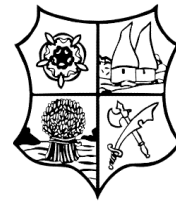


ALTON Town Council



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Town Clerk: Pat Harris

Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HD

30th January 2025

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the **FULL COUNCIL** on **Wednesday 5th February 2025 at 7.00pm** at the **TOWN HALL, MARKET SQUARE**, when the under mentioned business will be transacted.

There is a pre-meeting councillor briefing at 6.00 p.m. by EHDC Wellbeing Officer (Sport & Leisure), Community Team.

Yours faithfully

Patricia M Harris

Pat Harris
Interim Town Clerk

To: All Town Councillors

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

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2025
THE TOWN HALL, MARKET SQUARE ALTON
AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Town Mayor's announcements
3. Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 8th January 2025 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. Correspondence received and questions to the Council: Members of the public are invited to make representations.
6. Alton Neighbourhood Plan:
 - (i) Withdrawal of ONH
 - (ii) Submission of request to Locality for support package:
 - (iii) To form Alton Neighbourhood Plan Task & Finish Group
7. County & District Councillor Quarterly Reports
8. Evaluation of Grant Applications: Community Grants, Community Infrastructure Levy Grant (CIL) & Event Grants
9. Evaluation of Invitation to Tender for Tree Works and to approve contractor
10. Legal Agreements:
 1. Licence to Occupy – Capra Espresso
 2. S106 Deed of Variation Agreement in respect of Land to the east of Will Hall Farm, Basingstoke Road, Alton – 55222/019
 3. Legal Agreement with Crest Nicholson to allow a Sewer Connection pipe across Alton Town Council land at Treloar Heights
 4. Licence to Occupy – South-East Water/Dalcour McLaren – disposal of part of Alton Town Council owned land to permit construction of a booster pump structure at Treloar Heights
 5. Citizens Advice East Hampshire Limited – Renewal of Lease for 17 Market Square
11. AutoSpeedWatch System: Continuation of permanent placement of the devices on Basingstoke Road
12. Non-Financial Risk Assessment Report and Internal Review of Health & Safety Files
13. Statement of Accounts to 31st January 2025 & Internal Auditors Report (3rd Report of 4 for 2024/25 Financial Year) – **to follow**
14. Review of Alton Town Council Policies: Use of Public Open Spaces
15. To receive Minutes of the Climate Change Committee held on 22nd January 2025

16. Consultations for noting:
 1. Council response to the government consultation: ‘Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England’ Closing date 26th February 2025
 2. South Downs National Park – Have your say on the Local Plan Review – 8-week consultation opening on 20th January 2025
17. Service Level Agreement Reports for noting:
 1. The Kings Arms for the period 1st Sept 2024 – 31st Dec 2024
 2. Dementia Friendly Alton for the year to January 2025
18. Exclusion of the Press & Public

Confidential

19. Code of Conduct Complaints
20. Recruitment – verbal update from the Chair of the Staffing Committee

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL – 5TH FEBRUARY 2025**

ITEM 5: CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

FOR INFORMATION

No correspondence written or e-mailed has been received.

ITEM 6: ALTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

FOR DECISION

Following the decision taken at the Full Council meeting on 4th September when Council Resolved to undertake a review of all sites for development not only those excluded in the Draft Neighbourhood Plan, but also to consider any additional sites which were included in the updated Land Availability Assessment (LAA) as published by East Hampshire District Council in November of last year, (Minute 46 refers) progress to Regulation 14 was suspended.

Since that time, the Town Clerk has submitted two applications to Locality to seek further funding for the additional work required and has been successful in obtaining two technical support packages. However, this work could not commence until after the publication of the LAA by EHDC on 7th November. Subsequently, the funding has been secured and AECOM approved by Locality to undertake the required work, and they are due to produce their reports in early March of this year. No other work can be undertaken on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan policies until the outcome of these reports are received and, therefore, there has been no movement in appointing a Steering Group at this time.

As a result and in the meantime a briefing session was organised between Councillors and the appointed Neighbourhood Plan consultants ONH to discuss next steps:

Three possible options were tabled:

1. Stop the project, have no Neighbourhood Plan, and leave important planning matters to the Planning Authority (EHDC)
2. Pursue where Alton Town Council were as at last June (the tabled Draft Neighbourhood Plan) which in summary included
 - A plan which has good sound policies
 - Site allocation of 1200 dwellings
 - A requirement for a few tweaks, but essentially the current draft of the ANP3
3. Create a *new* version which would potentially have three options:
 - a) Choose not to make any site allocations but continue with the rest of the document
 - b) Allocate land for another number (i.e. not the 1200) but a number of the councillors choosing
 - c) Stick with the number you already have (1200) but distribute it differently

However, the Council would need to be consider other factors:

External Factors – over which Alton Town Council have little to no control

1. National Policy (NPPF)– where it is now and where it is heading next?
2. Local Plan – where it is now and where it is heading next?
3. Devolution – how will it impact on and affect EHDC as a Planning Authority and their Local Plan?
4. Land promoters positioning

Internal Factors – over which Alton Town Council has more control

1. Project governance and resources
2. Project delivery
3. Community Opinion – effect and perspective

After much discussion councillors present reached a consensus that they would like to continue with the plan, following option 3b above.

