations PSPOs for Alton Town Councils Open Spaces, specifically to reinforce the current byelaws on Town Council land where dogs are required to be on a lead (King's Pond and the Public Gardens) and to restrict dogs from being permitted within children's play areas.
2. Restrict the number of dogs able to be exercised at any one time across all of its open spaces, again through a PSPO limiting to a maximum of 5 dogs per walker.

Members further considered the removal of the temporary covers placed over the "dog on lead" symbols on the entrance signage to King's Pond and agreed that these should be removed immediately and, therefore, on the proposal of Councillor Mrs Sharon Cullen, seconded by Councillor Graham Hill it was

RESOLVED

To instruct the grounds team to remove the temporary covers on the "Dogs on Lead" signage at Kings Pond

169 Management Plans – Kings Pond and Flood Meadows

Members commended the reports produced by Footprint Ecology for both Kings Pond and Flood Meadows and which were included in the Supplementary Papers as part of the Agenda Papers.

The reports were considered by the Steering Group at their meeting on 25th September and their response to the reports were included in the reports issued. Councillors agreed that the next steps would be for Footprint Ecology to produce its Management Plan ready to go to Full Council for ratification which needed to include a fully costed report which included priorities against recommendations and that this would be taken to the Budget Workshop in December of this year

The Committee also agreed that the Steering Group should be retained which Councillor Pam Jones chairs.

There were a couple of amendments required in respect of Page 28, Point 6 action 2 needs to be amended to reflect the decision of the Steering Group regarding two feeding points only to be established at Kings Pond.

On the proposal of Councillor Mrs Jones seconded by Councillor Voller it was

RESOLVED

to approve the updated and amended prescriptions and objectives for both draft management plans

170 Allotments Update

Members noted the Allotment Officer's report and further noted that Mrs Samantha Brown would be appearing on Wey Valley Radio on Thursday, 5th October to publicise the Town Council's allotments and to bring a little insight into the administration of those sites at Borovere, Whitedown, Spitalfields & Wooteys and Hawthorns.

NOTED**171 Wey Walk Working Group Update**

At the last meeting (Minute ref 78) Members committed officer resource to create a basic implementation plan and costings for the Wey Walk to enable the submission of an application to secure project funding. The Grounds and Property Administrator has been working on this and the work to date is included in Members supplementary bundles. Members commended Mrs Alexandra Bond on the report produced and the estimate costing spreadsheet. Since the last Meeting they further noted that EHDC had announced that they had committed £15,000 worth of funding to the development of the Wey Walk.

Standing Orders were temporarily suspended in order to question Mrs Louise Parker as to whether the Steering Group had agreed on the logo they wished to be included on signage, who confirmed a decision was imminent.

Members agreed that given the calculated costs of the project this was not a short term one and could take a number of years to develop fully; however they did concur that utilising the monies secured to date to signpost the route could be a deliverable first step.

NOTED**172 Open Spaces – Updates****Barley Fields Consultation on name for site and play equipment**

Enclosed in Members bundles was the data produced from the public consultation undertaken through the summer holidays and noted the two recommendations before them for decision.

Councillor James Voller stated that this item was a “big subject” for the Holybourne Village Association who were very keen that the name for the site should be Balloon Field. Furthermore he felt that the question that had been asked of respondents to the consultation was “leading”. The Town Clerk advised that the Residents Association representing the residents who lived on the development adjoining the open space had wanted the question posed in that way.

Councillor Voller added that the HVA felt that as the site was in their ward, they should have a block vote on the name, but Councillor Graham Hill stated that the open space belongs to the whole of the town of Alton and all views should be canvassed. He added that “block votes” were not part of the process and that all residents of Holybourne had shared the same opportunity to respond to the Public Consultation as everyone else.

Councillor Mrs. Sharon Cullen added that regardless of what the HVA wanted, the results of the consultation were overwhelmingly in favour of the name of Barley Fields for the site and that a public consultation was a consultation based on individual responses and not “on block”.

Councillor James Voller requested a recorded vote on the name of the site element of the recommendation, which was agreed to

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

RESOLVED

To approve “Barley Fields” as the official name for the site

In favour: Councillors Hill, Cullen and Jones
Against: Councillor Voller

On the proposal of Councillor Mrs Jones seconded by Councillor Voller it was

RESOLVED

To approve Company B, Option 1 as the supplier of the play area for the site, requesting the re-orientation so that the metal slides were not south facing.

The precise location of the play area would take into account residents' views that it should not be sited too close to the roadway and should be slightly back.

Netball Courts

The Clerk met with Judy Talbot of Alton Ants this week to go through the proposals for the scheme.

Ms Talbot has said that a wall to practice skills against is vital to the new courts and as such the Clerk will go back to HCC to see if a double sided ball wall could be incorporated into the fence line between the courts and the enlarged skate park area so it can be dual purpose. She has also requested that two clear plastic dug-outs be installed so there is somewhere to place kit bags undercover. Ms Talbot has also asked whether the flood lights will be made operational; the Clerk is still awaiting a costing for replacing the lamps as well as confirmation that the flood lights are still in working order but will be advising on pricing for this once known.

The S106 application is going before the Community Forum on the 31st October and if approved, the Clerk will then advise Hampshire County Council so they can start the mini-competition through their framework contractors.

The Town Clerk confirmed that planning permission would not be required as the existing lights are working; it is the light fitting that requires modification.

Councillor Graham Hill stated that he was pleased to learn that this project is at last moving forward.

NOTED

173 To receive the Meeting Notes of the Footpath Wardens Meeting held on 14th September 2017

Members received the Footpath Wardens Meeting held on 14th September. Councillors noted the passing of local volunteer Robert Athis who was instrumental in developing the Six Hills of Alton walk; the southern part of which had been included in this year's Walking Festival. Councillor Mrs Jones advised that both she and Councillor Hill had attended the funeral.

In raising a number of questions as she was unable to attend the meeting on 14th September, officers confirmed the following:

- Six Hills of Alton would be included in the 2018 Walking Festival and would be dedicated to the memory of Robert Athis

- Approached had been made to land owners to allow temporary access to three areas during the Walking Festival to allow the circulatory walk (Six Hills) to be included and this was awaited.
- No firm progress to report on the owners of the tarmac alleyway which leads from the Bank Car Park to Market Street
- The meeting with Whitchurch Volunteer Group was taking place and noted Councillor Mrs Jones for her support in trying to re-gain the accreditation of "Walkers are Welcome" for Alton

NOTED

174 To receive the Minutes and Recommendations of the Allotments Sub Committee

Members received the Minutes and Recommendations of the Allotments Sub Committee Meeting held on 9th September.

Councillors noted the requests to be put before the Budget Workshop in December for consideration by Full Council when determining the councils budget for 2018/19. The requests were:

- Car parking provision at Spitalfields/Wooteys
- Fencing at Wooteys
- Plot Markers
- Tidying up area for bees on the Wooteys site
- Tree works on sites

NOTED

175 Exclusion of the press and public

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

RESOLVED

that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded.

176 Security Patrol Reports

The Committee received the security patrol reports from Alton Police and noted all incidents as reported. Alton Town ASB has dropped consistently over the last four years,



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

177 Update on CCTV Monitoring relocation to Winchester Control Centre

The Town Clerk reported that there have been some issues regarding the Service Level Agreement with Hampshire Police at Winchester for the CCTV and it is hoped that these will be resolved shortly

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

NOTED

The meeting finished at 8.47pm.
