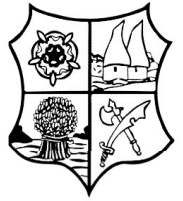


ALTON Town Council



Telephone (01420) 83986

www.alton.gov.uk

info@alton.gov.uk

Town Clerk: Mrs Leah Coney

Town Hall
Market Square

Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HD

4th February 2021

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to a **meeting of the OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE** in the Town Hall, Market Square, Alton on **Wednesday 10th February at 7.00 pm** 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 sincerely

LConey

Mrs Leah Coney
Town Clerk

To: Members of the Open Spaces Committee

Councillor Pam Jones	-	Chair
Councillor Ginny Boxall		Vice-Chair
Councillor Sharon Cullen		
Councillor Paul Crossley		
Councillor Richard Platt		
Councillor Suzie Burns		
Councillor Amanda Durley		

Copied to: All other Councillors for information

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE – 10th FEBRUARY 2021**

AGENDA

- 1 Chairman's announcements
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of previous meeting held on 11th November 2020
- 4 Declarations of Interests
- 5 Declarations of Interests & 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 from the room when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter.
- 6 Questions from members of the public for any item not on the agenda.
- 7 Walk Alton – Introduction from Ian Fleming, Chair of Walk Alton
- 8 Current Projects
 - a. Will Hall Farm – Lower Field
 - b. King's Pond
 - c. Flood Meadows
 - d. Holybourne Pond
 - e. PSPOs
- 9 Grounds Team Report
- 10 Allotments Report
- 11 ALFI tree planting
- 12 To Receive Meeting Notes
 - a. Walk Alton AGM of 7th December 2020 and Committee meeting 19th January 2021
 - b. Flood Meadows & Kings Pond Steering Group Meeting 19th November 2020

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE – 10th FEBRUARY 2021

ITEM 7: WALK ALTON

FOR DISCUSSION

The Annual Return for retaining the Walkers are Welcome accreditation has been submitted by Walk Alton which also included the latest statistics for the Walk Alton website which evidenced an increase in view from 3,821 in 2019 to 11,327 in 2020.

The Committee is joined this evening by Ian Fleming the current Chair of Walk Alton. Ian will discuss the revised structure of the group including a new annual forum as well as the considering the key priorities going forward

ITEM 8: CURRENT PROJECTS

FOR INFORMATION / DECISION

a) Will Hall Farm – Lower Field

There has been communication between the solicitors acting for Redrow and ATC. It is hoped that draft contracts for review will be forthcoming shortly.

b) King's Pond

- i) A complaint has been received by the council in respect of the current state of both the tarmac paths and the gravel path at Kings Pond. Photographs of the paths taken by the grounds team last week have been included below for reference.



ii) The Council has recently updated the signage in respect of dogs on leads and feeding of the wildlife around the pond and these have been erected across the site.

iii) The Council has been approached by a local resident who, last summer, was watching the bats around Alton including on some of the Town Council's Open Spaces. He has made a record of his observations and also some short recordings. The recordings have been made using both Heterodyne and 10X Time Expansion formats from an ultrasound detector. Time Expansion will allow the recordings to be uploaded through species ID software to produce a sonogram. He has kindly offered his findings to the Council for recording purposes and/or to pass to interested third parties. He further notes:

Kings Pond in particular had a lot of consistent activity throughout the summer and I suspect that there are colonies of Common Pips, Soprano Pips and some Myotis species, probably Natterers and Daubentons, roosting either at the pond or nearby.

I've noticed Soprano and Common Pips flying around the tall trees bordering Ashdell Road soon after dusk so it is likely some of those are roosts. The Myotis bats (Natterers and Daubentons) literally just seem to appear soon after dusk above the pond and in the car park by the Brewery bridge so not sure where they are roosting. Might try and make some dawn observations this season which might help. There is also Serotine and Noctule activity so they might be roosting locally too.

There is consistent bat species activity at other spots in the town but Kings Pond is the dynamic setting.

iv) Councillor Platt has awarded £141 of his District Councillor grant for the purchase of owl boxes for the pond area. Advice will be sought on the correct type of box and suitable location for deployment. These will be erected at the same time as a small number of single and colony bat boxes. (This is in addition to the £500 awarded from Councillor Platt for the installation of insect, bat, bird and hedgehogs houses in the Public Gardens)

c) Flood Meadows

i) The final bridge replacement approved at the last meeting was delayed and is now scheduled for installation in the next 10 days.

ii) Gravel Recharge Project (report prepared by Charles Kaye.)