In the meantime, Alton Town Council will

- await the output of the AECOM Technical Support Packages due in March, at which time further public engagement sessions would be arranged to ensure that the outputs of the reports are widely publicised and understood.
- take a much more hands-on approach as to whether and how a new steering group/task & finish group is formed and how that group will be constituted with new Terms of Reference as required.
- engage new consultants (by mutual agreement ONH would no longer continue as the Council's Neighbourhood Plan consultants)
- issue a Press Release providing an update on status of the Neighbourhood Plan including that the Council will be looking to appoint new consultants

The Town Clerk would investigate with Locality as to whether a further Technical Support Package could be obtained to bridge any shortfall identified between the current Draft Neighbourhood Plan and the output from the AECOM reviews currently being undertaken.

The Town Clerk would continue to seek active engagement with those developers who had previously been in dialogue with the Steering Group on developments in Holybourne, Will Hall 2 and South Alton to understand where they are in terms of submission of any planning applications.

RECOMMENDATION: Councillors are therefore requested to

- 1. approve the recommendation to pursue Option 3b and continue with a Neighbourhood Plan, with council being more hands-on and leading on it themselves**
- 2. Approve to proceed with the appointment of new consultants to provide professional planning advice**
- 3. To agree in principle with the establishing of a new Steering Group/Task & Finish Group to draft an Alton Neighbourhood Plan 3 and to seek Expressions of Interest from individuals who wish to be considered to sit on the newly formed group**

ITEM 7: COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

FOR INFORMATION

No written reports have been received in advance of the publication of the agenda for this meeting. Any verbal reports will be given at the meeting.

ITEM 8: EVALUATION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS: COMMUNITY GRANTS, COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) APPLICATIONS & EVENT GRANTS

FOR DECISION

All Councillors received an invitation to attend a Councillor Workshop on Wednesday, 22nd January to review and evaluate applications against existing criteria. The output from this workshop with recommendations are detailed below.

1. Community Grants

Community Grants are awarded annually at a Full Council meeting in January/ February each year for the forthcoming financial year (2025/26) with applications having to have been submitted between 1st November and 31st December 2024.

A total of 12 applications were received (the summary sheet is reproduced in Members bundles) totalling £84,145.42 against the approved budget of £30,000 (thirty thousand pounds). The budget for the financial year 2025/26 was approved by Full Council on 8th January 2026 (Minute reference 101 refers).

Community grants are awarded by the Council to organisations which are judged to contribute to the whole community of Alton, and which are not usually capable of covering their full running costs; these grants may be used as part of these. Grants may be awarded in this category up to £10,000.

With the total value of the applications received more than the budget approved, councillors were reminded at their workshop of the following factors when considering whether to approve a grant request and the amount of grant to be awarded to ensure a fair and equitable outcome.

- (a) Does the work carried out by the group or organisation demonstrably and directly impact the people of Alton wholly or just in part?
- (b) Do any applications duplicate work which is already being funded by the Town Council?
- (c) Do any applications “pre-discriminate” certain members of the community?
- (d) The Town Council also cannot fund activities that it considers to be the responsibility of a Statutory Authority

Members were further reminded that:

- Awards of over £2,000 are paid in tranches across the year – normally April and October (reference: point 1.6 of the Alton Town Council Grants Policy 2019 as amended June 2023).
- The Council is constrained by the S137 grant rules as the Council does not hold the General Power of Competence. However, the ethos that the amount given should be commensurate to the number of people in the locality who are to benefit should still be of consideration to Members.

The following applications had been received:

1. **Alton Beer Festival** £4,374.52 for the purchase of 4 beer dispensers, couplings cleaning and gas
2. **Alton Climate Action Network (ACAN)** £3,590 to cover core costs
3. **Alton Community Association (CIO)** £8,000 to cover core funding
4. **Alton Counselling Service** £10,000 to subsidise counselling fees for people over the age of 16
5. **Basingstoke & Alton Cardiac Rehab Charity** £1,778.40 installation of screen & AV unit
6. **Bushy Leaze Family Support** £10,000 to increase capacity to support families
7. **Citizens Advice East Hampshire** £10,000 to support the rent & service charge of potential move to new premises
8. **Dogs for Autism** £10,000 to go towards dog training to carry out specific tasks for their autistic recipient
9. **Home-Start Hampshire** £5,000 to provide essential support to families with children 0-11 years
10. **Miniland Farm** £10,000 to part fund a new prefabrication wooden building

11. **OpenSight (Hampshire Assoc for the care of the blind)** £10,000 to benefit Alton Early Years & Alton Social Groups

12. **The Friendship Café** £1,402.50 to provide 14 sessions of nature related activities

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee is invited to:

- (i) **Determine which applicants are to be awarded a grant**
- (ii) **Determine the amount each successful applicant is to be awarded**

2. Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Applications

The Neighbourhood CIL funding window opened on 1st November and closed on 30th November 2024 and invited local groups and organisations to submit applications for infrastructure related projects which benefit the local community.

The awarding of CIL monies is governed by strict criteria and the Town Council must use CIL money to support the development of the local council's area, by funding:

- (a) the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or
- (b) anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.

