

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 1ST MAY 2024 AT 7.00PM AT THE TOWN HALL**

Present: **Councillor** **Annette Eyre (Town Mayor)**
 Matthew Bayliss
 John Chubb
 Don Hammond
 Graham Hill
 Matthew Kellermann
 Nick O'Brien
 Barbara Tansey
 Janice Treacher
 Peter Wadman
 Jonathan Waugh

In attendance: **Pat Harris** - **Town Clerk**
 Hayley Carter - **Deputy Clerk**
 7 Members of the public
 County Councillor Andrew Joy

131 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Mark Boyce-Churn.

132 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and commented on how the setting up of the film-set in Market Square and Market Street is starting to make the town look post-apocalyptic. It is a very exciting opportunity for the town and is already pulling in lots of curious people.

133 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 3rd April 2024

On the proposal of Councillor Chubb, seconded by Councillor Wadman, it was

**RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held
on 3rd April 2024**

In favour: Councillors Annette Eyre, Matthew Bayliss, John Chubb, Don Hammond, Graham Hill, Nick O'Brien, Barbara Tansey, Janice Treacher, Peter Wadman, Jonathan Waugh

Against: Councillor Matthew Kellermann

134 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations

Councillor Chubb declared a pecuniary and personal interest in Agenda item 7: 60102/001: Land adjacent to Westbrook House, 17 Howards Lane.

135 Correspondence Received and Questions to the Council

135.1 A letter was received from Alton United Charities re the Thomas Geale's Almshouses and had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. Councillors Hammond, Kellermann and Hill said they would be happy to attend a meeting if the Town Clerk could please organise it.

135.2 Abigail Hills had submitted the following question to Councillors in advance: "I would like to ask what can be done to ensure critical infrastructure is in place prior to accepting any further development in Alton. We are at breaking point with our sewage works and health facilities."

135.3 Dr June Chatfield spoke about her letter she had published in the Alton Herald on 21st March. She said that there are limiting factors which must be looked at before planning large scale developments, and for Alton this includes the geology and the nature of the land. Alton is built on chalk, and whilst the upper strata of pure white chalk of the North and South Downs is both well-drained and consolidated, this does not apply to the Lower Grey chalk strata that underlie the main hollow of Alton. Alton is unusual in having so much grey chalk, the material characteristics of which are rarely understood by contractors and developers. The high clay content gives both poor drainage (compromising sustainable drainage solutions) as well as much fracturing, making vertical faces unstable. There are some very steep sites and as Highways insist on a 1:10 slope or less for access roads, this means digging deep into our hillsides, which causes instability on this heavily fractured chalk. Problems encountered in King's View off Ashdell Road need to be learned from.

The number of people has a drain on water supply and additional sewage must be dealt with. Sewage works in Alton also have to deal with the increased number of houses in Four Marks and Medstead, and this is already putting a huge strain on them.

135.4 Abigail Hills wished to comment on the reversal of the decision item on the agenda, stating that at the time the resolution was made it was well received, and that it would be very sad for the town if it were rescinded.

In response, councillors acknowledged the sensitivities surrounding the agenda item, but with a lack of brownfield sites they would have no choice but to allocate on greenfield sites in the Neighbourhood Plan. Therefore, in order that they at least have the option to put a Plan with site allocations to the residents of Alton at the next consultation, they would have to rescind.

Councillors also highlighted the fact that the council's objection to the Local Plan and the proposal for Neatham Down would not be affected by the decision to rescind the Statement of Principle.

136 Rescission of Resolution 101ii at the Extra-ordinary Meeting of Full Council on 28th February

The motion before Council was in two parts which were considered separately.