This project, advised by Glen Skelton, looks to add gravel to the river bed to improve the flow and quality of the water. It would be carried out in an 80-metre stretch upstream of the bridge back to the new benches. Aquamaintain have quoted £980 to design the scheme and obtain the necessary licences. These would be valid for three years.

This work would be carried out by volunteers under Glen's supervision and could be done in instalments. Approximately 50 tonnes of gravel would be required at a cost of about £30 per tonne, totalling £1,600. Approximate total cost £2,580. No labour costs as carried out entirely by volunteers with assistance from the Grounds team. Gravel costs could be spread over more than one year.

RECOMMENDATION : Members are requested to approve £2,580 from the current Flood Meadows budget to fund the works

d) Holybourne Pond

There has been no update since the last meeting

e) PSPOs

EHDC have a report tabled for approval at Cabinet in respect of PSPOs which is available to view at

<https://easthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s14633/Dog%20PSPO%20EH%20Jan21.pdf>

If approved, this will be out to the Full Council for ratification prior to rolling out patrols and enforcement.

ITEM 9: GROUNDS TEAM REPORT

FOR INFORMATION

7.1 Grounds Team Personnel:

The team continue to operation one person down due to the on-going long-term health issues of one member of the team. Since the last report, 2 members of the team were furloughed under the government scheme with effect from 6th January 2021 for an initial 3-week period to 27th January when an extension of the furlough scheme was agreed the two members of the grounds team until 28th February with a further review to be undertaken at that time.

7.2 Vehicles & Machinery:

- 7.2.1 The proposed timeline to arrange for all grass mowing machinery to be serviced so that all machinery is ready for the 2021 mowing season has been delayed due to Covid restrictions imposed and local maintenance and servicing outlets being closed. The grounds vehicles have been and are continuing to be serviced in line with their service history and are fully up-to-date.

7.3 Projects:

7.3.1 Flood Meadows

Further works have been commissioned and will be undertaken by Aqua Maintain Limited (the same company that undertook the dipping platform and Lenten Street bridge works on site). A date to commence the work is still to be agreed for the replacement of the footbridge across the reed beds as we are still awaiting the design for the bridge itself.

In addition, works to the riverside pathway is required and the quote from Aqua Maintain is awaited together with the schedule of work required. This pathway forms part of the Wey Walk and the erosion of the path at certain points due to the high levels of water is required to be undertaken.

7.3.2 Installation of New Gates and Barrier at Jubilee

Following a number of complaints regarding late night/early hours of the morning anti-social behaviour at the Harry Baker end of Jubilee, a new barrier has been installed which is locked at 8.00 p.m. each evening.

Replacement metal gates have also been installed at the Charles Reed end of Jubilee as the previous ones were no longer functional.

- 7.3.3 The grounds team are also assisting the Alton Climate Action and Network group (ACAN) with ground preparation work on Butts Road following the groups successful licence agreement with EHDC dated 1st February to cultivate the area and plant trees, hedging and wild flowers at the licenced site. Currently the site consists of two areas of mown lawn separated by a tarmac path which edges the

Radian owned social housing to the north and the old gas works site to the east (The Cobbitts).

7.4 Pitch Provision:

The next phase of the pitch maintenance programme for Anstey Park rugby pitches is due at the end of the current season when again verti-draining will be undertaken before tonnes of sand applied for the third time. Timings will need to be reviewed with the Rugby Club as, due to the current Covid restrictions, no team sports are due to be played until at least March. These restrictions cover all team sports so will, therefore, include football which is also played at this location.

The council in collaboration with Manor Colts and Alton FC commenced a similar programme of drainage works at Jubilee Playing Fields. Verti-draining took place in October with over 250 tonnes of sand spread across 5 football pitches (which includes the outfields for cricket). Again, a review will take place with the clubs as to when the next phase will take place as playing protocols are not the same as Anstey as there is cricket played during the summer at this site.

7.4.1 Football & Rugby

7.4.1.1 Covid restrictions and now the 3rd shutdown due to Covid have impacted on income generated from pitch bookings. No games will be played until March at the earliest under the latest restrictions put in place by the government. The Rugby Club have already indicated that there will be no rugby being played this season and whilst the football goals have been removed at Jubilee due to large gatherings and severe damage to the goal mouths, they can be reinstated should football be reinstated; however, the window will be short lived as normally football finishes at Jubilee at Easter to allow the Cricket season to commence.

7.4.2 Cricket

7.4.2.1 No decision at the time of this report being produced has been made as to the 2021 cricket season. The team will liaise with Alton Cricket Club as to when (or even if) the wickets will be brought back into play for the summer. However, early indications are that although a shortened season, cricket is likely to commence at some time this coming year.

