

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – 2nd JUNE 2021**

REPORTS BY THE TOWN CLERK

ITEM 6 ALTON AWARDS (Inc MAYORS RECEPTION)

FOR DECISION

At the last meeting (13th January) it was resolved to set up a Task and Finish Group chaired by Councillors Burns to meet and make a recommendation to the committee.

In discussion with Councillor Burns it was felt that given the committee's deliberations that it might be for the Town Council to host an award event for others to make awards, i.e bringing together the existing groups who make awards each year and adding further awards identified through a gap analysis. It was felt that this would be most appropriate as an event to have its inaugural ceremony in 2022. This was with the expectation that there might be the opportunity for a non-socially distanced event by then and would give the time to approach existing groups such as the Alton Society and Lions time to join with the council in this endeavour.

In the meantime, it was noted that former councillor Peter Whitmarsh had offered to fund an award for a young person within the Town for this year. Given the continuing lockdown and the realistic possibility of not having an awards ceremony in 2021, it was agreed that this award should be progressed with a view to making a one-off presentation for this year at the Mayor making, with the award being made in subsequent years at either the Mayors Reception or a Town Council organised/hosted ceremony from 2022 onward.

The first Task and Finish Group meeting was thus held in February to consider two strands of work – firstly the deliverability of a Youth Award for 2021 and then progression of the concept of a dedicated awards ceremony for 2022. David Allan and Lisa Hillan were invited to attend the meetings as community representatives. Both have extensive experience in both working with young people but are also well known with many community groups and both were happy to be involved.

The wording of the Youth award and eligibility was discussed and agreed with Mr Whitmarsh. The award will be an "open nomination" process inviting nominations from the public from 2022 but for the inaugural award, David and Lisa approached all the groups and schools associated with young people in the town to seek nominations. These nominations were then reviewed by the Task and Finish Group at a subsequent meeting in April and a recipient for 2021 chosen. The award, as members are aware, was presented at last week's Annual Meeting of the Council.

In progressing the second strand of work, Events Officer Emily Messenger undertook a gap analysis, identifying those who already host awards and canvassing local groups including those whom it was thought appropriate to contact as they may have future plans for awards. The feedback from the local groups who do not already have awards was generally negative – noting that they prefer to acknowledge the work of all their volunteers/fundraisers/supporters and that identifying individuals as recipients could be seen as either divisive or worse, making awards to the same people who are often already identified in this way.

The Task and Finish Group reviewed this and concluded that, with the exception of the Youth Award, where there was an identified gap which had organically been filled by the approach from Mr Whitmarsh, the preferred approach to an awards ceremony was to shine a light on a particular

sector in our community to celebrate their achievements in a given year rather than bring together an unconnected list of individual award winners. Discussion turned to the guest list for the Mayor's Reception and how this event could be re-imagined to celebrate our community in this way, inviting the grass roots of community service rather than chairs and presidents of long-established groups. The recommendation of the Task and Finish group is that this be tried for the Mayors reception this year. The event is scheduled for the first Saturday in September as a joint event for both incumbent and immediate past Mayors with the pandemic as the theme, so celebrating local GPs, mutual aid volunteers, community drivers, etc. both Councillor Titterington and Councillor Jones have been approached and both are happy with the concept and theme for 2021.

Members are requested to endorse the recommendation of the Awards Task and Finish Group to utilise the Mayor's Reception to celebrate the work of certain sectors of the community chosen on an annual basis rather than making awards to a number of individuals. On this basis, the only award made by the Town Council going forward will be the Whitmarsh Award for which the nominations each year will be reviewed by a panel made up of one councillor and two community representatives with the award made at the Mayors Reception.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to endorse the recommendation of the Awards Task and Finish Group as detailed above.

ITEM 7 COMMUNITY STREETWATCH

FOR DECISION

This item is on the agenda at the request of Councillor Bayliss for the Council to consider a scheme for Alton. Below are details of the scheme at Four Marks.

