

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 22nd MARCH 2023 AT 7:00PM
AT THE TOWN HALL, ALTON

Present:	Councillor	Ginny Boxall Suzie Burns Annette Eyre Graham Hill Lewis Jones Richard Platt Graham Titterington Jonathan Waugh	Town Mayor Deputy Mayor
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In attendance:

**Leah Coney - Town Clerk
Pat Harris - Finance & Administration Manager
County Councillor Andrew Joy
3 members of the public**

219 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Matthew Bayliss, Paul Crossley, Sharon Cullen and Pam Jones and Annie Lancaster

220 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor advised that there is a very full agenda this evening and as such, requested that all speakers keep their representations to a maximum of 5 minutes.

221 Minutes of the last meetings held on 1st February 2023

The Minutes of the Full Council on 1st February 2023 were approved and were signed by the Town Mayor.

222 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

No Declarations of Interest were noted.

223 Questions to the Council from Members of the Public

1. Mr Bone, representing the Bordon & Whitehill Town Partnership updated Members on Agenda item 11, noting that in response to the comments received at the pre-meeting session with Members has month, that more emphasis will be on the arts and theatre use for the Assembly Rooms and as such they are increasing their funding investment request to £307,000 and that they are also applying to the Arts Council for additional funding to support an Arts & Promotions Officer.
2. County Councillor Andrew Joy spoke of his "protected feeling" for Alton and its family silver (Crown Close – including the Cairn, Assembly Rooms and the Curtis Museum). He was concerned that as such Members need to exercise care in considering the management

and Lease of the Assembly Rooms to an organisation outside of the town as he considers the area core to the town and it should be retained for the future within the town. He requested that full consideration should be given to the matter before Full Council this evening.

224 **Event Grant Application – Victorian Cricket**

An application has been received from the organisers of the Victorian Cricket event which is held annual on The Butts and which raises monies for local charities.

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

RESOLVED to
Approve a grant of £400 to Victorian Cricket

225 **Alton Climate Action Network Neighbourhood CIL application**

This item was deferred from the Policy and Resources Committee meeting of the 25th January in order to allow for a workshop session for Councillors with ACAN, held on 15th February to explore more widely the work of ACAN and the CIL funding request. Full details of the session were included in Members bundles together with an updated scoring matrix, which detailed two scores, one including the consultancy fees element which scored 31/53 and one without the consultancy fee element which scored at 34/53 with the improved score based on the lower percentage of contribution and cost v benefit.

Jenny Griffiths on behalf of ACAN made a brief representation to Members and answered questions raised.

Councillor Titterington asked officers why there was a concern over the fees element as surely all infrastructure projects have an element of funding staff costs albeit indirectly. The Town Clerk commented that when referred to EHDC, the view was that whilst the wording of the legislation does not preclude it, in policy terms there may be a precedent set for funding revenue support by the direct funding of staffing cost either to employees or self-employed persons.

Members were requested to consider the approval of the ACAN neighbourhood CIL application and the level of funds to be awarded. Members requested the resolution be broken down into two parts, one covering the costs excluding consultancy and the second covering the consultancy element.

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

RESOLVED to
Approve the ACAN Neighbourhood CIL application in the sum of £9,316 to support the Eco Streets Project excluding consultancy fees.

All in favour

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

RESOLVED to
Approve the ACAN Neighbourhood CIL application in the sum of £9,000 to cover consultancy fees for the Eco-Streets project.

Carried by a majority of 4-3 with one abstention.

226 Capital Works and expenditure

Members received reports on the following capital works and expenditure for approval using funds approved by Full Council on the 1st February 2023 (Budget and Precept 2023/24 minute 191 refers) for works to be carried out in the new financial year. Full details of each of the line items were contained the Members bundles.

1. **Path at Flood Meadow** – Public tender for replacement of the tarmac path from the Tanhouse Lane entrance including two spurs onto the riverside path.

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

RESOLVED
To appoint Scandor (Company G) to undertake the path works Flood Meadows at a cost of £37,517.14

All in favour

2. **Anstey Park Pump Track Flood Lighting** - Public tender with only one compliant response for solar lighting. Members were requested to confirm whether to re-issue the ITT for LED lighting or to set aside floodlighting for the pump track at this time with the remaining funds allocated for the project to an Ear Marked Reserve until such time as it is felt that solar lighting can adequately light the area.

NO APPOINTMENT MADE.
Members requested that this be re-visited in 12 months' time.

3. **Fire Doors at the Assembly Rooms.**

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

RESOLVED
To appoint Lockmaster to install new Fire Doors at the Assembly Rooms at cost of £12,590

All in favour

4. **Additional Play Area Inspections.**

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

RESOLVED

To appoint Sawscapes to undertake additional Play Area Inspections at a cost of £13,650 over three years (£4,550 per annum)

All in favour

5. **Festive Lighting** - following the purchase of a number of new festive column lights last year, approval is requested to extend for a further year, the current agreement with the Council's current installer who erect and take down all of the lighting, including string lights, all building lights and column lights at a cost of £11,923.00 (original contract from 2019 was £12,727.23 per annum) This is within the allocated budget for 2023/24.

In addition, the Council is requested to consider the replacement of one the Council's Christmas Trees with a "faux" Christmas tree for the Assembly Rooms lawn at a cost of £12,213.50

On the proposal of Councillor Lewis Jones, seconded by Councillor Richard Platt it was:

RESOLVED:

- 1. To extend the existing contract with SparkX – for the installation/take down of the existing festive lighting scheme at a cost of £11,923.00**
- 2. To purchase from Blachere – a 5m, ex-hire faux Christmas Tree at a cost of £12,213.50 to include the base**

All in favour

6. **Will Hall Farm path improvements** - Mini-competition utilising Lot 1 of the Hampshire County Council Landscape Framework. Funding for the works will be taken from the earmarked commuted sum for this site, held in the reserves.

