ALTON
Town Council

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Town Clerk: Mrs Pat Harris

Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
Hampshire
GU341HD

1st March 2024

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the **ALTON TOWN ANNUAL ELECTORS' MEETING** will be held at the Assembly Rooms, Alton GU34 IBA on Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 7:00pm when the under mentioned business will be under consideration. All electors living within the Town Council's area are entitled to attend.

Councillor Annette Eyre
Town Mayor

AGENDA

1 Welcome and Town Mayor's Address

2. To approve the minutes of the annual meeting held on 15th March 2023

3. To table the Alton Town Council audited accounts year ending 31 March 2023

4. Town Mayor to welcome representatives of community groups to tell you about the work they do in the community:

- Alton Neighbourhood Plan-Mike Heelis
- Dementia Friendly Alton - Karen Murrell
- Men's Shed-Gordon Anderson
- Kings Arms - Jen Hammersley

5. Open Forum - To receive questions and statements from electors of the Alton Town Council area. Where possible residents are requested to provide their representations at least 5 days prior to the meeting in order that there is sufficient time to prepare responses.

7 Closing comments

Please note: light refreshments will be served in advance of the meeting from 6.30pm

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ALTON TOWN ELECTORS' MEETING
HELD ON 15 MARCH 2023 AT 7:00PM

Present:	Councillor	Ginny Boxall	-	Town Mayor
		Matthew Bayliss		
		Annette Eyre		
		Graham Hill		
		Graham Titterington		
		Jonathan Waugh		
Apologies:	Councillor			
		Paul Crossley		
		Sharon Cullen		
		Pam Jones		
		Suzie Burns		
		Lewis Jones		
		Richard Platt		
Absent:	Councillor			
		Annie Lancaster		

In attendance:	Leah Coney	-	Town Clerk
	Pat Harris	-	Admin and Finance Manager
	Samantha Brown	-	Councillor Support/ Admin Officer
	Wendy Simson	-	Finance Officer
	County Councillor Andrew Joy		
	Sgt Mark O'Hanlon	-	Neighbourhood Police Team
	5 members of the public		

104 **Welcome and Town Mayors Address**

The Town Mayor welcomed all to the Annual Meeting of Electors and made the following address:

A warm Welcome to this evenings Annual Electors meeting -

I would like to begin this evening with a Big Thankyou to our Town clerk and staff of Alton Town council for all their hard work and the extra mile that they all put in to ensure the smooth running of the council throughout the year.

I would also like to warmly thank my colleagues and fellow councillors for their hard work and the contribution they have all made to the council some over very many years and I believe their contribution should be recognised by this community.

A life of serving in the community is often something that goes unnoticed but I believe passionately that these unsung and unpaid volunteers (and Alton has a great many) deserve our Thanks for all they do for Alton and the wider area; without them our town would be very much impoverished.

I am aware of the great privilege I have had this year to serve as Mayor of Alton and I and my consort my husband Gary have had a wonderful year so far attending a great many different and varied events and it has been a very busy year.

I find it hard to single out just one memorable event but one of the highlights must surely be the Christmas lights switch on which was such a joyous occasion when after the confinement of the pandemic our community were out in force and the high street was absolutely buzzing and a hive of festive activity.

I am fortunate to call Alton my home, I think Alton is a fabulous place to live and surrounded by wonderful accessible countryside and a vibrant community life with so many local groups and associations to join and be part of.

Yes, I am proud to call myself an Altonian having lived here amongst you for All of my formative years and I'm proud to call Alton my home,

I will continue to serve here for long after stepping down as Mayor and I wish the New Town council which will be elected in May all the very best in their endeavours to continue making Alton the very best it can be.

105 **Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 16th March 2022**

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

RESOLVED
The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and will be signed by the Town Mayor at a later date.

All councillors present voted in favour.

106 **To table the Alton Town Council Audited Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2022**

Councillors noted the Audited Accounts as presented and that the External Auditor had raised no comments

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

RESOLVED
To approve the Audited Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2022

All councillors present voted in favour

107 **Town Mayor to welcome Sergeant Mark O'Hanlon (Neighbourhood Police Team)**

The Town Mayor welcomed Sergeant Mark O'Hanlon (Neighbourhood Police Team) who introduced himself and explained a little about the current position in respect of Alton and the work of the local Neighbourhoods Team.

