

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 28th APRIL 2021 AT 7.00PM

Due to current government regulations this meeting was held remotely using video conferencing

Present: Councillor

Graham Titterington
Matthew Bayliss
Ginny Boxall
Susie Burns
Gideon Cristofoli
Paul Crossley
Sharon Cullen
Graham Hill
Pam Jones
Richard Platt

Town Mayor

In attendance:

Leah Coney
Patricia Harris
District Councillor Stephen Dolan
Jenny Griffiths – Alton Community Action Network (ACAN)
Lisa Hillan – Kings Arms

Town Clerk
Finance & Admin Manager

256 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Pam Bradford, Amanda Durley & Christopher Lawrence

257 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor made the following announcements:

1. There would be a 1-minute silence observed for the late Duke of Edinburgh
2. Welcome to this meeting of Alton Town Council. Due to Government regulations this is likely to be the last ATC Full Council meeting held on Zoom. The pandemic is still with us and we will be reviewing the Covid risk assessment in item 7 tonight. The question of how we will manage future meetings and attendance at such meetings is still under review and a hybrid physical/virtual model is likely for some time to come.
3. When I look back at the minutes of our last meeting, it seems that February 3rd was a long time ago. It amazes me how much Alton as a community and ATC, working with members of the community, has achieved in less than 3 months. Beyond all the work that is needed to keep our assets and services in good shape, the council has navigated the Covid crisis, overseen the Resilience Fund to support the most needy, moved forward on the Neighbourhood Plan, the Climate strategy, and renewing the CCTV system; planning the future of the community hub in the brewery development, worked towards the future

viability of the town centre, supported the Kings Arms Youth Project, and made the first moves towards tackling the litter problem.

4. On the subject of the Modified Neighbourhood Plan, although it is invidious to name individuals, I would particularly like to thank Mike Heelis, David Allan and the Town Clerk for the immense amount of work they have done to keep this project on time and budget. The public consultation gave rise to 1972 page views, 112 responses, and 95% of these were in support of what we were doing. We have just learned that our application for a further grant from Locality to pay for the preparation of the final documents has been successful. The grant will also cover around 100 printed copies of the modified plan once it has been approved by the examiner later in the year. On that basis, excluding officer and volunteer hours the ANP modification has been provided at no expense to the taxpayer!
5. We have a very full agenda this evening and so please be concise and avoid repetition. We have limited reports from county or district councillors because of purdah. Please use the “raise hands” feature of Zoom if you wish to speak and mute your microphone when not speaking. Voting will be by raising your real hand alongside your face so that I can see it.

258 **Leader’s Announcements**

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

1. The Mayor has mentioned our intention to upgrade our CCTV system. Tonight, we are being asked to agree on a contractor who will do this. The High Street cameras will be replaced and new cameras will be installed on some of our Open Spaces such as the Public Gardens and the skate parks.
2. As EHDC have not been able to hold the usual Community Partnership meetings during lockdown, we are currently organising our own with the local police and other community officers...antisocial behaviour has been on the rise in lockdown and given the recent assault and stabbing we are concerned that these meetings should be re-introduced as a matter of some urgency.
3. Finally, after such a challenging year the Auditor’s report was excellent. One particular quote from the report that stood out reads....
‘The Council Offices continue to remain closed to the general public. However, it continues to retain full functionality. ‘it continues to retain full functionality.’
We always knew we had a great team at the Town Hall... nice to know that it’s recognised!

259 **Minutes of the last meetings held on 3rd and 10th February 2021**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 3rd and 10th February 2021 were approved subject to a correction of a typing error on the Extra-ordinary Full Council Meeting date to be amended to read 2021 and will be signed at a later date by Councillor Graham Titterington, Town Mayor.

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

No declarations of interest were declared.

261 Questions to the Council from Members of the Public

There were no questions raised and none had been received in writing.

