

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 7TH MAY 2025 AT 7.00PM AT THE TOWN HALL**

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

In attendance: Pat Harris - Town Clerk
 Hayley Carter - Deputy Clerk
 Wendy Simson - Assistant to the Clerk
 9 Members of the public and press
 County Councillor Andrew Joy

172 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Mark Boyce-Churn and Jonathan Waugh.

173 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Town Mayor:

1. Welcomed both councillors and members of the public to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.
2. Reminded all those attending that in accordance with the Council's published Recording of Meetings Policy, as displayed on the doors and the table at the back of the hall, anyone wishing to make any recording of a meeting must let the Chair of the meeting know prior to or at the start of the meeting. If anyone does not wish to be recorded, they must make the Chair of the meeting aware. No filming of any member of the public is allowed without their consent, or of any child or vulnerable person without the consent of them and their parent, guardian or carer.
In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12 paragraph 41 (1) only the official signed minutes of the council and its committees will be recognised as the formal, statutory and legally binding record of a meeting.
3. The Mayor then announced that she had received a letter from Councillor Doug Richards advising of his resignation; his full resignation letter can be seen under correspondence. Councillor Bayliss asked that Mr Richards be thanked for his valuable contribution to the work of the council and his efforts for the town.

Councillor Kellermann asked if he could raise a point of order.

He stated:

- he had raised the same matter at the previous meeting

- following the publication of the agenda by the Town Clerk, he had corresponded with the Deputy Clerk, who reminded him that he had been asked to put his concerns in writing so that councillors could properly understand the matter being raised and that it could then be discussed at a future meeting.
- that it was not his place to do this and that he had clearly made his point at the last meeting. The Deputy Clerk pointed out that their email exchange had brought to light the fact that the document he had been relying on and quoting from at the previous meeting was actually the internal governance document for the Local Government Association from 2018 and not Alton Town Council's Standing Orders. Not only had the document been updated several times since, but it also had nothing whatsoever to do with Alton Town Council. The Deputy Town Clerk further advised that this point had already been advised in an email to him.
- He had sought legal advice which confirmed to him that the council was not following correct procedures.

Councillor Bayliss interjected advising that whilst Councillor Kellermann raised an interesting point, he had since re-read the Council's Standing Orders, and he was not of the same opinion and that Alton Town Council was following its own Standing Orders.

Councillor Hill stated that the matter was not on the agenda and again requested Councillor Kellermann put his concerns clearly in writing. Council also requested that he made the legal opinion he had sought freely available to all councillors to which Councillor Kellermann stated he would consider it.

174 **Minutes of the Full Council Meetings held on 9th April 2025 for approval**

Councillor Kellermann asked that it be noted under item 170 that he had thanked the Jalsa Salana for their hospitality.

The Deputy Clerk advised that she had spotted a typing error under item 161.2, which she had corrected – the item should have read “all in favour”.

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

RESOLVED

to APPROVE the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 9th April 2025

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman

Against: Councillor Kellermann

175 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

No Declarations of Interest were noted.

176 **Correspondence Received and Questions to the Council**

Correspondence received:

176.1 Letter of acknowledgement from Tony Souter for flying the Ukranian flag at the Town Hall – circulated to all councillors in advance of the meeting.

176.2 E-mail received from Mr. Paul Taroni on the question of Devolution, circulated to all councillors

176.3 A letter of resignation was received from Councillor Doug Richards:

“I am writing to formally resign my position as a Town Councillor for Alton Town Council, Eastbrooke Ward, effective from the 5th May 2025/

This decision has not been made lightly, but after careful consideration, I have concluded that I must step down due to health reasons and increased family commitments. Both have made it increasingly challenging for me to dedicate the time and energy required to fulfil my duties to the standard I believe is essential for this role.

Serving the community of Alton has been an honour and a privilege, and I am proud of what we have achieved together during my time on the council. I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked alongside such committed colleagues and staff and to have contributed to initiatives aimed at improving our town.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to serve our community. I wish the council and my successor every success in continuing the important work of representing and supporting the residents of Alton.”

176.4 Mr John Quincey raised concerns about the paths at King’s Pond. He thanked the Town Clerk for all she had done regarding Kings Pond. He went on to state that in all the talk about King’s Pond and the options being researched, the paths have been neglected and are now in a disgraceful state. He said he had walked around the pond with Councillor Bayliss some years ago to look at what was needed and of the three areas identified only one had been done. He pointed out that as Alton Town Council owns King’s Pond, they will be liable for any injuries.