Sergeant Mark O'Hanlon introduced himself and advised the following:

- He was 2 months into the job in Alton
- He had been in the police force for 24 years; a sergeant for 17 years and in the Neighbourhood Police Team for 12 having carried out a police wide strategic review of neighbourhood policing
- Posting to Alton had been requested by himself and he would be here "for the foreseeable future" - Alton being the heartland of Hampshire where people want to live and work
- Concurred that there had been challenges for the police since the 2008 financial crises during which time they have suffered a 25% reduction in funding. There were new recruits coming in but they are still waiting the reap the rewards of an "experienced" workforce but Alton had a full compliment in the Response and Neighbourhood Team
- Responsibilities for the police include (both obvious and hidden) include
    - A rise in the number of domestic violence incidents
    - Those whose voice cannot be heard including children and those with learning disabilities
    - Working with schools
    - Drugs imbedded - there are a small minority who have succumbed to drug addiction who needed support but also they need to stop drugs coming into the area
    - Bringing those that cause harm to justice
- The positive side of the role included
    - Engagement with the public and to listen to the concerns and Mark has a very enthusiastic team however, some of these were not down to the police such as:
        - Noise complaints - Environmental Health Department at EHDC
        - Parking issues -local authorities EHDC currently but returning to HCC shortly
- Nationally crime is on the rise - a rebound across many sectors following Covid and lock down with both the Health Service and the Police seeing a sharp increase in low level crime. Alton compared to Hampshire:
    - Alton has flatlined compared to a 10% increase across Hampshire
    - Reduction in violent crime reported (which is a trend they wish to see continuing)

Sergeant O'Hanlon advised that this had been a brief overview and encouraged members of the public to continue to report incidents either

- On-line (very quick and very efficient and effective)
- calling 101 (appreciated the frustration of your call being answered)
- e-mailing him direct for any other concerns people may have

Councillors and the public were invited to ask any questions - (Responses from Sergeant O'Hanlon are in italics)

- Mike Heelis-Neighbourhood Watch and what is happening?
    - *There are 3/4 schemes (Speedwatch, Neighbourhood Watch and County Watch) but acknowledges it needs to be improved but a strong reliance upon volunteers. One*

of the areas which they will be working on to engage with the public and improve upon

- Mark Rumsby - Drug use which appears to be spreading and is County Lines in Alton
  - *I am the Zsar for Alton - nationally they have just conducted a major intervention over the last couple of weeks and made arrests, seized drugs and money. Putting it into context in Alton - Class A drugs - yes with a small number of addicts who are known. His job is to close down the supply chains. The Police have good strong links with the schools and college and on a positive note Class A & B drugs - there is access to, but they chose not to and this all comes down to a strong community, good parenting and great links into education. You can count on two hands the number of Class A users in the whole of Hampshire*
- County Councillor Andrew Joy - there is a marked increase in shop-lifting in the town - is this actual or perception and how is it being dealt with and are culprits being let off?
  - *In reality, the crime committed is look at in terms of*
    - *Severity and overall what is best for the victim*
    - *Look at the offender - what is the underlying issue - is there one*
  - *Generally with a young person - educate and look at driving factors*
  - *Repeaters to fund a drug habit - no excuse and need to be held to account. There is a scheme in Hampshire which allows the offender to be taken straight to court which is used as and when such action is required*
- County Councillor Andrew Joy - there is concern about speeding motorists and motor-cyclists
  - *Training has fallen by the wayside in respect of Community Speedwatch - although there is data available from surveys and SLR data capture to identify specific areas; road policing and the use of static vans. Good news is that the local policing team are now all training up on the use of speed guns (laser guns) noting that officers can enforce, but PCSOs cannot. Everything is now in place and there will be a heightened presence.*
- Councillor Graham Hill - there used to be a Police Liaison Committee (PLC) which consisted on both District and Town Councils and council officers who met with the police to share information and look at crime stats - is this something that will be resurrected. Secondly, your views on the 101 service and use of it?
  - *Yes to the PLC and accepts these should be regular but couldn't commit to timngs but it is important to have close communications. Happy to share raw data and raw statistics and then discuss in order to draft the narrative . Scrutiny and buy in is an important part of the role and in developing relationships*
    - *There is criticism of the 101 service and not being able to get through. My own personal experience is that it is a superb service (and I do not have any special access - I have the same access as the general public). He has just come from a control centre and acknowledged call waiting times can be extensive. The stark reality - hugely frustration and people do give up but 101 is the best way of reporting complex issues. If not complex report via Hampshire Policy website/report an incident. There*