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

RESOLVED

To appoint Blakedown to undertake the Will Hall Farm path improvements at a cost of £41,869.69

All in favour

7. **Tarmac works at Anstey Park** - to create (a) an additional tarmac path alongside the play area to access the Pump Track where a desire line has already been created and (b) to formalise additional parking spaces alongside the Town Council compound. To be funded from the approved budget for 2023/24 for pothole/tarmac works, funded from the Capital Reserve. Direct award from Lot 1 Hampshire County Council Landscape Framework.

On the proposal of Councillor Suzie Burns, seconded by Councillor Annette Eyre it was:

RESOLVED

To appoint Blakedown at a cost of £23,187.46

All in favour

227 **Alton Assembly Rooms Lease 2024**

(Moved up the agenda with the permission of the Chair) Members received an update report and Draft Heads of Terms to enter into an agreement with the Whitehill and Bordon Town Partnership (WBTP) in respect of the Alton Assembly Rooms, taking on a long-term lease on the building from 1st January 2024 to expand their base across East Hampshire.

Members felt the utilising the expertise of the group who have proven success in running the facility at the Forest Centre and having the Assembly Rooms as a base for Pumpkin Panto, who have been very popular in the town, was a great opportunity for Alton and would safeguard the facility for community use, expand it for performing arts and see significant investment in the building to enable an improved theatre and stage venue for the town.

Members requested that two additional Clauses be added to the Draft Heads of Terms to include an occupancy clause to ensure the building is not left empty and unused (notwithstanding any government restrictions as was seen in the pandemic) and that the Landlord at its discretion and in a non-Trustee capacity would reserve the right to have a seat on the Management Board.

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

RESOLVED to approve entering into an agreement with WBTP in respect of the Alton Assembly Rooms taking on a long-term lease on the building from 1st January 2024 in accordance with the Heads of Terms as amended.

All in favour

228 **Alton Energy Advice Cafe**

(Moved up the agenda with the permission of the chair) Further to the confirmation from ACAN that they were unable to continue with the Energy Advice café beyond 31st March 2023 but would be interested in continued use of the space on an ad-hoc basis, the Council was requested to confirm agreement to allow the unit to be retained as a community space for free use and as well as occasional paid hire pop up opportunities for the next 12 months and to not lease it out commercially. Members were requested to acknowledge and approve that this space will not be expected to provide a commercial income to the Council for the next financial year as it will be predominately unoccupied.

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

RESOLVED to approve ad-hoc community use of the Energy Advice Café unit for 12 months from 1st April and will not advertise the unit for a commercial lease.

All in favour

229 **CALA Community Building**

Members received a comprehensive update on the progress of the CALA Community Building from the Town Clerk and were advised that information had been received shortly before the meeting to state the likely shortfall in funds would be in excess of 20% due to material costs and inflation increases for which Members were requested to approve the submission of a further application for CIL funding. Members were happy to add to the recommendation that a further District CIL funding request be submitted for the majority of the increased cost, with any top up then being referred for a subsequent Neighbourhood CIL application in due course.

Therefore, on the proposal of Councillor Lewis Jones, seconded by Councillor Jonathan Waugh, it was

RESOLVED to amend the Resolution to approve the submission of an additional CIL application to fund the shortfall for the fit out of the CALA Community Building

On the amended Resolution proposed by Councillor Graham Hill, seconded by Councillor Annette Eyre, it was:

RESOLVED to:

- 1. Confirm the Council's continued commitment to the project with further review by the new Council once the increased costs to the fit out are finalised, a definitive works programme known and allowing officers a further 3 months to resolve the outstanding terms of the lease, in order that the final document can be presented to Members for approval.**
- 2. Approve the expenditure of £4,912.28 to meet the costs of delays to the project and the cost of splitting the technical drawings (as detailed above) to de-risk the fit-out programme.**
- 3. Approve the submission of an additional CIL application to fund the shortfall for the fit out of the CALA Community Building**

All in favour

230 Internal Audit Report from July 2022 to February 2023

Members received the Internal Audit report following the most recent visit from the auditor which was tabled for Members approved. Councillor Graham Titterington thanked Officers for their diligence whilst noting that the continued monitoring items of major risk would be a feature of the Internal Audit process.

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

RESOLVED to approve the Internal Audit Report from July 2022 to February 2023

All in favour

231 To receive the Minutes from the following Committees

The Minutes of the Planning & Transport Committee of the 8th February and 8th March 2023 were noted.

Members attention was drawn to Minute reference 209 of the 8th February; the purchase of a piece of grounds equipment (£1,700) approved by the Committee and in accordance with the recommended action from the auditor, retrospectively approved by Full Council as part of the approval of the overall minutes.

On the proposal of Councillor Suzie Burns, seconded by Councillor Ginny Boxall it was

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting of the 8th February including the purchase of Quad utility vehicle for the grounds team in the sum of £1,700 (one thousand, seven hundred pounds) minute reference 209 refers.

232 **Exclusion of the Press & Public**

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

**RESOLVED to
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**

233 **Lease Agreement: Edgar Hall – Dementia Friends/Mens Shed**

Members had received a comprehensive update report from the Town Clerk outlining the proposal from Dementia Friends/Mens Shed for the Lease arrangements for Edgar Hall.



The meeting finished at 8.52 p.m.