Typically, there are three broad categories of infrastructure:

- (a) Social infrastructure: e.g. art and culture, sports halls, education, health, social care, emergency services, community centres,
- (b) Physical infrastructure: e.g. pavements, cycleways, flood defences, highways, transport links
- (c) Green infrastructure: e.g. play areas, public open space, woodlands

The available CIL funds which had not been allocated following the April 2024 application window was £138,785.99 plus a further £103,733.65 from development as at the October 2024 notification just received from EHDC making a total of £242,519.64 available. An additional sum of £2,847.96 will be returned to the grant pot following the completion of the Alton Town Council Jubilee Path project as there was an underspend on this project. Therefore, the total sum available for distribution currently stands at £245,367.60

A total of 8 bids were received. The four Alton Town Council applications were reviewed only by the EHDC CIL officer as Alton Town Council officers cannot assess or review their own grant applications. The remaining four applications were, however, reviewed by officers from both EHDC and Alton Town Council. All applications are subject to review in order to:

- (i) verify whether applicants met the laid down criteria
- (ii) undertake independent scoring of those applications that qualified
- (iii) all applications were further reviewed with recommendations put to councillors using the scoring matrix as below:
 - those scoring above 40 should be recommended for granting
 - those between 35-40 should be considered for further evaluation
 - those below 35 rejected as not meeting criteria for either recommendation or further discussion

The following applications totalling £155,104 were received and each were reviewed by Councillors at the Councillor Workshop held on 22nd January at which time all of the applications were discussed and initially appraised on the basis of the criteria as outlined.

1. **Alton Town Council** £15,000 to engage a public relations organisation to assist with its public engagement program with particular emphasis on Kings Pond – the way forward and the Alton Neighbourhood Plan (Total project cost £20,000)
2. **Holybourne Theatre** £2,540 to assist in the purchase of new fire doors (Total project cost £3,840)
3. **Alton Town Council** £80,617 to retrofit ATC properties: the Town Hall (Total project cost £109,616)
4. **Alton Town Council** £14,294 to install an all-weather surface for the Community Canopy in the Public Gardens project (Total project cost £41,652)
5. **Alton Town Council** £14,353 to install retractable privacy screens in Unit 16, Market Square (Total project cost £16,403)
6. **ACAN** £9,200 to provide funds for the Eco-Street Phase 2 project (Total project cost £9,200)
7. **Allen Gallery** £10,000 major project for refurbishment of the Gallery (Total project cost of £2,402,652)
8. **Treloar College** £9,100 replacement hoist project (Total project cost £137,410)

One application (Applicant 6 – ACAN) did not meet the criteria required and, therefore, did not pass the first stage of scoring as the grant requested was to fund an individual to undertake the Eco-Street Phase 2 project and was, therefore, rejected.

The remaining 7 applications all met the qualifying criteria.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to consider which qualifying Neighbourhood CIL applications as presented are to be approved.

3. Event Grant Application

An Event Grant had been received from Alton Lions for £400 in support of their Diabetes Aware initiative which is being held in the Assembly Rooms on Saturday, 1st March. This new event is in collaboration with Alton Primary Care Network (PCN) and Xyla Services.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to consider the Event Grant received from the Alton Lions for £400 in support of the Diabetes Aware event on 1st March 2025.

ITEM 9: EVALUATION OF INVITATION TO TENDER FOR TREE WORKS FOR DECISION

Following the receipt of the commissioned Tree Survey reports from Gristwood & Toms in October and November 2024, Alton Town Council issued an Invitation to Tender (ITT) for all urgent and high priority works as defined in the reports, seeking responses to the ITT by 24th January 2025.

Six responses were received and were opened in the presence of Councillor Janice Treacher, the Town Clerk and the Deputy Town Clerk on 28th January 2025. The evaluation of responses was carried out in line with the published criteria in the original ITT and each response marked in accordance. This document can be viewed at <https://www.alton.gov.uk/tenders-expressions-of-interest/>.

Of the six responses received:

- Three were not known to the Town Council, but Contractors D and E stated that they had carried out extensive work for other councils and Contractor F stated that they had acted as a sub-contractor for other councils.
- Contractor B had not broken down their quote into the two phases as requested in the ITT
- Contractor C had not included their professional ability in the document but had included three people the council could apply to for references in a covering letter and had previously done work for the council
- Contractors C and D advised that they do not hold professional indemnity insurance as both felt it should not be needed as the tree reports had already been carried out specifying the work required.

- Contractor B confirmed that they hold £1 million professional indemnity insurance but would be happy to increase it to £2 million if necessary for this contract.

Contractor	Comments / Clarifications	Phase 1 Price	Phase 2 Price	Discount for all sites	Total	SCORE			
						Price score 80%	Experience with local authorities 10%	Adherence to tender requirements 10%	Total score
A		£17,767.62	£31,512.38	£0.00	£49,280.00	50	9	10	69
B	Have not split the quote into the two phases	£22,000.00		£1,000.00	£21,000.00	70	9	5	84
C		£6,975.00	£12,740.00	10%	£17,743.50	80	7	5	92
D		£8,000.00	£14,940.00	£0.00	£22,940.00	68	8	8	84
E		£28,433.49	£39,940.83	£0.00	£68,374.32	40	10	10	60
F	Total does not include all sites. Cheapest for the work at Treloars (39 Connaught) but the bigger contractors would prefer to do all the work to increase efficiency so not really an option on this occasion.				£0.00		1	10	
	Recommended contractor								

Based on the information provided by each of the responders and the evaluation criteria followed by Councillor Janice Treacher, the Town Clerk and her deputy, the recommendation is that Contractor C be appointed, having scored a mark of 92.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to determine which contractor they wish to appoint.

