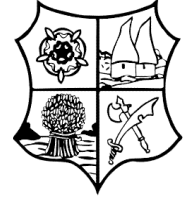


ALTON Town Council



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Town Clerk: Leah Coney

Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HD

26th October 2023

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the **FULL COUNCIL** on **Wednesday 1st November 2023 at 7.00pm** at the Town Hall when the under mentioned business will be transacted.

Yours faithfully

LConey

Leah Coney
Town Clerk

To: All Town Councillors

Councillor Ben Hamlin
Councillor Matthew Bayliss
Councillor John Chubb
Councillor Mark Boyce-Churn
Councillor Annette Eyre
Councillor Don Hammond
Councillor Graham Hill
Councillor Matthew Kellermann
Councillor Nick O'Brien
Councillor Barbara Tansey
Councillor Janice Treacher
Councillor Peter Wadman
Councillor Jonathan Waugh

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 1st NOVEMBER 2023
TOWN HALL, ALTON – AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Town Mayor's announcements
- 3 Minutes of the last meeting held on the 4th October 2023 for approval.
- 4 Declaration of Interest and 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 when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter
- 5 Changes to Standing Orders to allow representations on items not on the agenda and reinstate the Networking Café.
6. Questions to the Council. Members of the public are invited to make representations.
7. Capital Expenditure - Assembly Rooms
8. Accounts to 30th September 2023, Internal Audit Report & Financial Regulation updates
9. Climate Change committee - updated Climate Change Strategy and appointment of business representative
10. Lease agreement Brazilian Jujitsu and Mens Shed.

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL – 1st NOVEMBER 2023**

REPORTS BY THE TOWN CLERK

**ITEM 5 CHANGES TO STANDING ORDERS AND REINSTATEMENT
OF THE NETWORKING CAFE**

FOR DECISION

Members are requested to consider the reinstatement of the Council's Networking Café – This is a session in advance of Full Council meetings where members of the public can come to talk to councillors, on any subject, outside of the formal setting of the meeting. The sessions are designed to enable local people who may not wish to address Council within a council meeting, to speak informally to their ward councillor, ask questions, raise queries or request their councillor speak on their behalf within the public representations section of the council meeting.

It is recommended that this session commences at the February 2024 Meeting (Members have a prior arrangement in place for a briefing at 6pm before the January meeting)

In addition, Members are requested to approve an alteration to the current standing order in respect of public speaking at meetings, which currently reads as follows:

3e. Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

It is proposed to amend this standing order to read as follows:

3e. Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to consider approval of:

- 1) The reinstatement of the Networking Café to be held in the Council Chamber at 6.15pm to 6.45pm in advance of Full Council meetings,
- 2) The amendment of Standing Order 3e to read: "Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend."

ITEM 7 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE ASSEMBLY ROOMS

FOR DECISION

Further to the October Full Council meeting when Members approved a lease of the Assembly Rooms to Dementia Friendly Alton, to commence in January 2024, Members are now requested to consider the use of up to £45,000 capital reserves to pay for non-structural improvements to the building to facilitate its continued use as a community facility. The works include:

Downstairs Lower Room. Change ceiling lights to LED. Complete redecoration to room to include all walls, ceilings and woodwork. Prov Sum for works to water dispenser.

Foyer. Complete redecoration to room to include all walls, ceilings and woodwork. To include all stairs and landings. Movement and construction of new freestanding reception desk.

Kitchen Change all kitchen cabinet doors and plinths. New fridges x 2 and cooker Supply and fit new

Dishwasher.(Domestic Quality) Fit Sliding door or Fixed door (for budget purposes sliding has been assumed) Decorations to completed area.

Existing Toilets Complete refurbishment of both rear sets of toilets. New suites, floors, decs and fittings. Damp sorted and re-plastered where needed.

Rear Hall Complete re-plaster as required. Complete full redecoration to same area. New lighting throughout.

Rear Lobby Full redecoration or rear lobby (behind reception).

Upper Room Change ceiling lights to LED. Complete redecoration to room

Main Hall. Stage Lighting replacement and upgrade.

It is confirmed that none of the work being proposed is structural (all decorative and replacing of fittings) and as such do not require planning permission. Nor is any of the work proposed to modify the building or alter the character of the building in terms of its listed building status.