262 Updated Covid-19 Risk Assessment for Town Hall and Council Staff

Members received the updated Covid-19 Risk Assessment for the Town Council which had been reviewed in line with the current 4-step easing of lockdown and expiry of the legislation to permit the use of virtual technology for council meetings (up to 6th May 2021). The Town Clerk clarified that all councillors would be requested to undertake self-testing prior to attending the Town Hall for meetings (staff are already doing so) and that NHS Track and Trace protocols are already in place.

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

RESOLVED**To approve the updated Covid-19 Risk Assessment without amendment**

All councillors voted in favour

263 Alton Neighbourhood Plan Modification

Members wished to formally acknowledge the work of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee and in particular the contribution from Mike Heelis, David Allan and the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will circulate the link to the pdf of the full version of the modified plan document to all councillors.

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

RESOLVED**To approve the modified Alton Neighbourhood Plan, including the Modification Statement, Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions statement and for these to now be submitted to East Hampshire District Council**

All councillors voted in favour

264 Internal Auditors Report for Financial Year End and Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit

Members received the final 2020/21 reports from the Internal Auditor covering the period to 31st March 2021 together with the review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit.

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

RESOLVED**To approve 1) the content of the Internal Auditor's Report****2) the review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit**

All councillors voted in favour

265 Statement of Governance 2020/21

On the proposal of Councillor Pam Jones, seconded by Councillor Suzie Burns it was

RESOLVED

To confirm their positive agreement to the completed of boxes 1-8 on the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) (Box 9 is not applicable to ATC)

All councillors voted in favour

266 Statement of Accounts to 31st March 2021

Members were requested to scrutinise the accounts and accompanying documents and reports prior to the meeting and if there were any questions arising, to submit these to the Clerk in advance of Full Council to ensure answers were available at the meeting. A small number of questions had been e-mailed to the Clerk by Cllr Titterington to which all councillors were copied on the responses the day before the meeting. No questions were raised in the meeting. Members were also requested to read the accounting statement for 2020/21 which is compiled from the 2020/21-year end Income and Expenditure, Balance Sheet and Asset Register.

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021

The balance as presented for sign off by the Chairman of the Council and the RFO (Responsible Financial Officer, Mrs Leah Coney – Town Clerk).

Income & Expenditure

The Income and Expenditure Report for the Year Ended 31st March 2021; this illustrates the Operating Income and Expenditure for the council's financial year ending 31st March 2021 against the 2020 figures for the same period.

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31st March 2021

The Bank Reconciliation Statements are as presented with a closing balance of £220,902.38 (Unity), £401,049.22 (CCLA) and £253.18 (Petty cash). This requires signing off on behalf of the council that the figures presented reconcile with the original bank statement which will be given to the Chairman on the night.

Payments over £500

The report included all payments over £500, issued between 1st January 2021 and 31st March 2021 in respect of invoices and grant cheques.

Asset Register

The Asset register was tabled for approval

Accountability and Governance Annual Return (AGAR) Section 2

The completed section 2 of the AGAR was presented for approval.

On the proposal of Councillor Pam Jones, seconded by Councillor Matthew Bayliss it was

RESOLVED to approve

- 1) The balance sheet dated 31st March 2021**
 - 2) The Income and Expenditure account to 31st March 2021**
 - 3) The bank reconciliations for the Unity Account and the CCLA Deposit Account**
 - 4) The Payments over £500 covering 1st January to the 31st March 2021**
 - 5) The updated Asset Register for 31st March 2021**
 - 6) The Accountability and Governance Annual Return Section 2.**
- All councillors voted in favour

267 **Appointment of the Internal Auditor for 2021/22**

With the caveat of engaging a third party to independently oversee a mid-year internal audit, on the proposal of Councillor Graham Titterington, seconded by Councillor Ginny Boxall it was

RESOLVED to approve the re-appointment of LightaTouch at a cost of £1,775 for the forthcoming financial year
All councillors voted in favour

268 **Alton Climate Action Network – reallocation of approved grant**

A request from Janny Griffiths at ACAN had been received and was included in the Agenda papers for consideration by Members.

