

76 Updates**76.1 Town Wide Wi-Fi Project**

Following the installation of the town wide Wi-Fi, details of the statistics to date on usage of the service were circulated to Members. Councillor Burns asked if more signage advertising the service could be placed in town.

76.2 Community Facility Update (Brewery Site)

Officers have met with District Council colleagues in respect of the lack of proposed community facilities on the brewery site development as put forward by CALA homes at the recent public exhibition and indeed the financial offer proposed in its place. Officers are currently trying to secure a meeting with CALA home and Molson Coors to address this.

76.3 Assembly Rooms Report

Monitoring meetings continue on a quarterly basis in line with the Collaboration Agreement with Alton Community Association (Schedule 10) together with monthly reporting. The latest monitoring meeting scheduled to be held on the 30th July was postponed and rescheduled for mid-August. Bookings for the first quarter of 2019/20 total £7,757.53 which is approximately £500 down on the previous year but under the new invoicing arrangement for staffing costs, this is around £700 down on this time last year. Overall, the position is therefore stable. The current collaboration agreement with the Community Centre for the Assembly Rooms is due to end on the 31st March 2020 and the Community Centre will need to indicate their intentions to extend or renew the agreement this coming September so we have six months to finalise arrangements. Councillor Hill requested that additional statistical information in respect of the agreement be tabled at future meetings.

Councillor Hill further asked why there were no accounts presented to the Committee as is usual at Policy and Resources Meetings. The Clerk responded that due to the timing of the meeting, the full accounts had been tabled three weeks before at Full Council and so members were up to date in the approval process but yes they would be tabled as required at future meetings.

NOTED

77 Local Government Pension Scheme Consultation Outcomes

Members received with their agenda papers the Town Clerk's response to the Local Government Pension Scheme Consultation. Members thanked the Clerk for her efforts on what appeared to be quite a complicated subject matter and were content that no changes were required to the terms of the Council's membership of the scheme at present but a review would be held in three years' time once valuation figures were available.

78 Climate Change Discussion Group

Attending the evening's main agenda item discussion, Members welcomed colleagues from Energy Alton (EA) and Alton Climate Awareness Network (ACAN):

Eleanor Hill, John Hubbard, Philippa Brealey, Jenny Griffiths, Tony Cohen and Charlotte Wigzell as well as local meteorologist Luke Boxall.

Jenny Griffiths, opened the session by making a short presentation on the findings of a survey undertaken with 200 Alton residents, asking for their views on climate change.

In summary,

- 92% of those surveyed are convinced that the world's climate is changing: 66% very and 26% fairly convinced.
- 90% of respondents are worried about climate change: 44% very and 46% fairly worried.
- Concern about climate change is higher amongst Alton residents than the national average. The Dept. of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Public Attitudes Tracker published data in May 2019 that 80% of people were concerned about climate change (45% fairly concerned and 35% very concerned).
- Nearly half (45%) said that they are prepared to change their behaviour "a lot" to limit climate change; a further 44% said they were prepared to change "a little".
- In response to the question, "Who or what is most likely to help you do more to reduce your carbon emissions?" the top choice was government legislation, the second choice was TV programmes and the third was newspapers and magazines. Social media was next on the list.

Luke Boxall then made a short presentation on global climate change from a meteorological perspective using forecast data issued by the Met Office to give context to the evening's discussions.

The session then broke out into groups to look at the following areas:

- Consider what the Council would need to do to become carbon neutral or zero carbon, and ascertaining its current carbon footprint.
- Understand the scope of the remit, whether it is contained within the Council's own estate or a wider geographical area of the Town
- Identifying "big ticket" items for reducing our emissions, such as property improvements, vehicle and machinery changes. Look at options for off-setting.
- Identifying community projects – those which may not have a large or direct impact on our carbon footprint but are a hook to interest a wider audience in the conversation, though looking at subjects such as waste reduction, reduced reliance on car use, thinking about shopping choices and holiday choices, recycling etc..

A spokesperson from each group then outlined their discussions and ideas, summarised as follows:

- Undertake a Town Council audit over the next 6 months to establish carbon footprint
- Look at quick wins in our green spaces, additional planting
- Look to host an Eco-Festival
- Consider a "Greener Alton" accreditation for businesses to help get them involved
- Investigate Eco-Housing
- Promote the Energy Day to be held at the Assembly Rooms in October
- Finding projects to help people take "first steps" such as pop up vegan café, meat free Friday, swap shops, community fridge etc..
- Look to work collaboratively with surrounding villages and other local authorities to avoid "silos" and duplication of effort
- Looking at funding options including National Lottery

- Appointing a sustainability officer
- Lobbying EHDC to put additional policies in the emerging Local Plan to impose high environmental building standards for new homes
- Educating people on the difference between climate change and recycling
- Persuading people living in existing housing as opposed to new build to look at more energy efficient options including glazing, insulation etc..
- Improving how Alton Town Council manages its own estate in terms of sustainability and energy efficiency
- Appointing a Young Ambassador for Climate Change to connect with local children and teenagers
- Watch or show the “Game Changer” film coming out this September
- Look at setting up local awards or competitions including a category for best natural space or garden at next year’s in Bloom and entering a high profile event like High Street of the Year.

Councillor Jones suggested a Task and Finish Group, or in this case a Task and Progress Group, be set up to explore these ideas further either before or after the next Full Council Meeting when the Climate Emergency motion will be put to Members. The Town Clerk advised that before the Climate Change motion is considered she would like the group to meet so that she can scope out the remit of the motion for members briefing paper, gain an understanding of what tools will be needed to achieve this, officer time, resources and finances and draft the terms of reference for the group.

Councillors Boxall, Cristofoli and Burns said they would be happy to sit on this group, together with John Hubbard from Energy Alton, Phillip Brealey from ACAN and the Town Clerk. The Clerk would contact everyone to set up a meeting shortly.

Councillor Jones thanked everyone for attending and the input to the discussion session.

The meeting finished at 8.46p.m