1. On the proposal of Councillor Bayliss, seconded by Councillor Treacher, it was

RESOLVED TO

Rescind Resolution 101(ii) as recorded in the Minutes of the Extra-ordinary meeting of the Full Council held on 28th February 2024 in accordance with Standing Order 7a (previous Resolutions) and the written notice as signed by Councillors Chubb, Bayliss, Hill, Eyre, Treacher, Hammond & Waugh

In favour: Councillors Annette Eyre, Matthew Bayliss, Don Hammond, Graham Hill, John Chubb, Janice Treacher, Peter Wadman, Jonathan Waugh

Against: Councillors Matthew Kellermann, Nick O'Brien and Barbara Tansey

2. There was no proposer for part 2 of this agenda item and therefore it was not carried.

137 **Planning Application: 60102/001 Land adjacent to Westbrook House, 17 Howards Lane, Holybourne, Alton.**

Councillor Chubb had already declared an interest in this item and Councillor Hill confirmed that he would be commenting as District Councillor and as such would take no part in the discussion or vote.

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

RESOLVED

to submit a response of NO OBJECTION to the planning application to build three detached houses with garages and associated new access road on land adjacent to Westbrook House, 17 Howards Lane, Holybourne.

In favour: Councillors Annette Eyre, Matthew Bayliss, Don Hammond, Nick O'Brien, Barbara Tansey, Janice Treacher, Peter Wadman, Jonathan Waugh

Abstained: Councillor Matthew Kellermann

138 **Internal Auditors Report for Financial Year End and Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit**

Councillor Kellermann raised the issue of a repeat comment in the Internal Audit about how up to date the website was. Officers confirmed that having just moved the website over to a new platform a full review was currently underway.

Councillor Bayliss wished, on behalf of the Council, to extend its thanks to the officers and everyone involved with the huge amount of excellent work which had been undertaken, and Councillors Hill and Chubb commended the Town Clerk on a very healthy balance sheet.

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

RESOLVED to approve the content of the Internal Audit covering the period to the 31st March 2024.

All in favour

2. On the proposal of Councillor Bayliss, seconded by Councillor Hammond, it was

RESOLVED to approve the review of effectiveness of the internal audit

In favour: Councillors Annette Eyre, Matthew Bayliss, John Chubb, Don Hammond, Graham Hill, Nick O'Brien, Barbara Tansey, Janice Treacher, Peter Wadman, Jonathan Waugh

Abstained: Councillor Matthew Kellermann, who wished it to be recorded that he could not possibly know whether the Internal Auditor was independent or competent and whether they had any relationship with the Clerk.

139 **Statement of Governance 2023/24**

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

**RESOLVED
to approve the statement of governance.**

All in favour.

140 **Statement of Accounts to Financial Year End 31st March 2024**

On the proposal of Councillor Treacher, seconded by Councillor Chubb, it was

**RESOLVED
To approve:**
1. The balance sheet dated 31st March 2024
2. The Income and Expenditure account to 31st March 2024
3. The bank reconciliations for the Unity Account and the CCLA Deposit Account
4. The Payments over £500 covering 1st January to the 31st March 2024
5. The Accountability and Governance Annual Return Section 2.

All in favour.

141 **Conflict of Interest form and confirmation of the dates of the notice of exercise of public rights**

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

**RESOLVED
to confirm:**
1. There are no conflicts of interest with BDO LLP.
2. The dates for the publication of the notice of the exercise are Monday 3rd June 2024 to Friday 14th July 2024

All in favour.

142 **Re-appointment of Internal Auditor**

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

RESOLVED

to ratify the appointment of Mulberry at a cost of £1,700 plus travel at 45p per mile for the forthcoming financial year.

In favour: Councillors Annette Eyre, Matthew Bayliss, John Chubb, Don Hammond, Graham Hill, Nick O'Brien, Barbara Tansey, Janice Treacher, Peter Wadman, Jonathan Waugh

Abstained: Councillor Matthew Kellermann

143 **To approve the Draft Terms of Reference for the Climate Change Committee & Staffing Committee**

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

RESOLVED

to approve the Draft Terms of Reference for the Climate Change Committee as tabled.

All in favour.

2. On the proposal of Councillor Bayliss, seconded by Councillor Chubb, it was

RESOLVED

to approve the Draft Terms of Reference for the Staffing Committee as tabled.