ITEM 10: LEGAL AGREEMENTS

Councillors have received regular briefings and been kept fully updated informally on the progress of the following legal agreements which now require formal agreement to proceed to signing.

1. Licence to Occupy – Capra Espresso

Following the decision of the previous Licencees to cease trading under Licence from the kiosk in the Public Gardens and the horse trailer in Anstey Park in September 2024; the business has now been sold-on including the trading name to new owners who wish to seek a Licence to Occupy for a period of 3 years from the Town Council. However, they have subsequently requested a review at the end of Year 1 so that they are able to access the viability and profitability of the horse trailer at Anstey Park given that this is a new business venture for them.

Given that the previous Licencees ceased trading in October of last year it is recommended that the Council grants a Licence to Occupy to the new owners for a period of 3 years at the combined rent of £600 per month payable monthly in advance which is £400 per month for the Public Gardens and £200 for Anstey Park with a review at the end of Year 1.

RECOMMENDATION: Council is requested to approve a 3-year Licence to Occupy to Mr. & Mrs Saltiel trading as Capra Espresso from 1st February 2025 to 31st January 2028 with a review to be undertaken at the end of the Year 1.

2. Deed of Variation Agreement to the S106 re Land to the east of Will Hall Farm, Basingstoke Road, Alton – 55222/019

Over the past two years, agreement had been sought from Crest Nicholson to give permission that the commuted sum in respect of the S106 Agreement re Land to the east of Will Hall Farm development could be put to alternative use. There has been somewhat protracted on-going negotiations with EHDC regarding the release of the commuted sum totalling £285,309.96 which Alton Town Council (ATC) are requesting to be put towards the refurbishment of the two existing pavilions at Jubilee. The original intent in the S106 Agreement was that such funds would be used for a new pavilion. However, ATC reviewed whether it would be able to use these funds to refurbish

the existing pavilions and in June of 2023 were advised by EHDC officers that the potential change from funding a new pavilion to refurbishing two pavilions wouldn't require any amendment to a planning permission in force but instead would simply alter one of the clauses in the existing 106. If ATC wished to formally request this a Deed of Variation would need to be sought and that there are fees associated and a formal process in place for this. Alton Town Council engaged Hampshire Legal Services to commence the process and negotiation have taken place with all relevant parties: the developers (Redrow), who have agreed that the funds can be used for the purpose requested, EHDC and HCC both of which have also given their approval. It also became apparent that Alton Town Council would need to cover the legal costs of all parties, including their own which at current estimates stands at £5,173 plus any additional disbursements. In addition, the legal costs of all parties would need to be paid up front before the funds would be released by the holding party i.e. EHDC upon completion of the Deed of Variation. Agreement to this has been provided with EHDC requested to provide a PO (purchase order) to allow Alton Town Council to draw down the commuted sum of £285,309.96 from District immediately upon completion.

As a side issue, ATC continues to negotiate with EHDC as to whether ATC are entitled to claim any pro-rata interest on the principle that EHDC have had the benefit of holding these funds over the periods as and when payments fell due from the developer.

Members are advised that it must comply with the Council's Standing Orders which states: *A legal deed shall not be executed on behalf of the Council unless authorised by a resolution. b [Subject to standing order 23(a), the Council's common seal shall alone be used for sealing a deed required by law. It shall be applied by the Proper Officer in the presence of two councillors who shall sign the deed as witnesses.]. The above is applicable to a Council with a common seal.*

Therefore, Councillors are requested to note this report, approve the up front payment of all parties' legal fees and to approve the Council entering into the Deed of Variation.

RECOMMENDATION: Council is requested to

- (i) Approve Council signing the S106 Deed of Variation required in order that EHDC release the sum of £285,309.95 which is to be placed to an Earmarked Reserve for the specific purpose of Refurbishment of the two pavilions (Harry Baker & Charles Read) at the Jubilee Playing Fields site**
 - (ii) Approve the "up front" payment of all parties' legal feeds in the sum of £5,173 plus any additional disbursements as notified and agreed, prior to receipt of the sum to be released by EHDC**
 - (iii) Approve the Town Clerk to actively continue negotiations in seeking any potential claim of interest accrued on the principle sum for the time that EHDC have held these funds**
- 3. Legal Agreement with Crest Nicholson to allow a Sewer Connection pipe across its land at Treloar Heights to the new development currently under construction**

The Town Clerk has been in discussions with Crest Nicholson who are seeking permission from Alton Town Council to allow a sewer connection pipe to be installed across a strip of Alton Town Council owned land at Treloar Heights adjacent to the play area for the purpose of allowing a sewer connection to the new development currently under construction.

Negotiations have been elongated whilst the question of compensation is agreed with the developer to allow the installation on the council owned land. These negotiations have finally concluded, and a mutually acceptable compensation figure agreed. Councillors have been kept fully appraised throughout the negotiations by the Town Clerk and have agreed to the sum being offered.

However, Councillors are required to formally confirm its agreement to enter into a Legal Agreement with Crest Nicholson to allow a sewer connection pipe across its land as denoted by the red marker on the map below.

