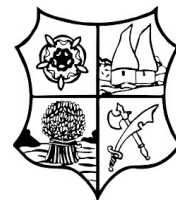


ALTON Town Council



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Town Clerk: Leah Coney

Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HD

21st October 2020

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the **FULL COUNCIL** on **Wednesday 28th October at 7.00pm** when the under mentioned business will be transacted.

Due to current government regulations this meeting will be held remotely using video conferencing. For meeting security, the meeting code and password to log in will be sent to Members separately and any member of the public wishing to attend is asked to e-mail townclerk@alton.gov.uk and log in details will be sent.

Yours faithfully

LConey

Leah Coney
Town Clerk

To: All Town Councillors

Councillor Matthew Bayliss
Councillor Ginny Boxall
Councillor Pam Bradford
Councillor Suzie Burns
Councillor Gideon Cristofoli
Councillor Paul Crossley
Councillor Sharon Cullen
Councillor Amanda Durley
Councillor Graham Hill
Councillor Pam Jones
Councillor Christopher Lawrence
Councillor Richard Platt
Councillor Graham Titterington

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 28th OCTOBER 2020
TOWN HALL, MARKET SQUARE, ALTON
AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Town Mayor's announcements
- 3 Leader's announcements
- 4 Minutes of the last meeting held on 8th July, 5th August and the Extra-ordinary Meeting of 19th August
- 5 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensations - Councillors are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest. You must withdraw when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter
- 6 Questions to the Council. Members of the public are invited to make representations
- 7 Covid-19 risk assessment for Town Hall and Council staff.
- 8 Alton Neighbourhood Plan Review.
- 9 Alton & District Community Resilience Fund Update (for information)
- 10 Conclusion of External Audit
- 11 Non-Financial Risk Assessments 2020
- 12 Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
- 13 Youth Project - updated report by Lisa Hillan (for information)
- 14 Statement of Accounts to 30th September 2020 and Q2 Internal Audit.
- 15 Government Planning White Paper.
- 16 ACAN reallocation of Community Grant – deferred from Policy and Resources (14th October)
- 17 To receive a report from and ask questions of the County Council and District Council representative
- 18 To receive the minutes from the following Committees: -

Open Spaces Committee – 22nd July 2020

Planning & Transport – 15th July, 12th August, 9th September & 7th October 2020.

Community Committee – 30th September 2020

Policy & Resources Committee 14th October 2020

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL – 28th OCTOBER 2020**

REPORTS BY THE TOWN CLERK

ITEM 7 COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT FOR TOWN HALL

FOR DECISION

Enclosed in Members bundles is the updated Covid-19 Risk Assessment for the Town Council to enable the Town Hall to reopen for staff and to advise a wider audience on the measures taken to safeguard staff and contractors across our sites. At the current time both NALC and the Society of Local Council Clerks are strongly advising local councils to continue to meet remotely, without the need for face-to-face contact. With the message to continue to work from home where possible but balancing the business needs of the organisation and the health and wellbeing of our staff, officers are advocating a continuation of home working for part of the week with office work on a rotational basis to limit numbers but to ensure the smooth running of the council as we move forward. This document will be reviewed on an on-going basis as government advice changes but a further full review will take place at the end of December.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the updated risk assessment as presented.

ITEM 8 ALTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW

FOR DECISION

The Alton Neighbourhood Plan was “made” in February 2016 and is currently being considered for review as it reaches 5 years old. Members have attended two workshop sessions earlier this month to look at the options in order to have dedicated discussions prior to putting a recommendation to Full Council to determine a way forward. Both sessions were also attended by David Allan and Mike Heelis who were at the forefront of the original plan and Members were also joined by Simon Jenkins and Vicki Potts from EHDC for the first session along with Neil Homer, a Neighbourhood Plan consultant.

The options equate to either:

- 1) Undertake no review at this time,
- 2) Undertake a full review either with or without considering housing allocations.
- 3) Undertake a modification to the current plan, only considering the housing allocation policies.

There have been delays to the advancement of the new Local Plan at EHDC and with the Government White Papers proposing a radical overall to the current planning system there are risks associated with all of the options.

If the Council chose to forego any review at this time in view of likely future changes to the planning system, this combined with the delayed Local Plan could result in a complete policy vacuum for some time.

However, if there is there is a radical overall of the planning system within the next 2 years, the amount of time and resources poured into a review could be without merit should national policy overtake events.

In the knowledge of this Members felt strongly that the “do nothing” option was not a risk worth taking and therefore this option was therefore discounted.

Members also considered whether to undertake a full review of the Neighbourhood Plan which will take around 18months. There was concern that option would take too long and be too labour intensive given the uncertainty about the longer-term status of Neighbourhood Plans in light of the Governments proposals. It was also felt that this option gave the greatest window of opportunity for developers in the short to medium term of speculative development applications in inappropriate locations, providing no protection to Alton in the intervening period. This option was therefore also discounted.