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

RESOLVED to approve the re-allocation of the remaining £2,084 grant to ACAN for the engagement of a community facilitator
All councillors voted in favour

269 **ACAN proposal – Climate Emergency**

Members were requested to consider correspondence from ACAN which had been included in their Agenda papers. Councillor Graham Hill suggested that it would be appropriate for ACAN to send the same letter from Lesley Willis to both Hampshire County Council and East Hampshire District Council.

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

RESOLVED to approve

- (1) Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill**
- (2) Inform the local media of this decision;**
- (3) Write to local MPs, asking them to support or thanking them for supporting the Bill; and**
- (4) Write to the CEE Bill Alliance, the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support (campaign@ceebill.uk)**

Councillor Matthew Bayliss abstained – all other councillors were in favour

270 **CCTV Tender**

Members received full tender submissions in respect of an upgrade to the council's CCTV for their consideration and appointment of a preferred supplier. The Town Mayor confirmed in response to Councillor Graham Hill that the police had been asked for their comments on CCTV and their response taken into consideration when the tender documentation was issued. The Town Clerk further confirmed that a Press Release would be issued on completion of the installation and that signage would be erected to inform the public that CCTV was in operation at all of the locations included within the tender documentation.

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

RESOLVED to
Appoint ASDC Southern Limited as the approved supplier at a contract cost of £19,523
All councillors voted in favour

271 **EHDC Code of Conduct for Approval**

Members were asked to consider approval and adoption of the EHDC Code of Conduct, subject of a small number of strike throughs where a correction is required on items which are authorised at a Town Council level by the Clerk or where wording relates to Cabinet positions at EHDC which are not application to the Town Council.

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

RESOLVED to
Adopt the East Hampshire Code of Conduct with the stated alternations
All councillors voted in favour

272 **Town Council Capital Purchase (Machinery)**

Members were requested to approve the purchase of a new tractor for the grounds team as detailed in the Town Clerk's report. Members discussed at length the benefits of either leasing or outright purchase for the tractor and requested that a vote be taken on this specific matter.

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

RESOLVED to purchase the tractor outright
The vote was 5 in favour and 5 against with Councillor Graham Titterington having the casting vote.

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

RESOLVED to approve the
Purchase of a Kubota M125GX-IV tractor at a cost of £44,950

273 Updates for Information

Members received updates on the following items:

- 1) Youth Project – update report by Lisa Hillan
The Committee thanked Lisa for her comprehensive report together with the update presented to councillors this evening.
- 2) Alton & District Community Resilience Fund
Members received a spreadsheet detailing all applications received and the Committee wished to commend Alton Lions for their participation and input into establishing the group and acknowledged the benefits that this group had delivered.
- 3) Litter Task & Finish Group
Members noted the work to date that the group had achieved; however, it wished to seek clarification from EHDC on what activities were included in the Norse contract in respect of street cleaning as to whether this was simply for bin emptying or whether other activities including litter picking and removal of cigarette butts was also included. The Town Clerk will seek clarification.

NOTED

274 To receive a report from the District Council and County Council representatives (due to purdah these will be noted only with no questions on the evening unless they are of procedural nature only)

A report from District Councillor Stephen Dolan had been circulated with Agenda papers. Councillor Matthew Bayliss enquired as to an update on the Town Centre Recovery Plan but Councillor Dolan advised that no update was available as the District Council was still moving from its Survival to Recovery Phase. The Town Clerk further advised that she had been advised that “everything was on hold” but it was believed that District would re-engage from 10th May.

The Chair thanked District Councillor Dolan for his attendance.

There was no report tabled by the County Councillor.

NOTED

275 Calendar of Meetings for 2021/22

Members were requested to approve the Calendar of meetings for the next 12 months as tabled.

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

**RESOLVED to approve the
Calendar of Meetings for 2021/22**

276 To receive the Minutes from the following Committees: Open Spaces Committee of 10th February and Planning & Transport Committee of 24th February, 24th March and 21st April

Members received the Minutes of the meetings which were noted.

NOTED

The meeting finished at 8.40 pm