7.4.3 MUGA Facility at Anstey Park and Skate Park at Jubilee

7.4.3.1 The MUGA has been closed at Anstey Park following the latest Covid restrictions put in place and the flood lights at this facility turned off. This action remains under constant review in line with the guidance provided.

7.4.3.3 The Skate Park at Jubilee has been closed following clarification from Skateboard England and the latest government guidelines. Signage advising its closure is insufficient and Heras fencing has been erected to signify its closure. Anti-social behaviour up until its closure on Thursday, 7th January continues to be an issue and it is disappointing that its popularity has not produced the anticipated respect for the facility which continues to suffer from litter and broken bottles issues as well as vandalism to the floodlight supply. Works have been commissioned for further anti-vandal works to be undertaken in this respect.

7.5. Maintenance of Open Spaces

7.5.1 Tree & Hedge Cutting Works

The Council has completed the replacement of trees following a number of felled trees throughout the current season and Climbers Tree Care have just planted the replacement Beech tree Anstey Park (Tree 88) which formed part of the felling contract awarded and is in line with the planning permission which was granted by EHDC.

All hedge works due have now been undertaken by the Council's contractor including the works at Treloar Heights.

7.5.2 Hard Standings and Paths & Fencing

The proposed path works at Flood Meadows remains under review.

The main tarmac path from the Tanhouse Lane entrance has suffered from mud covering areas of the path from a combination of water run off down the grass slope and people walking along the path from the gravel riverside path and bringing additional mud on their boots. The path is swept to remove excess mud when conditions allow.

Footpath improvement works to the path which runs from Flood Meadows between the houses to the New Basingstoke Road has now had the benefit of scalpings applied and the council is extremely grateful to those local residents who undertook these works following the delivery of the materials and prior to the grounds team being scheduled to do.

Kings Pond pathways. There have been a couple of locations around the pond on both gravel and tarmac paths where due to the extremely high-water table and heavy rain of late have shown signs of puddling and additional mud covering the paths (similar to Flood Meadows) due in part to rainwater run-off from Ashdell Road, Kings View and the railway embankment. (See King's Pond update)

Scalpings have, for the second time, been applied at Greenfields Amenity land through the kissing gates which again has seen heavy use due to the lockdown and footfall combined with heavy rain have turned the access through the gates into quagmires.

Repairs to the post and rail fencing has taken place at Jubilee following a number of broken slates and posts by the skatepark area.

7.5.3 Fertilizer and Weed Control

The Council's Contractor is due to undertake the scheduled application of fertilizer and weed control at Anstey Park and Jubilee during March 2021.

7.5.4 Open Spaces and Pavilions

General:

- A metal detecting licence has been granted to a member of the public applicable to Flood Meadows, Windmill Hill and Kings Pond only. Terms and conditions state that all finds must be reported to Alton Town Council and the finds be plotted on a map of each site. All finds of any historical or financial value belong to Alton Town Council. All excavated

holes must be reinstated and all gates on the sites are to be kept closed at all times. The term for the licence granted is one year.

- Maintenance repairs have been undertaken on the potholes along The Drive at Anstey Park once again. The tarmac repairs are not long lasting and potholes reappear quite quickly due to a combination of factors including wet conditions and heavy traffic use. However, resurfacing could lead to higher usage once the Anstey Road/Anstey Lane junction works are completed and speed could also become an issue.

The Clerk will speak to the project manager of the Anstey Road/Anstey Lane junction works to see if the entrance to the park from Anstey Road could have further pot hole re-filling undertaken whilst the traffic light works are being concluded. If the contractors are resurfacing the junction, there could be a cost saving if the council engages the same contractors to effect these repairs.

Anstey Park – Finnimore Pavilion

The new tenant has been secured, but no rental income currently due to Covid Restrictions as it is not in use. The tenant is an artist and in time the facility will be used as she provides art lessons in addition to her undertaking her own private gallery work.

With the on-going junction works at Anstey Lane with Anstey Road, the contractors have removed the council's temporary Heras fencing on the corner and this has been placed in the Anstey Park compound until the junction works have been completed and proper reinstatement of fencing at the junction has been undertaken. Further space has been agreed with the contractors to enlarge their compound as ground conditions have deteriorated given the extremely wet conditions. All land will be reinstated as will the hedgerow that has had to be removed.

