

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 19th OCTOBER 2022 AT 7.00 PM
Held in the Town Hall, Market Square**

Present: **Councillor** **Graham Titterington**
 Matthew Bayliss
 Graham Hill
 Lewis Jones

In attendance in person:

Leah Coney - Town Clerk
Pat Harris – Finance & Administration Manager
1 Member of the Public.

102 Chairman's Announcements

There were no announcements

103 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Ginny Boxall & Suzie Burns

104 Minutes of the previous meeting.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2022 were approved and signed by the Chair.

105 Declarations of Interest

The Chairman reminded members of their obligation to disclose any pecuniary interest in items on the agenda.

106 To consider Requests for Dispensations

There were no requests made for Dispensations.

107 Questions to the Council.

None were received.

108 Alton Energy Advice Café

The Committee welcomed Jenny Griffiths who provided an update on the Alton Energy Advice Café advising that following the formal launch on 28th September, they now had 15 volunteers which included one councillor - Councillor Graham Hill. They had received 35 visitors to the café who required assistance in the form of those who needed help with reducing their energy consumption as well as those seeking information on energy saving measures such as solar panels, better insulation of their homes and air source heat pumps. There had been 10 requests for Energy Surveys which are undertaken by Energy Alton assessors.

Each visitor to the Café, on average, requires 30 minutes and although they wish to push the offering, they are conscious that more volunteers will be required as it gets busier. The Committee also suggested that the on-line support offering should effectively mirror that of the in person offering.

In order to provide on-going support to the joint venture between the Council and ACAN, Members received a report on the requirement to extend the funding for the Alton Energy Advice Café until 31st March 2023 through funding of rent, rates and utilities up to a value of £7,232 to cover up to the end of the current financial year.

Jenny advised the Committee that ACAN were to improve the energy efficiency of the Café by installing secondary glazing and putting up thermal lined curtains.

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

RESOLVED to

Approve the funding for the Alton Energy Advice Café until 31st March 2023 through funding of rent, rates and utilities up to a value of £7,232 to cover to the end of the current financial year. Funds to be taken from the current Climate Change budget.

The vote was carried unanimously

109 Climate Change Sub Committee – update

Members received an update from Councillor Graham Hill along with the minutes from the last meeting. The Committee discussed how further support could be given to ACAN and whether such support by way of administrative as well as operational requirements would be funded.

The Committee requested that the Town Clerk look to include the ACAN core cost requirements (c£2,800 for 2023/24) as well as the cost of administrative support through an increase to the Climate Change cost code to be tabled at Budget Workshop in December.

The Clerk asked Members to confirm for the benefit of Jenny Griffiths (present at the meeting) that ACAN therefore need not apply to the Community Grant fund when it opens next month to bid for funding for next year if this is likely to be funded through the Climate Change fund. Members confirmed this to be the position.

NOTED

110 Accounts to 30th September 2022 and Conclusion of Audit

The second quarter Accounts from 1st July to 30th September 2022 were tabled together with the Conclusion of Audit:

1. Balance Sheet as at 30th September 2022
2. Income & Expenditure to 30th September 2022
3. Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30th September 2022
4. Payments over £500 issued between 1st July to 30th September 2022 in respect of invoices.
5. External Audit Report

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

RESOLVED to approve:

1. **The Income and Expenditure account to 30th September 2022**
2. **The balance sheet dated 30th September 2022**
3. **The bank reconciliations for the Unity Account and the CCLA Deposit Account**
4. **The Payments over £500 covering 1st July to 30th September 2022**
5. **External Auditors Report**

The vote was carried unanimously

111 Appointment of External Auditors for the period 2022/23 to 2027/28

The Committee received the letter to the SAAA noting that the Council's Internal Auditor has recommended that the Council be informed of the notification and that a decision should be recorded in the Minutes of the Council. Members were requested to confirm that they do not wish to opt-out of the current External Audit regime and wish the SAAA to appoint an external auditor for the period 2022/23 to 2027/28.

On the proposal of Councillor Matthew Bayliss, seconded by Councillor Graham Titterington, it was

RESOLVED to confirm that they do not wish to opt-out of the current External Audit regime and wish the SAAA to appoint an external auditor for the period 2022/23 to 2027/28.

The vote was carried unanimously

112 Assembly Rooms Contract

Members received the report tabled by the Town Clerk to extend the current collaboration agreement with the Community Centre. There are no changes to the current agreement proposed, save an increase in the monthly management fee which is currently still being charged at 50% of the pre-covid rate. (The pre-covid rate was £1,050 – current rate £525.) The request for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 is to increase the rate to around 75%/80% of the pre-covid rate to circa £800 per month.

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

RESOLVED to approve the extension of the current agreement for a further 12 months to 31st March 2024 with the Alton Community Centre and increase the monthly fee to circa £800 per month

The vote was carried unanimously

113 Open Spaces Catering Contract 2022/23

The Committee received the one Tender submitted in respect of the Open Spaces Catering Contract for the period 1st November 2022 to 31st October 2023. The tender is for all three sites namely the Public Gardens, Anstey Park and Jubilee Playing Fields.)

On the proposal of Councillor Graham Hill seconded by Councillor Matthew Bayliss it was

RESOLVED to approve the tender for the Catering Contract and award to Ben Adams & Dayne Cartwright trading as Acorn Coffee & Cake in the sum of £9,600 to include trading at the Public Gardens, Anstey Park and Jubilee Playing Fields

The vote was carried unanimously

114 Sports Pitch and Changing Room Hiring Fees 1st April 2023

Officers tabled a report for an increase in the hire charges for sports pitch bookings and changing room hire fees requesting an increase in fees of 5% for sports pitches and 7% for changing room hire. The increase is requested to cover the rising costs of materials for marking out pitches and utilities.

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

RESOLVED to approve the recommended increases in the hire fees for sports pitches and changing rooms at Anstey Park and Jubilee Playing Fields with effect from 1st April 2023

The vote was carried unanimously

115 Update Reports for Information

(a) Edgar Hall (former St. John Ambulance Building.)

The Town Clerk advised that the Expression of Interest deadline was Wednesday, 26th October and there had been a number of organisations which had attended the open morning on Saturday, 8th October to view the building. Any responses received by the deadline would be reviewed and put before Full Council on 9th November for their consideration. Members wished to confirm that the Council was under no obligation to approve a user should it not be satisfied by the submissions received. The Town Clerk confirmed this was correct and if more information was needed on a preferred option a decision could be deferred.

The Town Clerk commented that it had been suggested by Council Grounds staff that the building may be suitable for the Council to relocate to, given its ground floor accessible location, ability to decarbonise and the adjacent car parking but this had not been given consideration given the current process underway. Members felt that this suggestion may have merit depending upon the options for the Town Hall and requested the Town Clerk research this further and submit an expression of interest within the published timescale.

(b) Town Centre Health Check

The Lichfield updated report had been circulated to all councillors and placed in the public domain as well as being passed to EHDC. The Town Clerk confirmed that it is on the Agenda for discussion at the Placemaking Strategy Group meeting next month.

NOTED**116 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

On the proposal of Councillor Graham Titterington, seconded by Councillor Graham 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

117 Developer Land Transfer Public Open Space

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

118 Staffing Update

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The meeting finished at 8.40 p.m.