An indicative quote has been received for all of the above works at a total cost of £57,000 less the following contribution from our new at Dementia Friendly Alton as follows:

Screwfix Money for toilet refurbishment	£5,000
EHDC Climate money	£6,200

Leaving a residual requirement of £45,800

Members are requested to consider the use of capital reserves to fund the works, with an additional 10% contingency available. The project is proposed to be managed on behalf of Alton Town Council by its tenant, Dementia Friendly Alton, as they will be managing the building day to day and can book the works around hirings. Dementia Friendly Alton will also look to secure three quotes for each element of the work, showing prospective contractors around the premises and will agree with ATC officers whom to appoint for each element of the works. ATC will raise the purchase orders and pay the invoices direct to the contractors.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to consider the approval of up to £45,800 + 10% contingency for (non-structural) improvement works to the Assembly Rooms to facilitate its use as community building, as detailed above; work to commence in early 2024.

ITEM 8 ACCOUNTS to 30th SEPTEMBER, INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT AND UPDATES TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

FOR DECISION

The accounts enclosed with your bundles were reviewed by the Internal Auditor on the 4th October 2023. If there are any questions arising, please submit these to the Clerk in advance of Full Council to ensure answers are available at the meeting.

Balance Sheet as at 30th September 2023

The balance sheet is presented for sign off by the Chairman of the Council and the RFO (Responsible Financial Officer, Mrs Leah Coney – Town Clerk). Members are requested to note that the current working capital figure of £757,639 includes the proceeds of asset disposal earlier this year of £275,000 which will be transferred down to reserves before financial year end.

Income & Expenditure

Attached is the Income and Expenditure Report for the second quarter of 2023/24 financial year; this illustrates the Operating Income and Expenditure for the council to 30th September 2023 against the budget set by the Council.

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30th September 2023

The Bank Reconciliation Statements are as presented with a closing balance of £342,426.29 (Unity), £1,463,829.73 (CCLA) and £396.17 (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 attached report includes all payments over £500, issued between 1st July to 30th September 2023 in respect of invoices and grant cheques.

Internal Audit Report

The Internal Audit Report to cover the period to the 30th September 2023 is included in Members bundles. Members are requested to approve two minor changes to the Financial Regulations, detailed by the Internal Auditor as follows:

Financial regulation 5.4 contains a typo where it refers to 5.6 above, I believe this should say 6.6 below. In addition to this I recommend the council draw up a list of variable direct debts and have this authorised annually by council and verify the direct debts every four years as per the regulation.

There is an inconsistency between the threshold for the fixed asset purchase/disposal at FR 13.2 and 13.5 this needs to be corrected.

“I am of the opinion the council is following its own regulations and that any changes to financial regulations are to be considered minor and not indicative of errors in the system. I am therefore of the opinion that the control assertion “This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for”, has been met.”

Variable Direct Debits

The list of variable direct debits paid by Alton Town Council is included in Members bundles for authorisation. Each one has been verified by the Assistant to the Clerk as active and correct.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to confirm their approval of:

- 1) The balance sheet dated 30th September 2023
- 2) The Income and Expenditure account to 30th September 2023
- 3) The bank reconciliations for the Unity Account and the CCLA Deposit Account
- 4) The Payments over £500 covering 1st July 2023 to 30th September 2023
- 5) The Internal Audit Report to 30th September 2023 including amendments to Financial Regulations as including the amended typo of 5.4 and correcting the inconsistency at FR13.2 and 13.5 to read £10,000
- 6) The list of variable direct debits for authorisation.

ITEM 9 CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE UPDATED STRATEGY AND APPOINTMENT OF BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVE

FOR DECISION

Enclosed in Members bundles is the updated Climate Change Strategy as recommended by the Climate Change Committee at its meeting on the 18th October. Members are requested to review the document. If

approved, an updated Action Plan to accompany the document will be tabled at the next Climate Change meeting for consideration.

In addition, Members are also requested to ratify the appointment of Janos Balazs of Laleham Health & Beauty to the Climate Change Committee as the Business Representative. A copy of the draft minutes from the meeting on the 18th October (minute 17 refers), is included within Members bundles.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to:

- 1) Approve the updated ATC Climate Change Strategy as tabled.
- 2) Ratify the appointment of Janos Balazs of Laleham Health & Beauty as the Business Representative to the Climate Change Committee.