is no call waiting indication of where you are in a queue on the 101 service

- Councillor Matthew Bayliss - 1. What can we do as a Town Council to assist the police and 2. What are the police doing about anti-social behaviour involving the use of vehicles and "meets"? 3. Speeding issues on certain roads as Alton has a lot of through traffic - what is happening as the last time I saw any kind of police presence to deter speeding was ages ago although did I hear correctly that there was going to be more presence around the town? 4. Noise issues related to modified motocycles
  - *I met with the Town Clerk and the team at the Town Hall a couple of weeks ago looking at the issues that concern the Council and looking at the reason why things happen. Such meetings are invaluable and I will be looking to continue these on a regular basis*
  - *The local team is established and a process in place in which there is a high police presence (and visibility) to try and stem anti-social behaviour of this type. Operatio Cromium established to thwart car meets and there has been local success at Aldi. Design of the new Lid! site - prevention by design. Sainsburys there is an action plan in place. Alton is very much the "end of the line" so they don't stay long and the police recently had a "welcoming committee" to deter. Some 200 turned up. Councillor Hill asked whether they use stings to which the response was "used only if they fail to stop" Engagement is key*
  - *I have more officers training in the use of speed guns and yes with good data, I can send my team out to those areas where speeding is a problem. The A31 corrdioor has good site lines all along it. Through the town, it needs to be backed up with good data*
  - *In respect of mopeds/motorcylces modified to make loud noise there is an initiative Roving Road for Mopeds - restricted speed for "L" plates - decibel meter readings can be taken so there are actions that can and will be taken*
- Councillor Ginny Boxall - will there be more "bobbies on the beat"?
  - *Yes and they will be more visible. Everyone probably knows Gemma. I am also looking to work more closely with local licencees and would certainly like to get Shopwatch up and running again*
- Councillor Graham Hill - CCTV cameras that Alton Town Council have - your views?
  - *Certainly act as a deterrent and useful in providing evidence that can be used - quality is good. The camera footage can (and has been) interrogated to provide useful evidence ot the police on a number of occasions and will continue to do so.*

The Mayor thanked Sergeant Mark O'Hanlon for sitting in the "hot seat" and for providing an informative update to both Councillors and members of the public.

108 **Open Forum - To receive questions and statements from Electors of the Alton Town Council area, including those received in advance**

The following questions were received in advance of the meeting and circulated to councillors:

Mr. Andrew Brown (requesting a written response)

Initial acknowledgement Response given: *Thankyouforyour email which has been circulated to Members in advance of Wednesday's meeting. I have alsoforwarded to County Councillor Andrew Joyfor comment as points 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7fall under Hampshire County Council as the Highways Authority.*

- Following the recent development which has now been completed (Cadnams Farm/ Maple Fields) we were led to believe from the original planning application that there was to be installed traffic calming pinch points along Gilbert White Way. This has never come to fruition. Why and when will this be completed?

  Response: *We are unable tofind any agreement relating to traffic calming made with the Highways authority. There was ajunction study undertakenfor thefeasibility ofa roundabout at the bottom ofAnstey Road/Anstey Lane but this subsequently was rejected infavour oftraffic lights. The link below (which will be sent) is to the legal* agreement relating to the site and the one below to the other planning documents https://planningpublicaccess.easthants.gov.uk/online-applications/files/8A94EC4D2786BADCA1D75E5C2B48EC04/pdf/55428_001-S106_AGREEMENT-1187151.pdf

  Outline Applicationfor up to 275 dwellings together with associated landscaping, children's play area, open space, infrastructure, carparking and roads (as additional information received 03/09/2014) -Land at Cadnams Farm, Upper Anstey Lane, Shalden, Alton

- The above-mentioned development also indicated that a new mini roundabout would be installed at the junction of Gilbert White Way and Anstey Lane. Again, this has not been installed.

