

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2023 AT 7.00PM AT THE TOWN HALL**

Present: **Councillor** **Ben Hamlin (Mayor)**
 Annette Eyre (Deputy Mayor)
 Matthew Bayliss
 John Chubb
 Mark Boyce-Churn
 Don Hammond
 Graham Hill
 Matthew Kellermann
 Nick O'Brien
 Barbara Tansey
 Janice Treacher
 Jonathan Waugh

In attendance: **Leah Coney** - **Town Clerk**
 Patricia Harris - **Finance & Admin Manager**

County Councillor Andrew Joy
16 Members of the public

Councillors and the public observed a one-minute silence in remembrance of former Councillor Paul Crossley who very sadly passed away last month.

11 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Waple.

12 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor made a short announcement in respect of the passing of former Councillor Paul Crossley to note a card of condolence had been sent and a donation from the Mayor's fund had been made to Paul's chosen charity.

The Mayor passed over to Cllr Hill who said a few words about former Cllr Paul Crossley.

13 Minutes of the last meetings held on 26th April and 17th May 2023

The Minutes of the Full Council on 26th April and those of the AGM on 17th May 2023 were approved and were signed by the Town Mayor. Councillor Joy had noted to councillors in advance of the meeting of a typo from Minute 238 of previous meeting 26th April, the minute being corrected by deleting the word 'was' before 'advised'

14 Questions to the Council

14.1 The following questions were raised/representations were made in person:

1. Karen Murrell. Noted that she was happy to answer any questions relating to the application at Edgar Hall.
2. Pat Murrell (Royal British Legion) wished to raise concern over the loss of parking spaces in the enclosed area by Edgar Hall as a result of the proposed planning application.
3. Stephen Gough – resident of Amery Ward and a supporter of the Save Kings Pond group asked when a full discussion on Kings Pond and its future management going forward would be held in public. The Mayor referred Mr. Gough to the statement issued by Alton Town Council setting out the position of the Council at this time as published in the weekly on line Altonian.
4. Andrew Joy wished to raise four items which he had previously raised with the Town Clerk. The first two had been dealt with namely with reference to the late Paul Crossley and a minute's silence and the second in respect of the Minutes. The next two were relating to the proposed planning application for Edgar Hall and the adverse impact on the neighbour, the Air Cadets and the last was advising caution in respect of the Town Council giving support to the Farnborough Noise Group's response to the Farnborough Airport's PIR report
5. Squadron Leader Shawn McCarthy in wishing to lodge his objection to the Edgar Hall planning application made a representation to Members citing loss of parking and drill space as well as loss of light into the Air Cadet building.
6. Tom Bagley, Training Officer for 613 (Alton) Squadron Royal Air Force Air Cadets wished to provide members with background details for Air Cadets and noting that a Freedom of Information Act request would be sent to the Council relating to the bidding process and award of lease to Dementia Friends and Men's Shed.
7. The Mayor then offered the right of reply to Karen Murrell (on behalf of the applicant Dementia Friendly).

Karen informed the Council that there had been contact with the Air Cadets and a number of offers had been extended to them including using Edgar Hall, free of charge and in fact the Air Cadets were so doing at the end of June for an event. Karen also believes that their aspirations for the site would not be detrimental to the Air Cadets as they would still be able to use the parking area for their parade drills, she re-affirmed that it was their intention to work together.

- 14.2 The following written correspondence/representations had been received and had been circulated to all Councillors in advance but as neither Mr. Furnival nor Mr. Kuttner were in attendance to make their representation both items were tabled as read. Members noted the correspondence and had no comments to make.
1. Mr Anthony Furnival:
In May I submitted a representation for the meeting that month but was told it could not be considered at an AGM but would be included for the first full meeting. I note in reviewing the agenda for this first full meeting two critical issues:

1) My representation has not been included on the agenda as I was assured. Equally nobody had the decency to contact me to tell me this.