Street Watch are ordinary local residents of Four Marks who care about our village and want to promote good citizenship. We provide a visible reassurance to the wider community and a friendly face, always ready for a chat as we patrol around the village on a regular basis. Wearing high visibility jackets, we patrol in pairs to assist the local police in preventing crime and antisocial behaviour. The concept started in 2008 with a blaze of publicity and has been operating in Four Marks ever since, especially during the school run in the mornings. This voluntary organisation is fully supported by Hampshire Constabulary with a set of guidelines and code of conduct which has been approved as part of the wider Safer Neighbourhood Scheme. Please stop us and have a friendly chat as we walk around the village. All of our members are well informed about what is going on in Four Marks and will be happy to try and answer any questions you may have. We are also pleased to act as a conduit to the police, for relaying information about what you may consider to be trivial or time-wasting matters. It all matters, if it is of concern to you then it is of concern to us. On occasions, small bits of information, collated together form a bigger picture which can be acted on by the police in making our streets ever safer.

The Town Clerk has contacted Deputy Leader of EHDC Councillor Julie Butler who is an active Member of Petersfield Community Streetwatch and very supportive of both the concept and what it can achieve. She has kindly extended an invitation for any councillor who is interested to join her for a Streetwatch session at Petersfield on a Friday evening if anyone would like to find out more and see what the scheme can and cannot do.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to consider whether to progress the concept of Community Street Watch for Alton in the first instance by nominating two councillors to undertake a practical session with Cllr Butler at Petersfield.

ITEM 8 TOURISM AND TOURIST ACCOMODATION FOR DISCUSSION

This item is on the agenda at the request of the Chair. Members are requested to discuss their views on how the Town Council could promote tourism and locally available accommodation to help the town economy. Ideally, in order to keep discussion succinct, Members are asked to exchange e-mails in advance of the meeting to circulate their ideas, so they can be brought together at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: This is a discussion item only

ITEM 9 ATC EVENTS PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22 FOR DECISION

EVENTS 2021

Below is the draft programme for BioBlitz. This is an ATC event run in partnership with Hampshire Biodiversity.

Programme for Day - Bio Blitz, King's Pond, 26th June, 9am-3pm (main event)			
Time	Action	Who	Group Size
7.30am	Early Bird Walk	Peter Hutchins	10
8.00am	AVALN / ACAN litter pick	Phillipa Brearley	NOT PUBLIC
9.00am	Insect identification walk (clockwise)	Ron Allen (EPCG)	10
9.15am	Family wildlife ID and ecology walk	Meg Cathcart-James	10
9.30am	Bird identification walk	Peter Hutchins	10
10.00am	Snail trail	June Chatfield	10
10.30am	Family nature identification walk	Mike Hackston	10
10.45am	Family wildlife ID and ecology walk	Meg Cathcart-James	10
11.00am	Insect identification walk (anticlockwise)	Ron Allen (EPCG)	10
11.30am	Bird identification walk	Peter Hutchins	10

12.00pm	wild plants	June Chatfield	10
12.30pm	Family nature identification walk	Mike Hackston	10
1.00pm	Family wildlife ID and ecology walk	Meg Cathcart-James	10
1.30pm	Bird identification walk	Peter Hutchins	10
1.45pm	Mosses	Helen Boyce &/or June Chatfield	10
2.00pm	Family wildlife ID and ecology walk	Meg Cathcart-James	10
2.15pm	Plant identification walk	Gareth Hurd	10
2.30pm	Family nature identification walk	Mike Hackston	10
9.00pm	Bat Identification @ Dusk	Hampshire Bat Group	20

EventBrite will be going live within the next week for people to book onto these sessions. We are grateful for a small grant from Councillor Burns for the purchase of two solar capable power banks so that experts from Hampshire Biodiversity can upload all the results as they come in throughout the BioBlitz on their laptops. There will be hourly updates on the number of species identified and the Town Clerk is looking to live stream and upload to social media handles throughout the day.