  Response: *Please see above - we cannotfind any record ofa new mini roundabout in this location. Again, the link to the documents may be ofassistance but this has been raised with HCC Highways Department who cannotfind any agreementfor this.*

- Damage to the kerb edging due to construction traffic and day to day use by large vehicles from the above development on the junction of Gilbert White Way and Anstey Lane has not been repaired and continue to be damaged

  Response: *We would request thatyou report this through to HCC roads defects, ideally with photographs* https://www.bants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance

- 20 mph speed limit up the Old Odiham Road and along Gilbert White Way. When will this be implemented?
  Response: *This is down to HCC - there has been a recent consultation on this and we are expecting a statement soon (the response will be town wide and notjustfor the location identified byyourself)*

- You erect traffic speed limit signs around the town. Why don't the Council publish the data in the local papers? Minimum speed/maximum speeds and average speeds.

  Response: *We do not publish data collected as a rule largely due to there being limited speeding across the town, with the exception of a few hot spots such as Lenten Street, Anstey Road and Ashdell Road. However, if you wish to see the raw data for any particular area please let us know and if the SLRs have been deployed in this area we can provide the information to you.*

- The community speed watch are rarely seen late in the day/evenings or at night! This is when most speeding takes place around the town.

  Response: *Alton Community Speed Watch (ACSW) are police volunteers and as such are governed by police protocols. They do not permit Speedwatch to deploy after sundown. We are also reliant on volunteers being available at sometimes unsociable* hours. *However, static Speed Limit Reminders (SLRs) are deployed at various locations in the town and are rotated to speeding hotspots every couple of weeks. If you would like to volunteer for Speedwatch, do contact the town hall who pass on your request.*

- There is no crossing point or patrol for students/parents/pedestrians crossing Anstey Lane to Anstey playing fields, Eggar's School or the amenities within Anstey Park (Edgar Hall, Energique, Air and Army Cadets, Scouts, Playgroup, Football Club, Rugby Club, RBL etc). Should we wait until someone is run over?
  Response: *The Town Clerk has raised this with our County Councillor who has responded that he has also lobbied for a crossing point in this area previously without success. It has also been highlighted as part of the Cycle Alton Safer Routes to schools proposal which has been submitted as part of the District LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) which was submitted to HCC late last year and has also been highlighted as recently as last week in an LCWIP workshop session with officers from HCC.*

2. Mr Mark Rumsby

Dear Leah,
As discussed, could you please bring the issue below to the attention of the town councillors at the Electors' meeting this week:
LIFEBUOY EYESORE ON FLOOD MEADOWS
Problem
Late last year, the Town Council had a large red lifebuoy housing unit installed at the edge of the path on Flood Meadows, in response to a perceived risk of children slipping into the water from the adjacent pontoon.
This is an over-the-top response to a hypothetical problem. The maximum depth of water on the River Wey at Flood Meadows is 18 inches and is usually less than that - sometimes zero. No-one other than a baby could drown there, and a lifebuoy is of no use to a baby. As someone said: "If you're in danger of drowning in the River Wey in Flood Meadows, the answer is simple - sit up!".

The lifebuoy holder is bright red and totally out ofkeeping with the nature ofFlood Meadows. Local residents ' comments include "ludicrous "; "hideous ", and all agree it's an eyesore.

Solution - Option 1

Remove the lifebuoy and its holder completely. Fix a grille between the rails on the pontoon, so that no child could slip into the water.

Solution - Option 2

Replace the bright red lifebuoy housing with one that is less intrusive, ideally green and preferablyfixed to the end ofthe pontoon rather than on apole by the path. Examples are:

(as used at Petersfield Lake) (Aspli Safety Ltd. - bespoke) (LC. Brindle & Co. Ltd.)

Solution - Option 3

Over-paint the existing lifebuoy housing and post, with a dark green or dark brown plastic paint. This would be visually more in sympathy with the environment.

I await the councillors' response.

Yours sincerely,

MarkRumsby

This request is supported by a sample ofAlton residents who live around Flood Meadows:

- Ann and Tim Cain
- Brian and Christina Good
- Charles Kaye, and Friends ofthe River Wey
- Mary McIntosh
- Richard Rowland

Mr Rumsby was asked whether he wished to address the meeting and he stated *Little things that annoy you and one ofthese is the life buy issue"*

Following councillors discussing this item it was suggested that this item be put to a Full Council meeting following the elections in May.

109 **Closing Comments**

The Mayor took the opportunity to thank everyone for attending this evening.

