

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 1st FEBRUARY 2023 AT 7:00PM
AT THE TOWN HALL, ALTON**

Present:	Councillor	Ginny Boxall Suzie Burns Matthew Bayliss Graham Hill Lewis Jones Annie Lancaster Richard Platt Graham Titterington	Town Mayor Deputy Mayor
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**Jonathan Waugh (Ashdell Ward) from Agenda item 188
Annette Eyre (Amery Ward) from Agenda item 188**

In attendance:

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

181 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Paul Crossley, Sharon Cullen and Pam Jones.

182 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.

183 Leader's Announcements

Wished to thank officers for their dedication and hard work, particularly in respect of the preparation of the budget.

184 Minutes of the last meetings held on the Extra-ordinary Meeting held on 18th January 2023

The Minutes of the Extra-ordinary Full Council on 18th January 2023 were approved and were signed by the Town Mayor noting the following amendment that item 162.4 was not all in favour but was 7 in favour, 1 against.

185 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

No Declarations of Interest were noted. Dispensation was granted to all Councillors in respect of Agenda item 11: Revised Budget for 2022/2023 and Budget and Precept 2023/2024 for ratification.

186 Questions to the Council from Members of the Public

1. A written representation had been received from Mr. John Quincey on 28th January.

The legacy of the OSC under the chair of Cllrs. Jones and Burns is sadly summed up in a screen shot, which was taken from the FB Save Kings Pond Group.

As you know during the meetings between OSC and Friends of Kings Pond I provided a specification and estimated cost (£40k) for replacing the path with concrete edged tarmac, which I thought had been accepted as the way ahead.

My question for the Council on 1st September is whether the £40k is part of the £250k allocated to KP on 18th January and if not would they kindly increase the budget to £290k?

Mr Quincey was thanked for his representation, with the following response read out:
"The matter of King's Pond is not on the agenda this evening. At the meeting of the Council on the 18th January, which you attended, you will be aware that the council has not specified what the funds set aside for the Pond will be spent on, as the draft management plan as not yet been adopted. Councillor Bayliss has already requested that the draft plan be reviewed further to consider the inclusion of wider issues not currently included and paths will be added to that. It is therefore not appropriate to make any changes to the funds set aside for the pond until we know more."

2. Mr David Dodd wished to ask the Council:

- a) to consider not using confusing jargon such as "off-line" in its documentation in respect of King's Pond as it is not helpful and is misleading.
- b) To confirm that it agrees that 22 people out of 20,000 is not a mandate to take the pond off-line.
- c) Has Alton Town Council taken into account the Wildlife Countryside Act of 1981, Section 1.

Councillor Graham Hill advised that there was an Extra-ordinary Full Council meeting at the Maltings which was dedicated to Kings Pond and that a number of decisions were taken that evening that are currently being worked through.

3. Jonathan Hughes – overjoyed to read that the Council is looking at depoliticisation of the Council, but he can foresee problems ahead as Members will have been elected on the basis of a party (on the ballot) and that people will be voting for a political party and therefore if elected as a member of a party, *"How will you square that circle?"*

Councillor Matthew Bayliss responded that no one can ever stop someone standing for a political party but by depoliticising the Council it would put all elected members on an equal footing.

187 **Co-option to the Town Council**

The Clerk confirmed that all three candidates who were present met the criteria required to be nominated.

The Town Mayor thanked all three candidates who had put their names forward and expressed that with only two vacancies available, it was going to be a difficult decision as all of them were of a very high standard and any one of them would make ideal councillors and she urged all to stand for election in May 2023. All Councillors present agreed with the sentiment.

Councillors were asked for Nominations:

Taking Amery ward first:

Paul Turner was nominated by Councillor Graham Hill and seconded by Councillor Platt

Annette Eyre was nominated by Councillor Matthew Bayliss and seconded by Lewis Jones

For Ashdell ward:

Jonathan Waugh was nominated by Councillor Matthew Bayliss, seconded by Councillor Richard Platt.

No other nominations were declared and therefore voting was undertaken by a show of hands, taking candidates in alphabetical order for each ward in turn.

Amery Ward: Anette Eyre received 6 votes and was thus co-opted to the Council.

Ashdell Ward: Jonathan Waugh received 8 votes and was thus co-opted to the Council.

It was, therefore,

**RESOLVED to approve the appointment of
Jonathan Waugh (Ashdell Ward)
Annette Eyre (Amery Ward)
as Councillors to Alton Town Council.**

The successful candidates were then requested by the Town Clerk to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and invited to attend this Full meeting of the council.