Jubilee Playing Fields: Charles Read & Harry Baker Pavilions

The Charles Read pavilion is to be occupied by Men's Shed on a short-term arrangement whilst the pavilion remains closed as there are no pitch bookings. At this time Men's Shed have not taken up occupancy, but a site meeting with the senior groundsman has taken place. We await further deliberations on the matter with the group as to when, or if the option will be taken up.

There have been a number of complaints regarding late night visitors to the Harry Baker Pavilion car park and a new galvanised barrier has been installed. Together with new double gates at the Charles Read car park. Both pavilions are currently closed.

Public Gardens

Winter locking of the Gardens at 6 p.m. was introduced with effect from Monday, 2nd November and this will remain in place until Sunday, 28th March 2021.

Spring bulb planting has been completed which hopefully will lead to a colourful display in the Spring.

Windmill Hill

Woodchip and bark had been laid at 2 of the 3 main entrances due to underfoot conditions which led to wet and very slippery inclines to gain access to the site as well as in front of the three benches on site. This form of mulching has proved to be very effective at this location. In addition, woodchip has been laid in front of the three benches due to the erosion of the soil through heavy use and the waterlogging that has taken place making the seats unusable. Once the drier weather arrives, a more permanent solution will be sought by placing paving slabs in front of the seats.

The tree planting in collaboration with the WI has been completed at two locations within the site and EHDC provided some tree guards and stakes.

The area remains a popular attraction for residents and dog walkers alike.

7.6 Play Areas:

Play area inspections continue to be undertaken on a monthly basis by our external contractor and reports produced. The Covid-19 cleaning regime continues to be in place that sees all play equipment, fencing and gates being sprayed down every morning by the grounds team with a disinfectant solution in line with current guidelines.

Replacement parts have been ordered for the toddler's multi-play at Anstey Park following defects identified and are being scheduled once the contractor (Playdale) has advised of delivery of the required replacement parts.

7.7 Town Centre:

The Town Centre planters are due to be cut back ready for the 2021 flowering season

The Market Square circular tables have proved to be highly successful, as have the two tables put out on the Lawn at the Assembly Rooms.

7.7.1 Memorial benches & Litter Bins

The grounds team have installed 2 new benches at Flood Meadows over recent weeks with a further bench in the Public Gardens and the re-instatement of the memorial bench at Anstey Park has been undertaken.

A new order has been taken for a Memorial bench to be installed in St. Lawrence churchyard with the agreement of the Rev. Andrew Mickelfield.

New Broxap Double Recycling Bins with associated fixing kits have been delivered (7th January) and these will start to be installed shortly when the locations have been agreed which will also include new wooden bins on The Butts.

ITEM 10: ALLOTMENTS REPORT

FOR INFORMATION

9.1 The Green Waste collections which were intended to take place at the beginning of the growing season was delayed due to the Covid restrictions but were undertaken by the end of December with all sites being served.

9.2 Plot Administration Overview as at 31st January 2021

There is currently 63* people on the waiting list:-

Borovere	20
Hawthorns	20
Spitalfields	36
Whitedown	15
Wooteys	27

*Some of the people on the waiting list have applied for more than one site.

Ten previous tenants relinquished their tenancies upon receiving their annual renewal in November and seven tenants have had their tenancies terminated due to non-payment of rent. Two plots, one at Borovere the other at Hawthorns have been offered and accepted. The remaining 15 plots; three on Hawthorns, four on Spitalfields, five on Whitedown and three on Wooteys, are now vacant and are being cleared by the Grounds Team and are in the process of being offered to prospective new tenants.

ITEM 11: ALTON LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE

FOR DECISION

Request from Sonia Clark (Alton Local Food Initiative Secretary)

Where could we plant some fruit trees?

I'm really impressed with what the Town Council are doing, for their enterprise and flexibility in these challenging times. It looks like ALFI may have the opportunity of planting some fruit (or nut) trees in Alton. We would be interested to know from you if you have anywhere to suggest and sanction, where this would be helpful? In the past we've put the trees in our orchard area at the Jubilee Fields and we also put about half a dozen at Alton College some years ago. I'll wait to hear if you have anywhere in mind. Some of my colleagues are having a zoom meeting soon to discuss the fruit trees so can you kindly copy them in to your response. I should say that our theme for ALFI this year is planting fruit trees, though it could also extend to fruit bushes. Thank you for your help and best wishes,

In discussion with the Senior Groundsmen, consideration could be given to either the Lower Field at Will Hall Farm (once transferred to the Town Council) or the far side of the open space at Barley Fields which is currently used as a wildflower meadow walk area.

Members are requested to consider these options or any other sites which they feel may be appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to consider the proposal as presented.