There being no further questions, the meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- **where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or**
- **where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:**
  - **are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or**
  - **have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)**

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices.*
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
   - The **Annual Internal Audit Report must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
   - **Sections 1 and 2 must** be completed and approved by the authority.
   - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2023.**
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2023.** Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
   - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
   - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023
   - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
   - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
   - Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section1, Section 2 and Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23,** approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23,** approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

**for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.*

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022/23

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2023.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements **(Section 2, page 5).** An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2022) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2023).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2023.**

Completion checklist - 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including **the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights,** been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?	✓	
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at **31 March 2023** been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds - have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.	✓	

***Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk**

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL

HTTPS://WWW.ALTON GOV.UK

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been property kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.			
0. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	I		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.			
F. Petty cash payments were property supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.			
G. Salaries ta employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were property applied.	I		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and property maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic **bank** account reconciliations **were** properly carried out during ttie year.			
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	/		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authon"fy had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered"?*			/
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up lo date al the lime of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	/		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	/		
N. The authority has complied wilh the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR *(see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Noles).*	/		

	Yes	No	Not applicable
0. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable)- The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

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Name of person who carried out the internal audit

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Signature of person who carried out the internal audit [redacted]

Date 2,02

•1f1he response is ·no· p�astt lin **cttlo• and actfon being taken to address any weakness** In **control Identified fadd separate sheets�If f-i e**

""Note: ITlhe response is **'not covered'** . **when the** most recent internal audit **work was done** in **lhls area** and **when** it is **next** planned; **or,** if coverage is not required, **the** annual **internal audit report** must explain why not **(add separate** sheets If needed).

Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Alton Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective rimmdal management dunny tlle year. and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		*prepared its accounting statemenls in acccrclance with lhe Accounts and Audit* Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequale system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraua and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	/		*made proper arrangem,mls and accepted respons1b1/ity for sRfeguarding the public mDney and resources in its charge.*
3. 1Ne took all reasonable steps :o assure ourselves lha! thare are no matlers of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Prnctices lha! could have a signif,canl rinancial effect on the ability of this autr1ority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			*has only done wnat it has tho legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			*during the yea, gave all persons interested th� opportunity to inspect and ask questions abo11t this authority's accounts.*
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took aporopriate steps to manage those risks. including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where requ_ired.	✓		*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and aealt with them properly.*
6. We mainlained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			***arranged for a competent** perSQ,7, :'-:dcp-=nd:;nf **ct** :�c ,lf;:�;::�cf;! contrQIS and proc�dures. to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority*
7. We loo appropriate ac(ion on all matlers raised in reports from internal and external audi'..	/		*responded lo matters brought to its artentian hy internal and external audit*
s_ We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transaclions. occurring either during or after lhe year-end, have a financial impact on thi authority and, where appropriate. have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		*disclosed averything ii should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant*

	Yes	No	N/A	
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as lhe sole managing trustee we discharged our acr,ounlability responsibili:ies for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audi;.			✓	*has met all of its respon.�ibi/ities whare. as a /Jody corporate, ii Is a sole managing trustee of a local tmst or trusts.*

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

26/04/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

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Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman [redacted]

Clerk

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Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Alton Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	534,446	730,514	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+)Preceptor Rates and Levies	735,270	781,195	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	644,519	891,894	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grant� received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	427,395	494,143	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	9,411	9,411	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	746,915	850,118	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capita/ repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	730,514	1,049,931	*Total balances and reserves at /he end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*

8. Total value of cash and short term investments	811,950	1,051,42-5	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March - To* **agree with bank reconciliation,**
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	2,881,317	3,059,087	*The value of all the propetty the authority owns - it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	192,680	187,538	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✔		*The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.*
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✔	*The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities - a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

[redacted]

Date 26/04/2023

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

"2b /P"1/'2P2..?,.

as recorded in minute reference:

Q.J.+1.

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statementsw.._

Section 3 - External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of Alton Town Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review **is not a full statutory audit,** it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return In accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website - https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audft-practice/guldance-and-information-for-auditors/ .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2022/23

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

None

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

External Auditor Name

BOO LLP Southampton

External Auditor Signature O . -\J ,__,.. '-:' 'p 2S690S6030974!!4_

Date 07 September 2023