188 **Alton Neighbourhood Plan**

Members received a comprehensive report from the Town Clerk on the proposals to undertake a full review of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan including site allocations and to re-appoint the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering group to include Council representation, the Town Clerk, Mike Heelis, David Allan and at least one other community representative, following the passing of former Member, Nicky Branch

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

RESOLVED to approve:

1. Commencement of a full review of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan
2. Re-appointment of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering group to undertake the review, with regular reporting back to Full Council and the submission of the resulting draft plan to follow at the appropriate time for approval.
3. Re-appointment of the Council's consultants O'Neill Homer to provide full support to the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in the preparation of the revised Alton Neighbourhood Plan

All in favour

Members agreed that the Terms of Reference should include the requirement that there should be two Councillors on the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group following the elections in May.

189 **Anstey Park Pump Track Flood Lighting**

Members received an update report following the decision by Full Council on 27th July 2022 when Members resolved to approve "in principle" a solar flood lighting scheme to be developed for the site as a second phase of works, subject to available funding and design. Funding was secured for the lighting up to £34,950 last summer and quotes obtained. However, with costs of materials rising, confirmation of pricing needs to be sought.

Members were delighted with the response to the facility and concurred that the adding of flood lights would be welcomed by the users. The request for revised quotes should also include the provision that light spill should be targeted on the facility, include motion sensors and a timer device. Further investigation into whether planning permission is a requirement will be dependent on recommendations as to the height of stanchions for health & safety.

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

RESOLVED to
approve the installation of solar flood lighting for the Anstey Park Pump Track, subject to revised details of suppliers and costs being submitted to the next Full Council meeting for determination.

All in favour

190 **Community Grants 2023/24 and Neighbourhood CIL funding for ratification**

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

RESOLVED to approve the following grant applications:

Community Grant applications:

1. Alton Community Association £8,000 (eight thousand pounds) payable in two tranches of £4,000 each
2. Homestart Hampshire (Alton) £4,000 (four thousand pounds)
3. Bushy Leaze £9,000 (nine thousand pounds) payable in two tranches of £4,500 each
4. All Saints Hard of Hearing £1,000 (one thousand pounds)
Dementia Friendly Alton £8,000 (eight thousand pounds)
payable in two tranches of £4,000 each

Neighbourhood CIL applications:

1. Alton Community Centre £3,000 Replacement Boiler
2. Alton Town Council £25,000 Neighbourhood Plan
3. Dementia Friendly Alton £10,000 Flourishing Gardens Project.

All in favour

191 **Revised Budget for 2022/2023 and Budget and Precept 2023/2024 for ratification**

Following approval by Policy and Resources Committee the proposed budget and precept was presented for approval. The proposed budget for 2023/24 represents an increase of 2.5% on a Band D. This equates to £110.28 per household (or £2.12 per week) an increase of £2.69 per annum or 5.1p per week. This equates to an overall precept request of £826,978.69

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

RESOLVED to

1. Approve the budget and precept request for 2023/24 in the sum of £826,978.69
2. Approve the revised budget for 2022/23 to enable the appropriate virements to be actioned.

All in favour

192 **Non-Financial Risk Assessments for approval**

In advance of the meeting Councillors Suzie Burns and Graham Hill met in the Council Chamber on 25th January and undertook a physical review of the full version of the non-financial risk assessments as detailed below. Councillor Hill commented that this was the first time in the twelve years of being a councillor that he had undertaken such a review and he was amazed at just how much paperwork there was and how much work is required under Health & Safety.

Members thanked Councillors for undertaking the review on behalf of the Council. The following information was reviewed:

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.

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

RESOLVED to approve the non-financial Risk Assessment

All in favour

193 **Depoliticising the Town Council**

Following the Full Council meeting on 9th November a Task and Finish Group was set up to consider the resolutions agreed. Contained in Members Bundles had been a comprehensive report from the Town Clerk outlining progress made and Recommendation to the Full Council. Councillor Matthew Bayliss led the discussion as to what the Council would look like if it adopted the proposals before them for consideration.

Members agreed that there would remain a requirement to receive quarterly reports from both the County Councillor and the nominated District Councillor as well as retaining the Climate Change Sub Committee.

Therefore, Members agreed that amendment to Item 6 and Item 9 was required and proposed amendment to Item 6: to add: "*and Climate Change Sub Committee*" and Item 9: to read "*With immediate effect, meetings of the Full Council will only include items for decision and quarterly reports from County and District Councillors; items for information only will not be included.*"

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

RESOLVED to amend item 6 to read:

- 1. The Council's Policy and Resources, Community and Open Spaces Committees are dissolved with immediate effect and replaced by a monthly (except August and December) Full Council meeting. The Staffing Sub-Committee and Climate Change Sub-Committee will be retained**

RESOLVED to amend item 9 to read:

- 2. With immediate effect, meetings of the Full Council will only include items for decision and quarterly reports from County and District Councillors; items for information only will not be included.**

All in favour

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

RESOLVED

- 1. The Council will become de-politicised with immediate effect**

All in favour

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

RESOLVED

- 2. The current Standing Orders of the Council will be replaced immediately with the apolitical Standing Orders (as contained in Members bundles)**

