

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE



18th December 2023

Update on King's Pond, Alton.

In January this year, Alton Town Council resolved to conduct financial and technical assessments of possible works to the pond, including dredging and weir removal. It was also resolved that the results of these studies, and any draft management plans, would be put back for public consultation.

The Council has reached an important stage in the research and investigation to gather the information needed for these assessments. Surveys and Silt Analysis have been completed.

In 1996 the pond was reportedly dredged to a minimum depth of 1.75m in the main area and 1m minimum depth each side of the island. The depths are calculated from the low water level set by the outlet weir. The average depths are now 1.05m in the main area and 0.41m by the island.

The total volume of silt in the pond is approximately 9,400m³. This is similar to the amount that was dredged in 1996.

Silt sampling, analysis and reporting have been carried out by local company, Ground & Water (www.groundandwater.co.uk).

The silt is contaminated with high levels of some metals, particularly lead and zinc, and also with high levels of Polycyclic-Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs). The PAHs are from road run-off of traffic pollution.

Although the silt contains plenty of organic matter and nutrients, the contamination levels mean that it cannot be used for agriculture, allotments or gardens. The contamination is also above the levels recommended for recreational land use, but the silt could be reused at Kings Pond provided that the surface is capped with cleaner material. Despite the level of contamination, the silt would not be classified as hazardous waste in landfill.

The survey drawings and the silt report are available on the ATC website.

In accordance with Council resolutions from January, the next stage is assessment of the feasibility and cost of removing the weir. After inviting fee proposals from four suitable consultants, the Council selected and appointed Water Environment Limited (www.waterenvironment.co.uk) to do this assessment. They are also to provide an outline of the possible options for river and pond if the weir was to be removed. This report will be received by the end of this month.

The council will review the Water Environment report during January and consider if there are one or more options that could be developed alongside the dredging option.

There will be public consultation on dredging and any other options in Spring 2024 prior to discussion and decision at a Full Council meeting.

No works will be carried out until the results of investigations and feasibility studies and any project or management plans have been put back for public consultation.

Ends

Media Contact:

Pat Harris - Interim Town Clerk townclerk@alton.gov.uk