ITEM 10 LEASE BRAZILIAN JIJITSU AND MENS SHED

FOR DECISION

Following the agreement for a lease with DFA at the Assembly Rooms (minute 43 4th October 2023 Full Council refers), the current occupier of the upper room at the Assembly Rooms, Brazilian Jujitsu (BJJ), who have had a licence to occupy with ATC for use of the facility since 2018, have confirmed that they would be agreeable to transfer across to Edgar Hall from 1st April 2023. Effectively they would be swapping with DFA to ensure continued full tenanted occupation of Edgar Hall alongside Mens Shed. It will also free up the upper room at the Assembly Rooms for more community hirings.

For BJJ, this will enable a dedicated space with changing rooms and they have agreed to pay virtually all of the previously agreed rental figure of £12,000 per annum for Edgar Hall, enabling Mens Shed as a community group to pay just £300 per annum (plus a contribution to utilities.)

The Town Clerk met with the Chair of Mens Shed and another trustee last week to discuss two matters. Firstly, they were concerned that with DFA moving to the Assembly Rooms that they would be liable for the full rent of the building which they could not afford and thus would be unable to pay, so sharing the space with BJJ provides a solution with shared occupancy across communal areas with each group having designated space for their activities.

Secondly, the organisation is incredibly pleased with the response and support they have received from the Community since their move into Edgar Hall. Their membership has increased and they are working with our social prescribers to provide opportunities for local men and women within “The Shed”. They have redecorated Edgar Hall and made improvements to the toilet areas and the workshop space and are now working with Energy Alton surveyors on a number of energy saving proposals for the building. Whilst this will come forward for landlord consent in due course (as part of the repairing lease), with the imminent departure of the Town Clerk, this is being brought to Members attention now, so they are aware of the discussions.

In summary, the heads of term agreed with Mens Shed and DFA in March 2023 are as follows:

- The lease will be for a term of up to 7 years
- The rent will initially be £12,000 per annum exclusive of rates, insurance premiums, utilities and any other outgoings. Rent will be payable monthly in 12 equal instalments via standing order.
- Rent review will be reviewed at the end of the third year.
- VAT – the building is not opted to Tax (confirmed by HMRC)
- The landlord and the tenants will be able to terminate the lease if the property is damaged or destroyed by an uninsurable risk so that the tenant cannot occupy the property.
- The tenants cannot change the use of the property

- The tenants must comply with all relevant licencing laws and health and safety regulations
- The Tenants will not cause nuisance, damage, disturbance or annoyance to any person or which may be injurious to the value, tone, amenity or character of the Property, the Building or Neighbouring Property.
- The property must be kept in good repair at all times. The tenant will be responsible for internal maintenance and external maintenance to be defined.
- The tenants can make external or structural alterations to the property with the landlord's prior written consent, which cannot be unreasonably withheld
- The tenants will have the right to use the parking spaces
- The tenants cannot assign the lease or sublet the property in part or in full.
- The tenants can put up signs on the outside of the property or that would be visible from the outside of the property with the landlord's prior written consent, which cannot be unreasonably withheld.
- The tenants will insure the property for contents; the landlord will pay the building insurance premium which will be recharged to the tenant at cost, annually.
- Each party will be responsible for its own costs in connection with this lease
- The lease is proposed to be contracted out (excluded) from the provisions of section 38A of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 (This means the tenant has no legal right to remain in occupation of the premises and no right to the grant of a new lease following the expiry of the existing lease)

There are a number of clauses originally included which will no longer be required for any lease going forward without DFA, these principally being,

- To provide spaces to other voluntary and community organisations in the Alton area at reasonable cost, when they are not in use (as the building would be occupied full time)
- The tenant may be permitted to licence the premises for the consumption of alcohol, subject to landlord consent, which will not be unreasonably withheld.(not required)
- The tenant may hire out the property to a third party (to be defined and reflected within the agreed rent for the property) (not required as the building will be occupied full time)

DFA and Mens Shed have set up an Edgar Hall Management Committee to oversee the building and it is understood that this will remain in place, minus DFA involvement. In discussion with Mens Shed though, it is likely that two leases would be drafted for the two tenants, in order to ensure that if BJJ were to ever move out that Mens Shed did not become liable for the rental of the whole building.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the granting of a lease for Edgar Hall from 1st April 2023 to Brazilian Jujitsu for £11,700 per annum and to Mens Shed for £300 per annum with revised heads of terms (including the removal of the three clauses as noted) issues to both parties prior to the drafting of the lease agreements.