2) Matters related to committees - this was the core matter in my representation, namely reestablishing the open spaces committee or forming a committee with a similar remit. It appears discussions behind closed doors at a 'workshop' extensively discussed committees, meaning that decisions were made without considering public opinion. I feel in light of much public criticism of the various outcomes of the ill conceived 'depoliticisation' motion including the dissolution of various committees and knowing that one or more public representations existed on this, it at very least deserved public debate.

Can there be any wonder why public confidence in ATC has become eroded when so much is discussed secretly by those allegedly there to represent the residents of this town? Of the various areas i've lived in - this council is by far the least transparent and have persistently shut doors to democracy. OSC had a some of the best public attendance compared to other committees, there was never a shortage of agenda items and with proposals the democratic platform residents had has been swiped from under their feet, it's easy to see why people have become so cynical when the council appear to be doing everything possible to stop certain views being heard.

May I also extend my disappointment at Cllr Waugh's role in this. I contacted him on the same matter shortly before your AGM as the then only elected councillor for Ashdell Ward (as Cllr Waple had at this stage not been co-opted) - rather than meaningful engagement, there was lots of excuses about councillors needing time to find their feet. In reality he was being dishonest - it appears that he was aware of and presumably partook in discussions on committees behind closed doors and had no intention of being a conduit for the voices and opinions of his residents.

Further, the lack of common decency to get back to me when he knew OSC would not be re-established was disappointing - it's incredibly frustrating to find out my concern has been presumably dismissed through an agenda item rather than the councillor to whom this concern had been entrusted contacting me. It's disheartening just one month in to this new council to realise that Ashdell is once again lumbered with a councillor unwilling to represent views of residents. After four years of non-representation - Ashdell deserved good, hard working and honest democracy and I cannot see us getting that from Mr Waugh.

2. Mr Andrew Kuttner:

I wish to present the following under agenda item 5, Questions to Council at the 14 June meeting:

1) Will the Town Clerk and Chair-Mayor Cllr Hamlin (member of the Labour group which has pledged to "Protect Kings Pond") as the two Responsible Officers, agree for a motion to dispense with all proposals and thoughts of taking Kings Pond offline, along with any actions that may threaten the integrity of the current large body of water, be tabled as a dedicated item on the agenda of the Full Council meeting on 12 July? Naturally, this is subject to a motion of this nature being tabled, proposed and seconded with due notice. Will the Open Spaces Champion, Cllr Kellermann, who has publicly declared being unequivocally in favour of keeping KP online, positivity support this?

2) Will it be ensured that security guard(s) employed for 12 July wear their SIA License “where it can be seen at all times”, as per SIA License conditions? Further, if said guard(s) fail to comply, will their services be immediately dispensed with?

3) Will the Town Clerk please explain why she is so reluctant (frightened) to allow today’s meeting, the first ‘proper’ Full Council meeting of the new ‘administration’ discuss the fundamental issue relating to Kings Pond, namely on- v off- line at Full Council instead of, as I have been reliably informed, behind closed door? What is the big secret that seems to have been be haunting ATC for at least 20 years? Is there an “Altongate”?

14 **Planning Application 60102 FUL Land adjacent to Westbrook House, 17 Howards Lane, Holybourne, Alton**

Members were invited to consider the following planning application: Proposal: Four new detached houses with attached garages and associated new access drive:

Councillor Graham Hill advised that having spoken with the Planning Office it had been confirmed that **Policy H10 of the Joint Core Strategy remains valid which states that development will only be permitted in this area of Holybourne where: a. there is no harm to the character and appearance of the area; b. as many trees and landscape features as possible are retained as identified in a detailed survey of the proposed site; c. the size of a new dwelling is in-keeping with its plot size; d. within Holybourne Special Housing Areas plot sizes are more than 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres) excluding land in the highway.**

Therefore, on the proposal of Councillor Hill, seconded by Councillor Hammond it was

RESOLVED

to OBJECT for the following material reason

The application is not compliant with Policy H10 of the Joint Core Strategy:

- 1. The proposed development lies in a Conservation Area and is not compliant in terms of the required 0.2 hectares of land afforded to each plot. The plot is 0.55 hectares overall and the proposal is for four new detached houses with garages and associated new access drive.**
- 2. There is special protection for trees (with or without TPO’s) and the applicant has not provided an Arboricultural Report which is a requirement as the applicant is wishing to remove trees on the site**
- 3. The application is by its design, size and bulk and the resultant loss of privacy to neighbours represents an unacceptable overdevelopment of the site and is contrary to Alton Neighbourhood Plan DE1.**
- 4. The application does not meet the requirement for visitor parking (namely 1 space per 2 dwellings) as requirement under Policy TR5**

of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2028 as Modified April 2021

5. There is insufficient information relating to highways, waste and fowl drainage.

All in favour

15 **Planning Application 60072 FUL Edgar Hall, Anstey Lane, Alton GU34 2NB**

Members were invited to consider the following planning application: Proposal: Single storey front extension with proposed covered area:

On the proposal of Councillor Hill, seconded by Councillor Kellermann, it was

RESOLVED

To have NO OBJECTION to this application.

All in favour

Members noted the concern raised by the Royal British Legion and Air Cadets in public session over the potential loss of parking / drill space from the proposal and requested this item be tabled for the next meeting to allow the council to consider a solution.

16 **Committee Structure**

On the proposal of Councillor Eyre, seconded by Councillor Bayliss, it was

RESOLVED to approve:

The appointments for each of the following committees:

Planning Committee (10 min)

Councillor John Chubb
Councillor Mark Boyce-Churn
Councillor Annette Eyre
Councillor Don Hammond
Councillor Matthew Kellermann
Councillor Nick O'Brien
Councillor Barbara Tansey
Councillor Janice Treacher
Councillor Ellie Waple
Councillor Jonathan Waugh

Climate Change Committee (3min)

Councillor Barbara Tansey,
Councillor Matthew Kellermann,
Councillor Don Hammond
Councillor Janice Treacher

Staffing Committee (3min)

Councillor Matthew Bayliss
Councillor Graham Hill

Councillor Annette Eyre

All in favour

On the proposal of Councillor Eyre, seconded by Councillor Bayliss, it was

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Eyre as the Chair of the Planning and Transport Committee

All in favour

On the proposal of Councillor Tansey, seconded by Councillor O'Brien, it was

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Tansey as the Chair of the Climate Change Committee

All in favour

On the proposal of Councillor John Chubb, seconded by Councillor Boyce-Churn, it was

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Bayliss as the Chair of the Staffing Committee

All in favour

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

RESOLVED to appoint the following "Champions"

Allotments – Councillor Bayliss

Neighbourhood Plan – Councillor Chubb

Community Events - Councillor Tansey

Open Spaces, Recreational and Sports Facilities – Councillor Kellermann

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) – Councillor Tansey

All in favour

17 To Approve the Updated Council Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24

On the proposal of Councillor Eyre, seconded by Councillor Hammond, it was

RESOLVED

To approve the amended Calendar of Meetings for 2023/24 as tabled

All in favour

18 Recreational Facilities improvements Anstey Park

This agenda item was brought to Full Council proposed by Councillor Kellermann and Seconded by Councillor Eyre.

On the proposal of Councillor Kellermann, seconded by Councillor Eyre it was

RESOLVED to approve

1. **The installation of an additional basketball hoop at the Anstey Park MUGA**
2. **The whitewashing of the ball wall (with grey paint to match the breeze blocks) to cover over the graffiti**
3. **The creation of a Task and Finish Group, led by Councillor Kellermann to look at the development of a project plan for improvements to the teen facilities around the MUGA. This would include the creation of a basketball court/ extension of the existing court of installation of additional markings on the current netball court for basketball, a replacement of the existing skatepark facility, the creation of a mural/street art project of the ball wall and upgrading of the flood lighting to LED. Any resulting project plan to be brought back to Full Council at the appropriate time for consideration.**

All in Favour

Councillor Boyce-Churn advised that he was more than happy to assist Councillor Kellerman on the Task and Finish Group.