All in favour

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

RESOLVED

- 3. The Council will remove political affiliations and political references from the Council website and all future Council internal and external publications. This will not apply to declarations of Members interests.**
- 4. The Council will take the steps set out in Annex 3 of the report**
- 5. The Council will release the external statement set out in Annex 5 of the report.**

All in favour

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

RESOLVED

- 6. The Council's Policy and Resources, Community and Open Spaces Committees are dissolved with immediate effect and replaced by a monthly (except August and December) Full Council meeting. The Staffing Sub-Committee and Climate Change Sub Committee will be retained**
- 7. From May, Members will be appointed as Champions/ Deputy Champions of one or more areas, with the responsibility to lead on items in their respective Champion areas.**
- 8. Planning Committee - from May: All Members will receive planning training • the Planning Committee will comprise at least 10 councillors • the Planning Committee will be led**

by the Planning Champion (or the Deputy Planning Champion) • the Planning Committee will meet monthly (2 weeks before Full Council)

9. With immediate effect, meetings of the Full Council will only include items for decision and quarterly reports from County and District Councillors; items for information only will not be included.

All in favour

194 **Updates for Information**

Members received a final report on the Alton & District Community Resilience Fund which had now closed. Members wished to recognise the support provided to the group by Council officer Wendy Simson and noted the Fund's success in being able to assist residents of Alton and the surrounding villages.

Councillors also received a comprehensive report by Dom Clarke on behalf of The Kings Arms which had been previously circulated and commended the work that they undertake.

NOTED

195 **Statement of Accounts to 31st December 2022 and Asset Register**

Members were requested to ratify the financial papers approved by Policy and Resources Committee (items 1 – 4) on 25th January.

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

RESOLVED to approve:

1. The Income and Expenditure account to 31st December 2022
2. The balance sheet dated 31st December 2022
3. The bank reconciliations for the Unity Account and the CCLA Deposit Account
4. The Payments over £500 covering 1st October to 31st December 2022
5. The updated Asser Register dated 1st February 2023

All in favour

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

County Councillor Andrew Joy gave the following verbal update:

- Highways: recent wet, followed by extreme cold weather, had impacted road surfaces. Rectification program in place which will mean selective patching to restore road surfaces to a safe condition.

- There had been substantial disruption following the installation of “fibre” program around the town which has been less than satisfactory. The issue is recognised by County and rectification is underway.

Questions raised by Councillors:

- Councillor Ginny Boxall asked whether there was any particular reason why the new steps at the station had not yet been commissioned and opened for public use. Councillor Joy advised that he was not aware of the issue but would take it back to County.
- Councillor Burns advised that one particular problem relating to the installation of fibre is that Swish just turned up (with no advance warning) leading to residents being denied access into their own properties as Swish contractors had dug up the pavement in front of their homes. Councillor Joy advised that the Streetworks Co-ordination Team is taking up the challenge and fines are being issued.
- Councillor Lewis Jones requested that Councillor Joy try to ascertain what the problems are on the Manor Estate in respect of drop kerbs to which Councillor Joy advised he was unaware of what the exact problems were but acknowledged that Councillor Jones had notified him of issues at the location.
- Councillor Graham Hill asked for an update on the S278 works at Mill Lane/Montecchio Way as he understood that until this was resolved (drawings awaited by the developer) the new shopping area cannot open until highways works have been completed. This being advised to him that the delay was being caused by Highways not signing off the technical documents
- Councillor Graham Hill asked whether HCC had set their budgets and was advised that HCC are looking at a 2.99% increase plus an additional 2% Adult Social Care so in total just under the threshold of 5% before a referendum is required

District Councillor Graham Hill gave the following update report on behalf of EHDC:

- EHDC had given away £140,000 worth of food vouchers to 4,500 residents to assist with the cost of living crisis
- Councillor Richard Millard had been lobbying hard with central government in respect of the inappropriate use of the standard methodology to calculate housing numbers specifically for areas such as EHDC which include National Parks and are unfairly being required to take high housing numbers given the protected rights of limited building in National Parks.
- The Green Team had been established and that applications are currently being invited under the Climate Change Grant Program which has recently opened.
- Local Plan Reg 18 Part 1 has now closed and responses currently being analysed and Part 2 – allocations of sites is due at the end of the year
- The Budget is still being finalised and is due to go before Full Council this month
- The Station Forecourt project is on schedule
- The Dementia Festival will be held on 10th March at Festival Hall, Petersfield.

The Mayor thanked both County Councillor Joy and District Councillor Hill for their verbal updates.

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

Planning & Transport Committee of 30th November 2022

NOTED198 **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

199 **Community Building (CALA site) – update report**

The meeting finished at 9.30 p.m.