On behalf of the Council, the officers would very much like to thank all the experts who are helping to bring this event together. The draft press release, with more details is included in councillor bundles.

A list of all other confirmed events for summer 2021 (including those organised and run by third parties) is also included in members bundles.

Review of Walking and Cycling Festival and plans for 2022

We have been incredibly pleased to have been able to run a full programme of events for the month-long festival in 2021 and attendees have repeatedly expressed their thanks at being able to enjoy the event, working within the current restrictions but giving people the opportunity to get out and about again. The final walk to Whitchurch will be on Monday, waved off by the Town Mayor and welcomed by the Mayor of Whitchurch after 26 miles!

As usual we will obtain full feedback following the conclusion of the Festival but already we have been asked about how we take the month “to the next level” extending our reach, possibly tying in with local establishments to offer walking or cycling weekends, ultra-length walks or rides, more self-guided routes and so on. Members are asked if this is something they would like officers to develop over the coming months to present at the next meeting.

For noting - At this stage that we are at capacity with officer support on the Festival as it stands as it is administratively heavy and we are very grateful for the continuing support of the volunteers who

actively participate in every walk and ride. If we do seek to expand, there may be a budgetary implication for additional administrative resource and advertising costs, just so members are aware.

Yuletide 2021.

Plans are progressing well for Yuletide. A couple of additions since the last meeting for Members to please consider.

- 1) We do not have the budget for the much requested “baby marmots” to accompany Marmite and Meribel but the manufacturers have designed 2D baby marmots which could be used in Market Square on lamp posts or on buildings. Designs are included in councillors’ bundles and are £900 each so for 5 would come within the allocated budget for additional lighting.

- 2) We stated at the last meeting that *“the market on the 20th November would be followed by a traditional Christmas light Switch on in Market Square with a fully decorated tree and possibly some smaller live trees which can then be planted out and reused in the public gardens. Officers will also investigate the possibility of extending the Christmas lighting into the Public Gardens.”*
On reflection it would appear counter intuitive to have a fully decorated cut tree in market Square, and officers are looking at purchasing a live 8 – 10ft tree which could also be planted out alongside the smaller trees. We could ask local businesses if they might like to sponsor or decorate a tree and maybe tie in with the Christmas Tree Festival at St Lawrence.
Extending the Christmas lighting into the Public Gardens may be cost prohibitive but officers are also looking at other options including the installation of permanent coloured up-lighters to enhance the gardens at dusk and early evening throughout Autumn, Winter and Spring.

Alton Literary Festival (ALF) – 2022

Following a suggestion from Councillor Boxall the Clerk has been working on an outline concept for a new event for 2022 which could either run in July in place of Last Night of the Prom as this is the final year, or could be a tie-in with Regency Week and held in June.

This could be a one-day event or longer depending upon the programme and could include:

- Working with Chawton House Library, Jane Austen House Museum and Gilbert White on talks and visits.
- Guided walks along the Writers Way (13-mile trail walk)
- Heritage Walks e.g Holybourne (Elizabeth Gaskell) Alton and Chawton (Jane Austen)
- Children’s Writing Competition in association with Alton Library
- Readings by local authors.
- Promotional events with Waterstones, Holybourne Rare Books and Alton Second-hand Books
- A public book swap possibly in partnership with ACAN

Members are asked to consider if this is something for which they would like more officer hours committed to develop further for presenting at the next meeting.

Other updates.

The Civil War Re-enactment has been rebooked for the beginning of May 2022.

We are delighted to confirm Specsavers as Headline Sponsor once again for 2021 and we are also very grateful to Mascolo and Styles who just this week have agreed a brand-new sponsorship deal; it is great to have more companies coming on board.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to review the report above and consider their approval of:

Installation of Baby Marmots as column lights in Market Square

Progression by officers of a new event for 2022 Alton Literary Festival (ALF)

ITEM 10 CIL EXPENDITURE (BREWERY SITE)

FOR DISCUSSION

Members are requested to have an initial discussion over the use of the CIL monies generated from the brewery site. The estimated figure is in excess of £500,000 but confirmation of the final figure is awaited from the case officer.