19 **Farnborough Noise Group's response to Farnborough Airport's PIR report**

This Agenda item was brought to Full Council proposed by Councillor Tansey and seconded by Councillor O'Brien. Councillor Tansey had invited Jenny Griffiths from Alton Climate Action Network (ACAN) to address Full Council who read out her representation which had previously been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting.

A proposed amendment to defer this item was tabled and a recorded vote requested

On the proposal of Councillor Hill, seconded by Councillor Eyre to defer this item.

In favour, Councillors Hill, Eyre and Kellermann.

Those against: Councillors Bayliss, Boyce-Churn, Chubb, Hamlin, Hammond, O'Brien, Treacher & Waugh.

The motion was not carried.

On the proposal of Councillor Tansey, seconded by Councillor O'Brien, it was

RESOLVED To support Farnborough Noise Group's response to Farnborough Airport's PIR report.

A recorded vote was requested

In favour - Councillors Bayliss, Boyce-Churn, Chubb, Eyre, Hamlin, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher & Waugh

Against – Councillor Kellermann

The Town Clerk was requested to confirm support of the Farnborough Noise Group's response to Farnborough Airport's post implementation review (PIR)

20 **District Councillor Report – Councillor Steve Hunt**

Councillor Hunt was not in attendance and no written report had been received in advance.

The Council recorded its disappointment that this was the case, having sought confirmation from Councillor Hill (in his capacity as a District Councillor) that a rota had been agreed with District Councillors and all were aware of their responsibilities to attend and/or to submit a written report in advance tendering apologies if applicable.

21 **County Councillor Report – Councillor Andrew Joy**

County Councillor Joy advised that at yesterday's cabinet meeting the Leader noted that an additional £7.5m had been allocated per year over the next three years to address highways issues. Following a question of clarification from Cllr O'Brien Councillor Joy commented that this was a re-allocation of existing budgets as opposed to a grant from central government.

Cllr Eyre enquired if surveys were carried out on the quality of works undertaken as repairs especially potholes appear to be of poor quality as they don't appear to last. Cllr Joy responded that interim repairs are the most economic solution at the moment and that repairs are undertaken 3 or 4 times before resources are found for a longer-term repair.

Councillor Tansey enquired if the £7.5m additional funds were for roads only or did it include cycleways and paths. Councillor Joy confirmed that the increase in the Highways budget allocation covered all aspects of highways which included cycleways and paths.

Councillor Hammond asked whether HCC holds a list of desirable road improvements for Alton i.e. junction improvements. Councillor Joy in wishing to keep his response brief advised that a review is currently being carried out on the strategic plans from 2015 and were being prioritised in terms of the extent that they would be implemented. He confirmed that only one junction in Alton had been implemented since that time which was the Anstey Road/Anstey Lane junction.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Joy.

22 **Capital Expenditure**

22.1 Assembly Rooms Drainage:

Members received a report detailing problems associated with the fowl sewer at the Assembly Rooms. Whilst immediate emergency works had been undertaken, officers had commissioned a report to establish any residual works with costings

that needed to be undertaken to rectify the problems. The report was tabled for consideration to undertake the necessary repair work.

On the proposal of Councillor O'Brien, seconded by Councillor Hill, it was

RESOLVED

To approve the appointment of Metro-Rod to undertake the repair works to the sewerage system at the Assembly Rooms at a cost of £8,705 (eight thousand, seven hundred and five pounds)

All in favour

22.2 Mayoral Regalia

Members were requested to consider the report tabled in respect of the costs associated with an upgrade to the Mayoral Regalia.

On the proposal of Councillor Hamlin, seconded by Councillor Eyre, it was

RESOLVED

That no updates be made to the Mayoral Regalia

All in favour

The meeting finished at 8.58 pm.