Members then considered the option to modify the existing Neighbourhood Plan and just look to amend the housing allocations contained within the plan in order to give protection to Alton judged against the three year housing land supply, as suggested by EHDC. It is envisaged that this could be undertaken over a shorter time frame, utilising the evidence base already collated by EHDC in the draft Local Plan Consultation and with assistance from EHDC and/or external consultants this could progress through the regulatory process within around 9 months from commencement. Members felt that this was the safest balance of risk and use of resources to provide the best level of protection for Alton under the current prevailing legislation and with the backdrop of the current status of the draft Local Plan. Members requested that this option be put forward to Full Council for approval. Members also agreed that this would require the ANP Steering Group to be re-convened, with Councillors Pam Jones and Graham Titterington volunteering to be the Council representatives. David Allan and Mike Heelis also agreed to sit on the Steering Group and Members wished an invitation be extended to the Alton Society to nominate community representative. Officers from ATC would provide administrative support, along with officers from EHDC and potentially an external consultant.

There is an allocated budget with the approved cost codes for 2020/2021 for this work which can be devolved to the Steering Group but a grant application could also be submitted to Locality to offset the costs or fund work above the grant funding allocation.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve:

- 1) To undertake a modification of the existing neighbourhood Plan over the next 9 months, only reviewing the Housing Allocation policies contained within the plan.
- 2) The re-convening of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and with membership as detailed above.
- 3) Devolve the allocated budget for 2020/2021 to the Steering Group Submit a grant application to Locality to assist in the financing of the review.

ITEM 9 ALTON & DISTRICT COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUND FOR INFORMATION

Enclosed in Members bundles is the updated financial information for the fund.

The Alton & District Community Resilience Fund Panel has already supported 15 households since the launch of the fund back in July. The Panel has approved a variety of goods and services for local people, ranging from the supply and installation of carpets, cookers and ovens, to the supply of fridge freezers, beds and mattresses, assistance with house moves and the loan of a bicycle. With over £20,000 in donations made to the fund we are extremely grateful to all of the local organisations, businesses and individuals who have so generously helped launch and sustain the fund.

The fund remains open for applications for residents of Alton and the surrounding parishes and details have been included in the paper Altonian which will be delivered to every household in Alton and the surrounding villages next month. Further details and the application form can be found on the Alton Town Council website.

RECOMMENDATION: This report is for information only.

ITEM 10 CONCLUSION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR DECISION

Enclosed in Members bundles is a copy of the conclusion of external audit examination for 2020. The auditor highlighted a box which has been inadvertently ticked on the statement of accounts form which was subsequently sent back for correction and resubmission. There were no other comments arising and no matters raised.

RECOMMENDATION. Members are requested to approve the conclusion of external audit as presented.

ITEM 11 NON-FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENTS

FOR DECISION

Members are requested to review the current non-financial risk assessment included within their bundles. This is a summary document sourced from a number of files listed below.

Health & Safety Policy and Procedures
Health and Safety Logs
Individual Risk Assessments – General and Events
Asbestos Surveys
Electrical Systems Log Book
COSHH data Sheets
Fire Risk Assessments.
Legionella Risk Assessment.

The scoring system for risk is calculated as the risk score multiplied by the impact score. All items in green have already been completed.

Under normal circumstances members are presented with the full set of files which are made available for viewing in advance of the meeting, however at the current time, with virtual meetings, this is not possible as most of the documents are large paper copy files. On that basis, the Council is requested to nominate two councillors who will come to the Town Hall at an arranged time to review the documentation and confirm their assessment of the documentation in order to enable approval to be considered at the next meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to nominate two councillors to review the full version of the documentation as detailed above

ITEM 12 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

FOR DECISION

The Climate Change Task and Progress Group met virtually on the 15th October to review the action plan to date which is included in Members Bundles. A report from the meeting, written by Councillor Ginny Boxall is below.

It has been 12 months since ATC declared a climate emergency and committed to Zero carbon by 2030

Since that time despite the COVID pandemic a great deal of progress has been made and this is reflected in the production of our Climate strategy and the recently completed Action plan .

My thanks go to our Town Clerk and staff and to Philippa Brearley and John Hubbard for their participation on the working group which has formed a sounding board and ideas generator for progress on our climate response.

As you will see from the action plan excellent progress has been made already on a number of key policies, most notably reduced use of fuel by grounds staff a 62% reduction, helped by a new mowing regime and a change of vehicle.

COVID has meant officers are now working more from home some 2/3 days each week reducing their carbon footprint and this is set to continue.

Use of electricity in the town hall has plummeted largely because the costly to heat chamber has not needed to be lit or heated.

Use of a digital platform has completely taken away the need for costly printing and again this is set to continue,

ATC has generously supported a number of excellent community initiatives, the repair cafe, community cupboard and community share to name a few, all encouraging behaviour change and promoting greater recycling and efficiency.

We have ambitious plans for ATC to become an exemplar council on the delivery of zero carbon public buildings and grant funding opportunities are currently being explored.

Behaviour change has been a hugely important factor but we now need to move forward and deliver on the next level of implementation and to keep the action plan moving forward and for this we will need external expertise and guidance in applying for the appropriate decarbonisation funds currently available.

Tree and hedge planting projects are underway and set to be extended, our walking and cycling strategy are also well established and set to be extended COVID permitting.