The indicative figure for the fit out of the shell and core facility of the new community building is likely to be around £180,000 - £200,000 plus fees and Members are requested to discuss whether there is an expectation that CIL should be used for this purpose and if so to make this recommendation to Full Council. In addition, members are asked to identify any other infrastructure projects which they would like to be considered going forward for CIL funding including other community buildings within the town, open spaces or projects such as transport.

RECOMMENDATION: This item is for discussion with any recommendations to be placed before Full Council in due course.

ITEM 11 ALTON AMBASSADORS (LITTER) AND TERRACYCLE FOR DISCUSSION

The item in respect of Terracycle has been brought to the committee by Councillor Titterington who noted, "There is a conversation on social media about a recycling scheme run by Terracycle. Its USP seems to be that it recycles things that other recycling schemes won't accept. It works at many levels from household recycling cartons to industrial collections for specific types of waste. Is it something the Town Council should be considering?"

Members are requested to look at the website and submit their views in advance of the meeting to keep the discussion succinct.

<https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB>

In a related item and following on from the Litter Task and Finish Group meeting Councillor Boxall has requested a discussion on the concept of Alton Ambassadors, referring to civic pride in the town and how such a role could be used to promote a litter free Alton.

RECOMMENDATION: This is a discussion item to consider ideas for the committee to progress in future meetings.

ITEM 12 TALKING BENCHES

FOR INFORMATION

Arising from the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan agreed at the last meeting, the Town Clerk met with Susi Drummond from ABRI to discuss progressing the concept of Happy to Talk Benches in town.

Below is an update from Susi on her work to date on this:

I just wanted to give you an update on the Happy to Talk Benches. I have done some initial research and created a first draft PID (Project Initiation Document) outlining the project which is currently with my Line Manager for review. Further along I will also need to include a risk assessment and equality and diversity inclusion document, which of course I'm happy to share with you. I have a few points and questions to raise/ask in the meantime.

Questions:

- 1. I have presumed the project will be using existing benches around the town, is this correct? Whereabouts did A.T.C. have in mind, are there any key hotspots areas you would like me to focus on? Some guidance on this would be appreciated.*
- 2. As there may be some minimal costs I would probably apply for a Cllr grant unless you think there might be a better funding pot. Abri also has a community funding pot for up to 3K but I cannot apply to this myself. If new benches are required the costs may be more but that could be a phase II if the first rollout phase goes well and maybe the Abri funding pot could be used to match fund?*
- 3. Am I right in thinking that A.T.C will take ownership of this project once it has been established?*

To raise awareness we would need to produce a comms campaign involving social media, a press release and links to existing newsletters to accompany the rollout of the happy to talk benches. Our comms team can help with this but they do have a three-week lead time, so planning is essential. I also have an idea to use existing volunteers in the town to help launch the project by making them available for short periods of time on the benches and encouraging conversations and displaying what the project is all about. I thought maybe the PCSO's could also be involved. Let me know what you think.

I think we should focus on the happy to talk benches initially and then follow on with the chat mats in the cafes and other indoor venues. The reason for this is that cafes have only just re-opened their inside seating from lockdown so I think a delay in approaching them might be prudent whilst they get back to business, would you agree? Again some guidance on preferred locations would be helpful.

Thank you, if you could give me your thoughts on this, that would be great.

The Town Clerk has responded to comment that in the first instance the benches at the Assembly Rooms Lawn and in Market Square or in the Public Gardens (which may be a little more discrete) may be appropriate rather than buying any new benches. Tuesdays and Fridays might be good to start with as they are busy days in town or maybe at Saturday morning for those who work during the week. Once the programme is established potentially the Town Council could look to take it on but in the first instance, we would be completely reliant on ABRI's expertise and ability to recruit volunteers! On the comms front ATC can certainly help with promoting this partnership working project.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are asked for their views and further comments on this project.