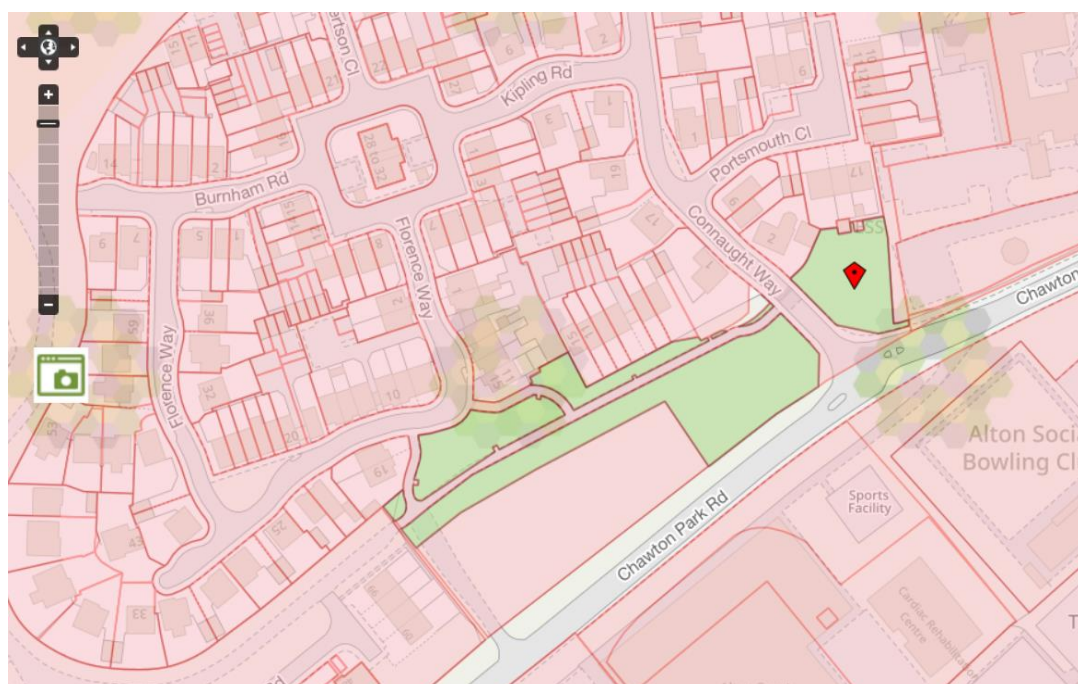


RECOMMENDATION: Council is requested to approve entering into a Legal Agreement with Crest Nicholson to allow a sewer connection pipe across its land in return for a compensation figure of £20,000.

4. Licence to Occupy – South-East Water/Dalcour McLaren – Erection of a metal structure to house a booster pump apparatus on Alton Town Council land at Treloar Heights

Alton Town Council have been in negotiations with South-East Water since April of last year as it looks to improve water pressure to dwellings in the vicinity of Chawton Park Road

The parcel of land where South-East Water wish to install apparatus is owned by Alton Town Council and lies at the entrance to the Treloar Heights development, just off Chawton Park Road, Newtown. South-East Water are considering positioning the apparatus in the parcel marked with a red marker below:



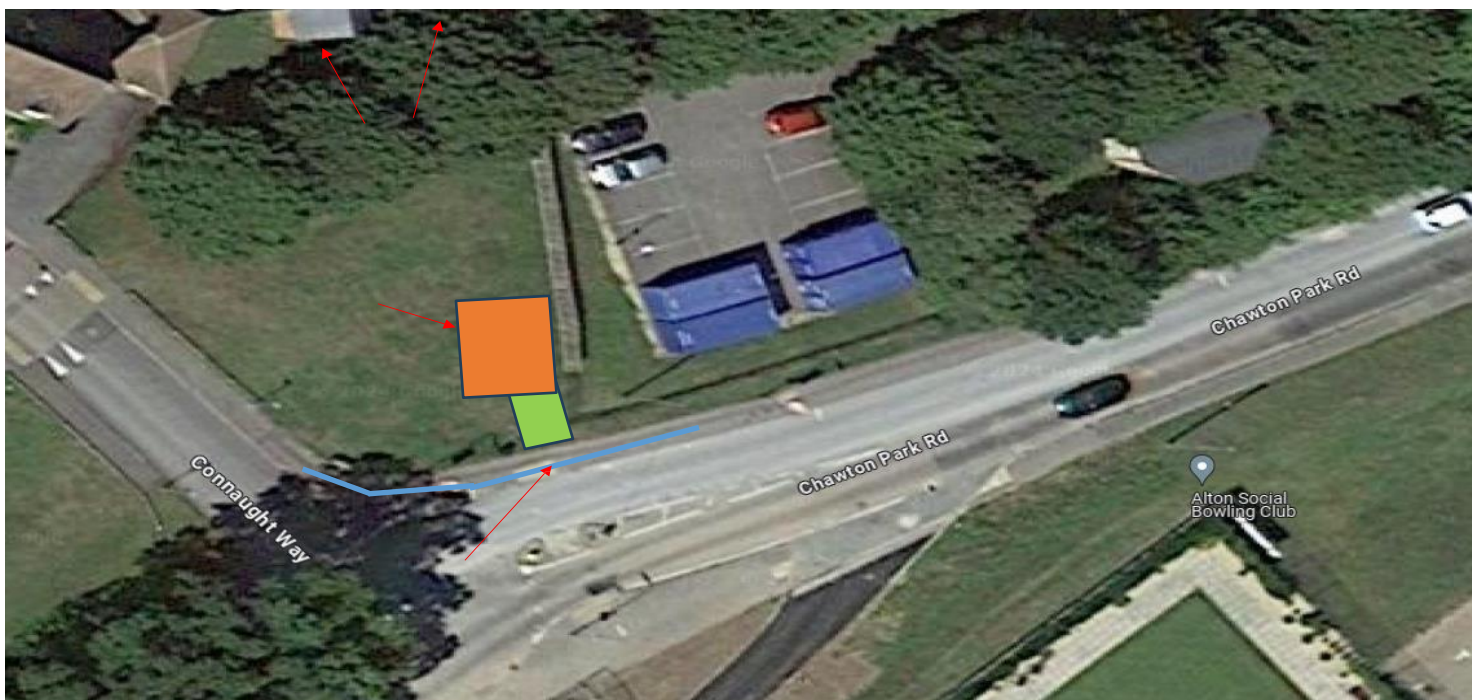
As South-East Water advised at the time of their initial approach:

- The installation of the apparatus is required to improve water pressures in Alton, and to build resilience in the network to prepare for current and ongoing development in the local area.
- South East Water wish to leave a permanent concrete pad and green metal kiosk on the land.
- Once this is installed, access and maintenance will not be regularly required.
- South East Water's contractors will require a working area to utilise during the works, and upon completion they must reinstate the area to its previous condition, only permanently leaving the concrete pad and kiosk.

As well as providing a plan South East Water will prepare a covering letter and Notice document to detail the works. It will then serve a Notice under the Water Industry Act 1991 to formalise South East Water's intention to complete the works, the notice period will be at least 3 months long.

To leave the kiosk on the land South East Water will seek to agree an Easement with Alton Town Council and this will involve South East Water covering all of the reasonable legal fees, surveyors fees involved and paying a consideration to the council as compensation for erecting a permanent structure on council owned land.

In the arial photograph below; the orange indicates the location.



Formalities have been agreed save for the compensation being sought for which South East Water have offered £500 against the Council's demand of a higher figure. However, in awaiting the outcome of these financial compensation discussions, Council needs to agree the formalities of the legal position.

RECOMMENDATION: Councillors are requested to agree to a Licence to Occupy that part of Alton Town Council owned land at the entrance to the Treloar Heights site to South East Water to permit the erection of a permanent metal structure for the purpose of housing a booster pump at Treloar Heights and authorise the Town Clerk to seek the best possible financial benefit for the Council.

ITEM 11: AUTO SPEED WATCH SYSTEM: CONTINUATION OF PERMANENT PLACEMENT OF THE DEVICE ON BASINGSTOKE ROAD FOR DECISION

On 10th January 2024 Councillors resolved to:

1. Retrospectively approve the submission of the application to EHDC for two high-tech speed cameras
2. The location for the fixed devices on the Basingstoke Road between its junction with Pertuis Avenue and the roundabout at New Odiham Road/Lenten Street as endorsed by Hampshire Police – lamp posts 32 and 51
3. Subject to evaluation as to the effectiveness of the devices at the end of the first year, Alton Town Council would assume responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the devices

The end of the first year period is 22nd February 2025 and councillors are requested to determine whether it wishes to extend the use of the cameras at this location for a further period of one year. The cost of the licence to enable this is a total cost of £396 broken down as follows:

- £179 per camera (there are two installed)
- £19 per camera for the anti-tamper alarm service

The licence for mounting on the lampposts was for a period of two years and is not due for renewal until February 2026.

The Deputy Clerk and Town Mayor held a meeting with representatives of the police on 30th January in which they agreed that going forward there would be an increase in traffic enforcement in the town, with the heat maps from these cameras contributing to their planning to increase the efficiency of the work.

RECOMMENDATION: Councillors are requested to determine whether they wish to extend the use of the two cameras on the Basingstoke Road for a further period of 12 months at a total cost of £396.

ITEM 12: NON-FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT AND INTERNAL REVIEW OF HEALTH & SAFETY FILES FOR DECISION

The Non-financial Risk Assessment is tabled for Councillor approval following a full review and updating which was undertaken by the Clerk as of 2nd January 2025.

In advance of the meeting Councillors Graham Hill and Janice Treacher undertook an inspection of the Town Council's Health & Safety records on 16th January at the Town Hall. Records and folders inspected were:

- Health & Safety Policy and Procedures
- Health and Safety Logs
- Individual Risk Assessments – General and Events
- Asbestos Surveys
- Electrical Systems Logbook
- COSHH data Sheets
- Fire Risk Assessments
- Legionella Risk Assessment

Both councillors confirmed that all records and documentation is current and up-to-date and all queries raised at the time were satisfied. A short report can be found in supplementary papers. The full suite of documents will be available in the Council Chamber in advance of the meeting for any Members wishing to further review.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to

- (i) Approve the Non-Financial Risk Assessment Report as tabled**
- (ii) Note the inspection that was carried out and the report raised on the Council's Health & Safety files as undertaken by Councillors Graham Hill & Janice Treacher on 16th January 2025**

**ITEM 13: STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS TO 31st JANUARY 2025 & INTERNAL AUDITORS
REPORT FOR THE PERIOD UP TO 31ST DECEMBER 2024** **FOR DECISION**

Members are requested to scrutinise the accounts and accompanying documents and reports to 31st December 2024 and to submit any questions they may have to the Town Clerk in advance of the meeting.

