

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 28th OCTOBER 2020 AT 7.00PM
Due to current government regulations this meeting was held remotely using video conferencing

Present: Councillor

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

Town Mayor

In attendance:

Leah Coney
Patricia Harris
County Councillor Andrew Joy
Lisa Hillan – The Kings Arms
5 Members of the public

Town Clerk
Finance & Admin Manager

116 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Town Councillors Suzie Burns & Richard Platt and District Councillors Stephen Dolan, Steve Hunt and Paula Langley.

117 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor made the following announcement:

1. Wished the acknowledge the work of the Town Hall and Grounds teams during this difficult time.
2. Reminded councillors that if they wish to speak, they will need to raise their hand.

118 Leader's Announcements

The Leader, Councillor Pam Jones, made the following announcements:

Many of my announcements tonight relate to younger Altonians.

1. Several councillors have received emails from concerned parents about the proposed closure of the nursery at the college. This nursery is primarily for the children of staff and students. Cllr Hunt is attending a meeting tonight to discuss this with the

stakeholders and will report back. It is hoped his report will come before us at P&T next week.

2. We recently refurbished two of our play areas for younger children. Unfortunately, these facilities are now being abused by older children. We are meeting with secondary school Head Teachers next week to discuss the issues and we are also in communication with the Community Policing team.
3. Our new skate park is proving popular; it has the fastest concrete around apparently. Unfortunately, some users are keen to skate after 8pm when the lights go off and have accessed the control box three times now to allow the lights to stay on all the time. Needless to say we are now looking to reinstate the lights but with the control box out of harm's way and considering the installation of CCTV.
4. On a positive note I was delighted to read the report from the Kings Arms, it shows what amazing support they are receiving from the community. Can't wait for the opening

While the documents we have tonight have taken a while to read, I think we should not lose sight of the time and energy that has gone into compiling them...

- The Climate strategy work
- The response to the proposed change in planning law
- Covid risk assessments
- Proposals to review the Neighbourhood Plan

We all owe an immense debt of gratitude to those officers and Councillors who have contributed in any way - real team work.

119 **Minutes of Last Meetings**

The Minutes of the meetings held 8th July and 5th August and the Extra-ordinary Meeting held on 19th August were approved subject to a correction on Minute point 025 to the typo which should read "Butts Bridge" and not "Budget Bridge" and will be signed by the Mayor at a later date due to current restrictions in place.

120 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

No Declarations of Interest were declared.

121 **Questions to the Council from Members of the Public**

There were no questions raised.

122 **Covid-19 Risk Assessment for Town Hall and Council Staff (minutes 8th July)**

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 councillors and 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. The Covid 19 Risk Assessment document is to be reviewed on an on-going basis as government advice changes but a further full review will take place at the end of December.

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

RESOLVED

To approve the updated Covid-19 Risk Assessment as presented with a further review to be undertaken in December 2020.

123 **Alton Neighbourhood Plan Review**

Following a Neighbourhood Plan Review Workshop to which all councillors were invited, Members felt that given the delays to the emerging Local Plan, a lighter touch modification of the current Neighbourhood Plan, purely to review the housing allocations contained within was appropriate. It was requested that a Project Plan be drawn up, together with Terms of Reference for the Steering Group and that a Press Release be issued to inform the public. The Steering Group will comprise of the following people: Councillors Graham Titterton and Pam Jones, David Allan and Mike Heelis. An invitation will be extended to the Alton Society to nominate a representative to join the Steering Group and a first meeting convened in November.

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

RESOLVED to

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. Reconvene the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with membership as detailed above.
3. Devolve the allocated budget for 2020/2021 to the Steering Group and submit a grant application to Locality to assist in the financing of the review.
4. To Prepare a Project Plan to be placed on the website
5. Terms of Reference to be agreed for the Steering Group
6. Extend an invitation to the Alton Society to nominate a representative to join the Steering Group
7. Issue a Press Release to inform the public of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Review taking place.

124 **Alton & District Community Resilience Fund Panel Terms of Reference**

With over £20,000 in donations received to the fund, the Alton & District Community Resilience Fund has already supported 15 households since its launch 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, fridge freezers, beds and mattresses plus assistance with house moves and the loan of a bicycle. The Town Clerk confirmed that a separate “cashbook” will be set up in the accounting system which will clearly show the Resilience Fund’s income and expenditure and will be reported to councillors in line with current financial reporting protocols.

NOTED**125 Conclusion of External Audit**

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

RESOLVED

to approve the conclusion of external audit as presented

126 Non-Financial Risk Assessments

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

RESOLVED to

Nominate Councillors Sharon Cullen and Ginny Boxall to review the full version of the documentation as detailed in the agenda papers ready for approval at the next Full Council meeting.

127 Climate Change Action Plan Review

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

RESOLVED**To approve:**

- 1. The updated Action Plan as tabled.**
- 2. 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**

It was noted that Councillor Graham Hill had offered the sum of £1,000 from his District Councillor Grant Fund but before committing guidance would be sought from offices at EHDC to establish whether this would be permitted.

The Town Clerk was also requested to submit a grant application to the Low Energy Skills Fund to help mitigate the cost.

128 Youth Project

Members had received a comprehensive report from the Lisa Hillan on behalf of the Kings Arms within their bundles. A number of questions were raised for clarification which were satisfied and Members expressed their gratitude for the work that is being undertaken by the Kings Arms team.

NOTED

129 Statement of Accounts to 30th September 2020

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

RESOLVED to approve:

- 1. Balance Sheet dated 30th September 2020**
- 2. The Income & Expenditure account to 30th September 2020**
- 3. Bank Reconciliations for the Unity Bank Account and the CCLA Deposit Account**
- 4. Payments over £500 from 1st July to 30th September 2020**

130 Government Planning White Paper

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 second part of the consultation closes on Thursday, 29th October and the draft consolidated response from Members was tabled by Councillor Titterington.

