

- The launch of a survey (which the Town Clerk had sent to all councillors) which opened today and runs until the end of February – ten options and looking for respondents to prioritise four
- To develop a strategic plan – define its focus and key priorities based on the results of the survey from which an operational plan will then be worked up.
- Hold an Annual Forum – setting up an advisory body which will provide advice and guidance. The first meeting to be held in late April and Councillor Pam Jones has kindly agreed to chair
- Walking Festival – promoting the festival and working with ATC
- Transport Projects – there is a well-established Community Rail Partnership and wish to create similar with bus travel and holding discussions with Stagecoach
- Local Walking Promotion – liaising with other walking groups and developing new ideas – producing maps and guides.
- Walkers are Welcome – encouraging local town networks and encouraging other neighbouring towns to gain the accreditation.
- Hosting the 2022 Walkers are Welcome Annual event
- Engaging with local businesses – raising funds and promoting opportunities
- Develop and improve the website.

Councillor Pam Jones thanked him for the very comprehensive presentation which was echoed by all members of the Committee.

NOTED

224 **Questions and representations from Members of the Public**

1. Mr Dodd: Kings Pond: questioned why the three photographs contained in the Committee Reports were without comment. Also, in item 7.5.2 again comments about paths but no feedback. Are we going to get feedback on the paths at King's Pond? What will the committee say to the public now the trees on the pond have fallen into the island where the swan nests – what will happen if the foxes kill this year's cygnets?

Councillor Pam Jones advised the paths would be discussed later in the meeting and asked the Clerk to add the matter of the trees to the Steering Group Meeting later in the month.

2. Mr Quincey: Kings Pond: Advised that the swans appear to be preparing a nesting site not on the island. He had been told in good faith by a person of repute that an alleged survey of paths had been undertaken by Alton Town Council. When was the council going to address the report to the council of some 5 years ago which had stated that the path needed regular maintenance and nothing had ever happened with the exception of the gravel path and when were the Committee going to consider further remedial works? The gravel path is a path of two halves, the area by the bungalows is the consistency of chicken feed and still needs remedial work; the remainder of the path it is fine.
3. Tanya Applegath: Kings Pond: How often are the water levels monitored?

Councillor Pam Jones advised that the Environment Agency regular monitors the water levels and in fact advises Alton Town Council when and if the weir should be cleared of debris as it has an impact on water levels further downstream. Councillor Pam Jones further advised

that she has posted the website on social media to enable members of the public to view the data that the Environment Agency monitor.

4. The Town Clerk advised that she had received correspondence from Miss Applegath on the question of BBQs asking is there a chance the rules on BBQ could be relaxed at some of the open spaces so families can enjoy the outdoors.

In response to the comment from Mr. Quincey regarding swans nesting at an alternative site, the Town Clerk asked whether he could be specific as to where he had observed activity? He responded that they might not be nesting but they are actively clearing a site on the left-hand end of the pond attached to the mainland on the Ashdell Road side. The Town Clerk would ask the grounds team to further investigate.

225 Current Projects

The Committee received updates on current projects underway:

225.1 **Will Hall Farm – Lower Field**

There has been communication between the solicitors acting for Redrow and ATC. It is hoped that draft contracts for review will be forthcoming shortly.

225.2 **King's Pond**

Following a number of concerns regarding run off and flooding issues, the Committee agreed that a proper survey of the run-off and drainage issues needs to be undertaken and the Town Clerk is to make contact with the Hydrologist who undertook a report in respect of the Coors Brewery site and obtain a quote. This should look holistically at the issues and provide an indication as to the reduction which could be expected under various options and what are the most cost-effective solutions.

Councillor Boxall raised the issue of the silt trap to be installed as part of the brewery development and whether it was known when this was likely to be undertaken? Cllr Jones asked if, in her role as District Councillor, Cllr Boxall could ask the case officer at EHDC as no timings had been given.

225.3 **Flood Meadows**

Full details of the expenditure for the project being undertaken to the river bed was included in councillor bundles at a cost of £2,580. However as additional works are required to the river banks the Committee agreed that the additional licence fees and design works should also be covered and this would require a further £800 of funding.