Balance Sheet as at 31st January 2025

The balance sheet is presented for sign off by the Chairman of the Council and the RFO (Responsible Financial Officer, Mrs Pat Harris – Town Clerk)

Income & Expenditure

The Statutory Income and Expenditure Report for the period 1st – 31st January 2025

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31st January 2025

The Bank Reconciliation Statements require 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.

CCLA: Deposit & Property Fund Account Statements

The statements for both the Council's accounts held with CCLA are tabled.

Payments over £500

The report includes all payments over £500, issued between 1st -31st January 2025 in respect of invoices and grant cheques.

Internal Audit Report for the period up to 31st December 2024

Members attention is drawn to the comments on the report relating to:

1. **Impartiality of the External Auditor.** *The internal auditor wrote: I have noted with some surprise the comment in the Minutes regarding a councillor being unable to “approve the external auditors report” on the basis of they could “not be sure of their impartiality”. Please note that the external auditor is independently appointed by SAA (Small Authority Appointment Ltd). SAA is the sector lead limited company appointed by the Department of Communities & Local Government as the “specified person to, procure and appoint external auditors to smaller authorities in England, to perform the functions set out in the relevant legislation, and monitor delivery on the on-going audit contracts.*

I can assure Council that the externally appointed auditor is independent of the decision making of the council, it is not under any influence of the council, it is not reliant on the individual fees of the council and is not influenced by the opinion it gives, i.e. its position as auditor is not under threat of termination by issuing a qualified report. On this basis the external auditor can be considered impartial in its decision making.

2. **Allotments – the internal auditor has raised the comment:** *the cost budget 320/4141 is over budget by £3984. I understand that council is given income & expenditure reports on a monthly basis and will have sight of this. However, I recommend that for avoidance of doubt that the Minutes show that council has been made aware of this and the implications. IN addition to this, the Minutes would show that council gives approval for continued spending, otherwise it could be argued that further spending would be against financial regulations.*

I have just done a quick calculation, and it looks like £6,395 has been collected in allotment rents for 2025 of which 75% (£4,796) will be transferred into 2025/26. This reduces the total income to £8,536 but this is still greater than the expenditure of £7,875 so Allotment (320) is in the black by £661.

In responding, the Town Clerk and Proper Officer, reports: A total of £6,395 has been collected in allotment rents for 2025 of which 75% (£4,796) will be transferred into 2025/26. (Allotment renewals are for a full year and only 25% is allocated to the current financial year). This reduces the total income to £8,536 but this is still greater than the expenditure of £7,875 therefore, the budget line for Allotments (320) is in credit by £661.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to confirm their approval of:

- 1. The balance sheet dated 31st January 2025**
- 2. The Income and Expenditure account to 31st January 2025**
- 3. The bank reconciliations for the Unity Account and the CCLA Deposit & Property Fund Accounts**
- 4. The Payments over £500 covering 1st-31st January 2025**
- 5. To note the Internal Auditors Report for the period ending 31st December 2024**

ITEM 14: REVIEW OF ALTON TOWN COUNCIL POLICIES: USE OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES FOR DECISION

It has been brought to the attention of officers that there are a number of commercial based businesses which are now operating outdoor fitness classes on the Town Council's open spaces, in particular The Butts and Anstey Park for which the Town Council receives no benefit. Whilst under Covid restrictions the Council took a position of allowing its public open spaces to be used for the benefit of health & wellbeing activities due to the restrictions placed on individuals, it would appear that commercial enterprises are now taking advantage of the free use of space whilst charging participants a fee to attend their classes or "camps".

This was not the intention that commercial enterprise should benefit at the council's expense and officers are, therefore, recommending that councillors review its Use of Public Open Spaces Policy and place a hire fee on such organisers who are charging participants to attend their classes/camps which are being held on the Council's public open space. There would be no hire fee to those who run free classes.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the Use of Public Open Spaces Policy as tabled.

ITEM 15: TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE HELD ON 22ND JANUARY 2025 FOR DECISION

Included in Members bundles are the Minutes of the Climate Change Committee meeting which was held on 22nd January 2025.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve the Minutes of the Climate Change Committee held on 22nd January 2025.

1. COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION: 'STRENGTHENING THE STANDARDS AND CONDUCT FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND' CLOSING DATE 26TH FEBRUARY 2025

Members were notified on 2nd January that the government is currently carrying out a consultation on 'Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England' which has the full support of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC).

The government is seeking views on proposals to introduce measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime for local authorities in England. The proposals being consulted upon include:

- The introduction of a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England
- A requirement that all principal authorities convene formal standards committees to make decisions on code of conduct breaches, and publish the outcomes of all formal investigations
- The introduction of the power for all local authorities (including combined authorities) to suspend councillors or mayors found in serious breach of their code of conduct and, as appropriate, interim suspension for the most serious and complex cases that may involve police investigations
- A new category of disqualification for gross misconduct and those subject to a sanction of suspension more than once in a 5-year period
- A role for a national body to deal with appeals

The SLCC will be making a response to this consultation by the deadline of 26 February 2025 with Clerks and their councils being encouraged to make their own response to the consultation too.