Councillor Bayliss explained that huge amounts of public money should not be spent on replacing a path which is likely to have heavy equipment on it in the near future, and that the paths should be done as part of the project.

Mr Quincey replied that should not apply to the path along the side of the railway as that one is dangerous.

176.5 Mr Stan Witcher said that what he had been going to say about King’s Pond had already been covered. He went on to ask Councillors to speak up as he could not hear very well. He then asked who was responsible for cleaning up the car parks in the town and Councillor Hill explained that would be EHDC. Councillor Hill offered to take up the matter on Mr Witchers behalf with EHDC. Councillor Tansey then asked what the specific concerns were, as she and District Councillor Suzie Burns had been

actively working to get the car parks cleared up. Mr Witcher explained that it was more about the way the team clearing up had been working as they had spent more time sat in the van than working and although the job had been done eventually it could have been done quicker. Councillor Tansey asked for clarification that the job had therefore been completed and Mr Witcher replied yes, he was just concerned about the way it was done.

176.6 Mr Anthony Furnival then spoke on three matters:

1. Egg oiling – Mr Furnival said that he was aware that this year, because it had been warmer, a brood of goslings had already hatched when the egg oiling was done and he was concerned that some of the oiled eggs may have contained more developed goslings than usual. He said that oiling should only take place before the birds start incubating them. He went on to say that he had circulated advice to Mrs Coney when she was Clerk and that the licence is issued under specific guidelines. He ended by saying that he was really concerned that there had been the potential to harm wildlife, that ATC had potentially murdered the goslings, and that he would be liaising with the Wildlife Welfare Officer at Hampshire Constabulary.
2. Councillor Richards – Mr Furnival said that he was going to be reporting Councillor Richards for having not attended a meeting for six months and that he should therefore no longer be a councillor, but that in light of his resignation this is no longer relevant.
3. Mr Furnival then went on to say that he is always campaigning for proper representation and he is very concerned about the number of meetings councillors have attended. He said that for effective decision making it is important councillors are there to vote and to represent the views of their ward. He acknowledged that councillors are volunteers, but said they take on a huge responsibility and low attendance at meetings means only a small number of people are making decisions, rather than all those who are elected to represent the town. It is also unfair to other councillors and officers who have to pick up the slack.

He said he had put together a spreadsheet looking at councillor attendance. He emphasised that he realises there will be reasons why councillors are unable to attend all the meetings but that on average the people he had spoken to felt they should be achieving an attendance rate of around 80%, and some councillors, in particular Councillor Boyce-Churn and Councillor Waugh, were far short of that standard.

He went on to say that if people were not able to commit their time to being a councillor they should not do so, and perhaps they should step aside and allow others to take on the role.

Councillors responded, in general saying they very much agreed that councillors should attend meetings. Main points raised include:

- Some people will always be more active than others in any organisation, due to other life commitments and interests
- It is difficult to get people to stand as councillors for a number of reasons, including the way they are sometimes targeted, the way they are spoken to, the level of work involved
- The last time there was a co-option only one person stood for the position

- The Full Council meetings are just one small part of it. In order to be able to vote effectively councillors must also attend valuable training, workshops, briefings, events in the town, sit on the committees of external bodies, and read masses of information
- ATC is now de-politicised so parties cannot put forward candidates and while that is very much a positive thing in many ways, it can make it more of an uphill struggle to recruit new councillors
- Being a councillor can be very rewarding and it is an honour to be able to represent the residents of your town and really make a difference
- Because it is a voluntary role it has to be enjoyable and so the tone in which some people try to make their point / address the council can really stop people from wanting to get involved
- (It should be noted that councillor attendance at meetings, workshops and so on are published on the website after each Annual Meeting in May)

177 **Planning Applications**

177.1 **EHDC-25-0363-FUL - Westbrook House, 17 Howards Lane, Holybourne, Alton, GU34 4HH**

Proposal: One detached dwelling and garage with associated works including access drive and landscaping.

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

RESOLVED

to submit a response of NO OBJECTION to Planning Application EHDC-25-0363-FUL.

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

All in favour.