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

RESOLVED

to approve the draft submission in response to Part 2 of the Government Planning White Paper consultation

131 ACAN reallocation of Community Grant – deferred from Policy & Resources (14th October 2020)

This item was before the Policy & Resources Committee on 14th October when a more detailed budget breakdown was requested and now supplied. ACAN had requested to re-allocate a portion of their approved grant (£5,000) for 2020/21 to enable them to engage Mesh Energy to undertake a study on their behalf which would be match funded by Community Energy South.

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

RESOLVED

to approve grant funding in the sum of £2,500 which would be made up as follows:

£2,100 of the already allocated grant (currently unused) and to release £400 from the second tranche previously awarded

Councillor Graham Hill advised that he would make £250 available from his District Councillor fund to ACAN to undertake surveys for 5 residents which was gratefully accepted on behalf of ACAN by the two representatives attending the meeting.

132 To receive a report from and ask questions of the District and County Council Representatives

In advance of County Councillor Andrew Joy's verbal report, Councillor Pam Jones raised the following three points:

1. What was happening about the fly tipping evident around the town?
2. Due to no community partnerships meetings since lockdown an exchange of information across the various stakeholders was virtually non-existent.
3. The EHDC Planning Committee meeting on 5th November only had one agenda item and that was for land East of Horndean – why was the Brewery Site not on the Agenda?

Councillor Graham Hill responded that he will take up with EHDC on points 2 and 3.

Councillor Jones advised that District Councillor Steve Hunt could not be present this evening to provide a report on behalf of EHDC as he was attending a meeting at the Alton College on the proposed closure of the Nursery which had caused considerable concern in the community and that he will be preparing a report on the outcome of this meeting which would be circulated to councillors in due course.

County Councillor Andrew Joy advised the following:

- On fly-tipping – he had raised the matter through Highways re EHDC undertaking their obligations in this respect.
- Flooding and drainage issues in Alton – a report had been collated by the Town Clerk on vulnerable locations and blocked drains which he would be submitting to the appropriate county departments. Some of the highlighted issues could be easily remedied but other points will input into the Flood Risk Assessment Survey currently being drawn together
- Anstey Road/Anstey Lane junction improvement project – this is due to go ahead shortly; however, utility works are currently being undertaken. A full update will be provided to Alton Town Council imminently
- Gypsy and Traveller issues – Whitedown Lane with Kings Road. The galvanised gate is due to be installed within the next few days which will prevent future unauthorised encampments at this location
- Licencing of street traders which will include The Butts – there is confusion over a “Consent” street licence and a “Licenced” street trader. This is currently being further investigated by County in more detail and a further update will be provided
- Station Forecourt – work continues on this project and a Placemaking Meeting was held on Tuesday, 27th October.
- Public disquiet on meals for disadvantaged children – Hampshire County Council (HCC) already have set up a fund to support these children which relates to both Covid-19 issues as well as disadvantaged children. This is being led by Community First and will provide support to those children and families that require assistance. It is in place but a Press Release is due shortly.
- Public Health – there are no plans to impose an imminent lockdown in Hampshire, however the public need to be mindful that it is a changing picture. Currently there is no impending intention to go to Tier 2.

County Councillor Andrew Joy responded to the following questions raised by councillors:

- Councillor Pam Bradford advised that in response to various flooding issues, she recalls that HCC used to clear out drains on an annual basis (painting a colour on

the drains to signify that it had been cleared) but apparently this is now done every four years. Councillor Joy advised he was not aware of the painting of the drain by colour coding, but he would take back to county the question of frequency.

- Councillor Pam Jones – the flooding issue of a resident of Greenfields Avenue and the provision of sand bags to assist the most vulnerable and what emergency cover was available to residents. Councillor Joy advised that sandbags are available from EHDC and when you phone the standard number this gives the mobile number of the duty officer who has access to emergency services including issuing of sandbags to the vulnerable and elderly. HCC is not responsible for providing.
- Councillor Sharon Cullen and flooding issues in Amery Ward which will no doubt be exacerbated given the weather forecast for further heavy rain on Thursday and asked that county be made fully aware of the increased vulnerabilities in Amery Ward and their need to be aware and pro-active
- Councillor Matthew Bayliss
 - sought clarification on the Action Plan involving Alton Town Council in respect of flooding vulnerabilities and requested that Alton Town Council, on their website, provide further information to direct people where to go for help. It was confirmed that officers had been compiling a spreadsheet providing information it ad gleamed from the public on flooding issues throughout the town which had been forwarded to Councillor Joy.
 - Anstey Road/Anstey Lane Junction had experienced “overload” on Monday and Tuesday of this week due to the slip road off the A31 to The Butts had been closed and it would appear without advance notification which had led to all traffic being diverted via the Holybourne roundabout into the town. Councillor Joy advised he was not aware of this closure and would investigate further and report back.
 - On the question of trading at The Butts wished to remind everyone that this had and was proving very popular and councillors needed to be mindful of this.
 - Funding for free school meals – where was this being funded from. Councillor Joy advised that a fund had been set up that deals with disadvantaged families which had come from County Councillors collective devolved budgets (some £250,000) but this was not aimed specifically at free school meals. As advised a Press Release was imminent.

The Chairman thanked County Councillor Andrew Joy for his attendance.

132 **To receive the Minutes from the following Committees**

The Minutes of the following committees were received and noted without comment:

Open Spaces Committee – 22nd July 2020

Planning & Transport – 1st July, 12th August, 9th September & 7th October 2020.

Community Committee – 30th September 2020

NOTED

The meeting finished at 8.46 pm