On the proposal of Councillor Ginny Boxall, seconded by Councillor Suzie Burns it was

RESOLVED to

Approve expenditure in the sum of £3,380 from the Flood Meadows budget to fund the two projects (river bed and river banks work)

225.4 **Holybourne Pond**

Councillor Paul Crossley undertook to update the Committee on the current position in respect of ownership of Holybourne Pond and potential costs for the silt works that are required. It would appear that ownership had not been clearly established in the sale and a letter has been issued to Land Registry to ascertain who is the legal owner of the pond. Meanwhile costs for the works is based on the toxicity of the silt and whether treated as

hazardous waste. Estimates are between 600/800 cubic metres require removal with indicative costings of between £20/35,000. Further updates are pending.

225.5 **PSPOs**

The Chair read out the outcome of the EHDC meeting which had approved patrols and enforcement of fines allowed by legislation in respect of dog fouling. For persistent offenders there was an option for a Court Summons which attracted a maximum fine of £1,000. EHDC Cabinet had approved:

(i) Cabinet recommends that Council makes a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in relation to the control of dogs under the Anti-Social Behaviour and Police Act 2014. To include the following offences:

- a. Person in charge of a dog must remove faeces deposited by that dog.
- b. Failure to put the dog on a lead when requested to do so by an authorised officer.
- c. Exclusion of dogs from fenced and gated play areas.
- d. Dogs must be on a lead in East Hampshire District Council owned cemeteries.

(ii) That £100 fixed penalty notices are adopted to tackle offences disclose; and

(iii) Authority be delegated to the Head of Service for Neighbourhood Support in consultation with the portfolio holder to carry out all necessary publicity required by virtue of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (Public Space Protection Orders) regulations.

The Chair suggested that this might be a good time to look at putting a small task and finish group together to look not just at the implementation of PSPO on our open spaces but also the request heard earlier this evening about BBQs and the increasing number of street vendors looking to trade on town council land. The group could review the requests and the PSPO position so that everyone is clear on what is permitted and what is not.

The Committee agreed that a small working group be established to report to Policy & Resources in respect of the above.

226 **Grounds Team Report**

The Grounds Team Report was tabled as per the published agenda papers. The Committee thanked the grounds team for the comprehensive report and all questions/clarifications raised were answered by officers. Members requested that it be formally Minuted that the grounds team should be commended on keeping all of the council's open spaces well maintained during the lock down periods.

NOTED

227 **Allotments Report**

The Allotments Report was tabled as published with the Agenda papers with renewals now being issued.

NOTED

228 **ALFI Tree Planting**

A request has been received from ALFI seeking approval to plant fruit and nut trees on the Council's open spaces. In discussion with the Senior Groundsmen, consideration could be given

to either the Lower Field at Will Hall Farm (once transferred to the Town Council) or the far side of the open space at Barley Fields which is currently used as a wildflower meadow walk area.

On the proposal of Councillor Sharon Cullen, seconded by Councillor Ginny Boxall it was

**RESOLVED to
Approve the planting of fruit and nut trees on Barley Fields
with a recommendation for Apples, Pears, Plums and
Quinces.**

229 To receive Meeting Notes

The Meeting Notes of the Walk Alton AGM of 7th December 2020 and Committee Meeting held on 19th January 2021 were received and the Flood Meadows and Kings Pond Steering Group meeting held on 19th November 2020.

Councillor Suzie Burns confirmed that there had been no Friends of Kings Pond sessions due to lock down and until such time as the restrictions were lifted the volunteer group would not be able to operate.

The Town Clerk confirmed that she is still investigating a professional “egg oiling” company to undertake this year’s task but would seek guidance from Dr. June Chatfield as to when nesting is taking place as there is only a short window of opportunity to undertake this.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Bio Blitz is still being planned to take place at the end of June and Swan Support had been invited to attend.

NOTED

The meeting closed at 8.23 p.m.