177.2 **EHDC-25-0135-FUL and EHDC-25-0396-LBC - 6 High Street, Alton, GU34 1BT**

Proposal: Conversion and Change of Use from office to 4 no. 1 and 2 Bed apartments.

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

RESOLVED

to submit a response of NO OBJECTION to Planning Applications EHDC-25-0135-FUL and EHDC-25-0396-LBC

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Hammond, Hill, Kellermann, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman

Abstained: Councillor O'Brien

177.3 EHDC-25-0057-FUL – 21 Winchester Road, Alton GU34 1RU

Proposal: 26 dwellings with access via Rye Lane.

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

RESOLVED

to submit an OBJECTION to Planning Application EHDC-25-0057-FUL on the following grounds:

- The proposal represented an overdevelopment of the site,
- The three storey buildings were very close to the road and would adversely affect the street scene within the immediate area of the site
- The number of parking spaces allocated to visitor parking did not meet the parking standards required under TR5 of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan
- The access to the site from the adjoining development would produce a significant increase in the number of vehicle movements on the internal road network through what is already a high density development

Alton Town Council also wished to record the following additional comments:

- the number of one and two-bed dwellings was seen as a positive contribution to the housing needs of the town
- the percentage of affordable housing attributed within the proposed development was welcome
- cycle and bin storage were positively welcomed together with the number of EV charging points all of which were acknowledged as being generally in conformity with the Alton Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

All in favour.

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

The Town Clerk, together with the Finance Officer and Deputy Clerk were thanked for all their hard work on the finances.

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

RESOLVED to approve:

- 1. The content of the Internal Auditor as tabled covering the period to the 31st March 2025**
- 2. The review of effectiveness of internal audit.**

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman

Abstained: Councillor Kellermann.

179 **Statement of Governance 2024/25**

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

RESOLVED

To approve the statement of governance (Section 1 of the AGAR) and witness the signatures of both the Town Clerk and the Mayor.

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman

Abstained: Councillor Kellermann.

180 **Statement of Accounts to Financial Year End 31st March 2025**

Councillor Hill reminded everyone that these papers are sent to councillors in advance for them to scrutinise, and to raise any queries with the Town Clerk prior to the meeting. No queries were raised in advance of the meeting.

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

RESOLVED to confirm approval of:

1. The balance sheet dated 31st March 2025

2. The Income and Expenditure account to 31st March 2025

3. The bank reconciliations for the Unity Account and the CCLA Deposit Account as at 31st March 2025 (as approved at the Full Council meeting on 9th April 2025)

4. The Payments over £500 covering 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

5. The Accountability and Governance Annual Return (AGAR) Section 2 duly signed by the Town Clerk and the Mayor.

6. PWLB Statement to 31st March 2025.

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Hammond, Hill, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman

Abstained: Councillors Kellermann and O'Brien.

181 **Conflict of Interest form and confirmation of the dates of the Notice of Exercise of Public Rights**

The Town Clerk read out the Conflict of Interest form and advised of the dates of the Notice of Exercise of Public Rights.

On the proposal of Councillor Hill, seconded by Councillor Hammond, 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 of Public Rights are Tuesday 3rd June 2025 to Monday 14th July 2025.**

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman

Abstained: Councillor Kellermann.

182 **Reappointment of Internal Auditor**

Councillor Kellermann asked if this had gone out to tender. The Town Clerk reminded him that the Council had appointed Mulberry for a period of three years following the tendering process in 2023 and referred to the Minute reference. The appointment of an Internal Auditor for 2026-27 will go out to tender.

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

RESOLVED to:

- 1. Ratify the appointment of Mulberry at a cost of £1,700 plus travel at 45p per mile for the forthcoming financial year.**
- 2. Confirm that they have considered the independence of the appointed auditor.**

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman

Against: Councillor Kellermann.

183 **Statement of Accounts from 1st – 30th April 2025**

The Town Clerk reminded Councillors that this was the first month's accounts of the new financial year.

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

**RESOLVED
to confirm approval of:**

1. The balance sheet dated 30th April 2025
2. The Income and Expenditure account to 30th April 2025
3. The bank reconciliations for the Unity Account
4. The Payments over £500 covering 1st- 30th April 2025
5. The standing items on the Bank Account which includes Direct Debits & Standing Orders as at 30th April

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Hammond, Hill, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman

Abstained: Councillors Kellermann and O'Brien.