All in all I am delighted with our progress to date and I hope full council will endorse the action plan before you today.

Further to the report by Cllr Boxall, the Council now needs to move to the next stage in addressing its carbon footprint reduction. The behavioural change work undertaken over the last 12 months has exceeded the 10% reduction target for 2020 (after the additional reductions created as a result of Covid are taken into account)

The next stage involves addressing the Town Council's existing estate and specifically the publicly accessed buildings (i.e non-residential.) A one-off Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund has been identified as being a potential source of funding for this work which comes at significant cost. The fund is now open and closes at the beginning of January with submissions accepted at any time during this period on a first come first served basis. As such, Members are requested to consider the submission of a bid to the fund. Liaising with Energy Alton, they have recommended looking to work with Basingstoke Energy Services Co-operative (BES) to fully survey the Town Council's three gas heated buildings to assess their suitability for Air Source Heat Pumps and insulation upgrade and then develop and estimate of the likely costs of installation, and carbon and energy savings of each measure.

In addition, they will look at any opportunities for other energy savings eg LED lights and renewables eg solar PV installations in these buildings and then use the data gathered to complete and submit the Salix application, a copy of which is enclosed in Councillor bundles. The application itself is a technical piece of work, beyond our in-house skill set and as such the Fund has also set aside money through the Low Carbon Skills Fund, to help councils pay for contractors to prepare the bid to the Decarbonisation Fund.

A quotation from BES is currently being prepared and will be forwarded to Members once received.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve:

- 1) the updated Action Plan as tabled.
- 2) Approval of the quotation from Basingstoke Energy Services Co-operative to prepare and submit a bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund to take forward the first stages of retrofit work required to the Town Council's estate to ensure continued progress towards the council's 2030 target. The cost of this bid work to be taken from the approved budget for Climate Change; however the Clerk will submit a grant request to the Low Energy Skills Fund to mitigate the cost.

ITEM 13 YOUTH PROJECT

FOR INFORMATION

Included in Member bundles is a report from Lisa Hillan on the current position in respect of the King's Arms.

RECOMMENDATION: This report is for information only

ITEM 14 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS TO 30TH SEPTEMBER & INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

FOR DECISION

Members are requested to ratify the financial papers approved by Policy and Resources Committee on the 14th October 2020 to which Members are requested to refer as the papers will not be re circulated. These include:

Balance Sheet as at 30th September 2020

The balance sheet is presented for sign off by the Chairman of the Council

Income & Expenditure

Attached is the Income and Expenditure Report for the second quarter of 2020/21 financial year; this illustrates the Operating Income and Expenditure for the council to 30th September against the budget set by the Council. A full revised budget for 2020/21 will be prepared for members in advance of the budget workshop meeting in December to account for the unforeseen financial impact of covid this year.

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30th September 2020

The Bank Reconciliation Statements are as presented with a closing balance of £510,923.23 (Unity), £400,879.50 (CCLA) and £196.07 (Petty cash). This requires signing off on behalf of the council that the figures presented reconcile with the original bank statement.

Payments over £500

The attached report includes all payments over £500, issued between 1st July 2020 and 30th September 2020 in respect of invoices and grant cheques.

Members are also requested to approve the Internal Audit statement prepared for the second quarter to 30th September 2020 which was carried out on Monday 12th October and is included in Councillor Bundles.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve:

- 1) The Income and Expenditure account to 30th September 2020
- 2) The balance sheet dated 30th September 2020
- 3) The bank reconciliations for the Unity Account and the CCLA Deposit Account
- 4) The Payments over £500 covering 1st July to 30th September 2020
- 5) The Internal Audit report to 30th September 2020

ITEM 15 – GOVERNMENT PLANNING WHITE PAPER

FOR DECISION

The government has published proposals to radically change the planning system over the next few years. It has launched a two-part White Paper Consultation. Alton Town Council has already responded to the first of these: the changes to the housing quotas and delivery of affordable housing. The second part of the consultation closes next Thursday, October 29th. A consolidated response from Members will be tabled on Wednesday evening so a response can be submitted on Thursday. Councillor Titterington is currently composing and collating responses from Members via e-mail to prepare the draft submission.

An aide memoir by way of the presentation from NALC is included in Members bundles and the EHDC draft submission will also be circulated later this week

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the draft submission.

ITEM 16 RE-ALLOCATION OF ACAN COMMUNITY GRANT

FOR DECISION

Policy and Resources Committee on the 14th October considered a request by Alton Climate Action and Network to re-allocate a portion of their approved grant (£5,000) for 2020/2021 as follows:

“A request had been received to spend the remaining £2,100 of the already allocated grant on the Clean Heat Alton Project (CHAP) and to release £400 from the second tranche of the grant to total the £2,500 needed for the project, which will be match funded by Community Energy South. “

Councillors concluded that further financial information was required before a decision could be made and requested a breakdown of costings in support of the request received.

A revised paper detailing the project including costings is now included in Councillor bundles along with a sample report from Mesh Energy demonstrating the level of detail in the studies (titled: Bank Cottage, in bundles)

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to consider their approval of the re-allocation of the grant funding as detailed above.