In favour: Councillors Annette Eyre, Matthew Bayliss, John Chubb, Graham Hill, Nick O'Brien, Barbara Tansey, Janice Treacher, Peter Wadman, Jonathan Waugh

Against: Councillor Matthew Kellermann

Abstained: Councillor Don Hammond

144 **To approve the Alton Town Council Auto Speed Watch Policy**

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

RESOLVED

to approve the Draft Auto Speed Watch Policy

In favour: Councillors Annette Eyre, Matthew Bayliss, John Chubb, Don Hammond, Graham Hill, Nick O'Brien, Barbara Tansey, Janice Treacher, Peter Wadman, Jonathan Waugh

Abstained: Councillor Matthew Kellermann

145 To approve an Event Grant application from the Alton Lions: Classic Car Show

On the proposal of Councillor Waugh, seconded by Councillor Chubb, it was

RESOLVED

to approve an event grant to the Alton Lions for the Classic Car Show for the sum of £500 (five hundred pounds)

In favour: Councillors Annette Eyre, Matthew Bayliss, John Chubb, Don Hammond, Graham Hill, Nick O'Brien, Barbara Tansey, Janice Treacher, Peter Wadman, Jonathan Waugh

Abstained: Councillor Matthew Kellermann

146 Approval of a Blue Plaque at the Alton Quakers Meeting House in Church Street

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

RESOLVED

to approve a Blue Plaque for Alton Quaker Meeting House in Church Street to be added to the Alton Town Council Blue Plaque scheme

In favour: Councillors Annette Eyre, Matthew Bayliss, John Chubb, Don Hammond, Graham Hill, Nick O'Brien, Barbara Tansey, Janice Treacher, Peter Wadman, Jonathan Waugh

Against: Councillor Matthew Kellermann

147 Landlord's Consent for the erection of signage on Edgar Hall

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

RESOLVED

to approve the erection of a Brazilian Jujitsu sign on the outside of the building known as Edgar Hall.

All in favour.

148 To receive a verbal report from and ask questions of County Councillor Andrew Joy

County Councillor Andrew Joy spoke about how he has been taking notice of the increasing deterioration of the roads around the town. He said the highways team are very active, but they do rely on members of the public reporting as much as they possibly can, using either the website or the ourhants app. The app is very easy to use and any help to promote it and increase the use of it would be appreciated. As the weather warms up, the amount of work they can do to make the necessary repairs will increase, but this will inevitably cause some inconvenience to members of the public as roads, or sections of roads, may need to be closed while work takes place. Councillor Joy asked that people are patient and that they report as much as possible so that as much work as possible can be done in one go.

Councillor Joy also expressed his strong concerns about the future of the Curtis Museum due to funding issues. He was part of a group that had come up with a solution some years ago, bringing together the ‘warring factions’ and an excellent volunteer group, which led to the creation of the Hampshire Cultural Trust. The current situation is that Hampshire County Council have had to look at their grant funding to that trust, but they cannot determine where the money the trust do have will be spent/saved. It is therefore up to the HCT whether these places close, not HCC. The volunteer group has within it a number of people who are highly respected professionals and some of their opinions have not been met with approval from the trust. Some of these people were then sacked from their positions and Councillor Joy said that he is very much on the case and looking into this. The facilities the two places offer are too important to the town to just be let go.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Joy for his update and opened the floor for councillors questions.

Councillor Chubb asked whether it was possible to have a time stamp of the website so we can see when a pothole was reported and when it has been validated and scheduled for repair.

Councillor Bayliss thanked Councillor Joy for sitting through the whole meeting every month and questioned whether it would be possible to move his report up the agenda so there may still be other members of the public there. The Town Clerk confirmed this could be done if so requested by Councillor Joy.

The Town Clerk then asked whether engineers have yet inspected the splitting seam in Alton High Street. Councillor Joy responded to say that he has verbally reported it, but is unaware whether it has been taken further and cannot say whether anyone has also logged it on the app. The Town Clerk also asked for clarification about whether, when you have reported something and receive an email to say the matter is now closed, that means that the issue has actually been fixed, or whether it means it has been reported to their contractor. Councillor Joy said he would find out about this.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.