184 **Appointment of a RFO on a temporary basis to cover the period 1st-23rd June 2025**

The Town Clerk referred to her report which advised of the legal requirement to appoint a RFO. As the current Town Clerk would retire on 31st May and the new incoming Clerk will not take up the role until 23rd June, the Council is required to appoint a RFO on a temporary basis. On the proposal of Councillor Treacher, seconded by Councillor Hill, it was

RESOLVED to approve the appointment of the Deputy Town Clerk to the role of RFO on a temporary basis to cover the period 1st-23rd June 2025

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

All in favour.

185 **Town Hall Refurbishment including secondary glazing, roofing & guttering and external decoration**

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

RESOLVED to:

1. **Re-affirm the continued appointment of Mitchell and Dickinson to undertake the fitting of secondary glazing and undertake all necessary repairs to the sash windows**
2. **to appoint Contractor A (Flint Construction) to undertake all the maintenance work as per Option 1 at a cost of £34,025 with a 10% contingency (£3,402.50).**

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

All in favour.

186 Purchase of equipment for the Grounds Team: Roller Mower attachment

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

RESOLVED to endorse the recommendation of officers and approve Supplier B (T H White) to supply a Wessex RMX 680 rotary mower with spare wheel and five year warranty, at a cost of £32,000 +VAT.

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

All in favour.

187 Landlord's Consent

187.1 Alton Social Bowls Club – installation of solar panels on roof

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

**RESOLVED
to grant Landlords Consent to the Alton Social Bowls Club to permit the installation of solar panels on the roof of their clubhouse at Chawton Park Road**

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

All in favour.

187.2 1 Jubilee Bungalows – installation of log burner and upgrade to kitchen

Councillor Kellermann said that as Landlord, he felt Alton Town Council should be paying for the full cost of the upgrade to the kitchen on this occasion and proposed an amendment to facilitate this which was seconded by Councillor Bayliss.

Thus, on the proposal of Councillor Hammond, seconded by Councillor Bayliss, the proposal was amended to:

- (i) grant Landlords Consent for the installation of a log burner at No. 1 Jubilee Bungalows**
- (ii) approve the cost of renewing the kitchen at No. 1 Jubilee Bungalows in the sum of £2, 560 (two thousand, five hundred and sixty pounds)**

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Hammond, Hill, Kellermann, O'Brien, Tansey and Wadman
Against: Councillor Treacher.

RESOLVED to

- (i) grant Landlords Consent for the installation of a log burner at No. 1 Jubilee Bungalows**

- (ii) approve the cost of renewing the kitchen at No. 1 Jubilee Bungalows in the sum of £2, 560 (two thousand, five hundred and sixty pounds)

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Hammond, Hill, Kellermann, O'Brien, Tansey and Wadman
Against: Councillor Treacher.

188 **Alton Town Council Business Continuity Plan**

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

RESOLVED to approve the Alton Town Council Business Continuity Plan as tabled

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

All in favour.

189 **To approve Terms of Reference for the Climate Change Committee, Planning Committee & Staffing Committee and Scheme of Delegation for Planning**

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

RESOLVED

to approve the Terms of Reference for:

- (i) the Climate Change Committee (unaltered)
- (ii) Planning Committee (unaltered) and the amended Scheme of Delegation to include single new build dwelling and conversions
- (iii) Staffing Committee as tabled (as amended)

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

All in favour.

190 **Staff Handbook for approval**

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

RESOLVED

To approve the Staff Handbook for adoption and publication to all members of staff.

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman
Against: Councillor Kellermann.

191 **Event and project Grants applications**

191.1 Mr Stephen Smiley has organised the Carols Around the Tree event at Christmas for the last 16 years and is approaching the Town Council to award an Event grant to enable the printing of a Carols hymn book for distribution at the event which has grown in popularity over the years.

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

RESOLVED

to award an Event Grant to from Steve Smiley who organises Carols around the Tree in the sum of £350 (three hundred and fifty pounds)

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

All in favour.

191.2 Alton Art Society have submitted a project grant application in the sum of £100 towards a project costing £150 primarily to buy art materials for use by the public to produce a large jointly produced painting on canvas by adults and painting on paper by children.

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

RESOLVED

to grant a Project Grant to Alton Art Society in the sum of £100 (one hundred pounds)

Councillor Kellermann requested a recorded vote.

All in favour.

The meeting closed at 8.23pm