The link below will provide access to the SLCC from where you will be able to access the government consultation. The consultation will run for 10 weeks from 18th December and I advised that it would be included on 5th February Full Council agenda as a reminder to you all to advise whether a response as Alton Town Council should be considered.

As advised in my e-mail of 2nd January, responses are invited from local authority elected members and officers from all types and tiers of authorities, and local authority sector representative organisations. The government is also particularly keen to hear from those members of the public who have a point of view based on their interest in accessing local democracy in their area or standing as a candidate for local government at any tier to represent their local community at some future point.

<https://www.slcc.co.uk/consultation-strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework-for-local-authorities-in-england/>

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to determine whether it wishes to submit a response on behalf of the Town Council in addition to individual councillors being requested to submit their own response.

2. SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK – HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – 8 WEEK CONSULTATION OPENING ON 20TH JANUARY
FOR DECISION

This consultation is placed on the agenda to ensure that councillors are fully aware of the date by which responses are required on the South Downs National Park Local Plan and in particular councillors attention is drawn to the housing numbers proposed contained therein for the Park.

Members will be fully cognisant of the recent adverse public opinion in response to its own Alton Neighbourhood Draft Plan in September of last year, as well as the controversy associated with the

indicative housing numbers just published by East Hampshire District Council and the figure quoted for Alton for its own Local Plan. However, EHDC have advised that these indicative figures are based on applying the standard method to parishes and the basis on which this figure has been arrived at. It simply looks at housing stock in those areas and applies the affordability adjustment factor, in the same manner as the standard method to give an output. It is not a housing requirement, as it does not factor in unmet need from the SDNP (or elsewhere), nor does it factor in the settlement hierarchy or constraints to areas. All of that will need to be done as part of the East Hampshire District Local Plan.

The figures are simply there for neighbourhood planning purposes and to accord with paragraph 70 of the NPPF in providing an indicative figure for neighbourhood planning groups to work with when looking at allocations.

The housing requirement will be set by the local plan in due course based on its evidence base and will determine exactly how much growth will go in each area. In some places it may be higher than those indicative figures and others lower, we just do not have the answers yet.

It will be for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering / Task & Finish group to determine how much of that indicative figure can be met and as Councillors are aware, Alton is restricted to its designated boundary. The local plan will be looking more strategically how needs can be met.

All of the above is relevant for councillors to be aware of and to alert them to the South Downs National Park Local Plan Consultation which is currently open due to the very low figure that it is advocating in terms of housing numbers.

This item is being placed on the agenda for this meeting in order for councillors to commit to submitting a response and in order to give time for consideration of the comments it wishes to make.

RECOMMENDATION: Councillors are requested to confirm that it intends to provide a response to the South Downs National Park Local Plan review and in particular comment on the housing numbers proposed therein

ITEM 17: SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT REPORTS

FOR DECISION

In line with their respective Service Level Agreements, Members are requested to note the quarterly reports received from The Kings Arms for the period 1st September 2024 – 31st December 2024 in line with their current Service Level Agreement together with the Dementia Friendly Alton for the period of their first year of operation at the Alton Assembly Rooms.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to formally acknowledge receipt of:

- 1. The quarterly Report from The Kings Arms for the period 1st September – 31st December 2024**
- 2. The first annual Report from Dementia Friendly operating out of the Alton Assembly Rooms for the year to January 2025**

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 8TH JANUARY 2025 AT 7.00PM AT THE ALTON ASSEMBLY ROOMS**

Present: **Councillor** **Annette Eyre (Town Mayor)**
 Matthew Bayliss
 Mark Boyce-Churn
 John Chubb
 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**
 43 Members of the public
 1 member of the press

91 Suspension of Alcohol Licence

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

RESOLVED

to suspend the Assembly Rooms alcohol licence in light that the sale of alcohol is not appropriate to the event and authority for its sale is suspended for the duration of the meeting, in accordance with paragraph 10 of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972

All in favour.

92 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Doug Richards and Jonathan Waugh.

93 Town Mayor's Announcements

1. The Town Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanked members of the public for attending, especially in light of the terrible weather, and wished everyone a Happy New Year.
2. She then said how sorry everyone at Alton Town Council had been to hear of the sad passing of former Town Mayor Patrick 'Paddy' Mendham and announced that there would be a memorial service on Saturday 11th January at 1.00pm in St Lawrence's Church. All who knew Paddy are welcome to attend. Councillor Hill added that he knew Paddy well and he was a wonderful man who will be sadly missed.

3. The Town Mayor then 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.

94 **Minutes of the Full Council Meetings held on 6th November 2024**

Councillor Hill thanked the Deputy Clerk and Town Clerk for an excellent set of minutes.

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

RESOLVED

to APPROVE the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 6th November 2024

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Boyce-Churn, Chubb, Hammond, Hill, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman

Abstained: Councillors Kellermann and O'Brien

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

No Declarations of Interest were noted.

Dispensation was granted to all Councillors in respect of Agenda item 9: Revised Budget for 2024/2025 and Budget and Precept 2025/2026 for ratification.

96 **Reminder of Financial Regulation 3.4**

Members were reminded that as per Alton Town Council Financial Regulation 3.4, any Member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.

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

The Town Mayor invited members of the public to speak. She explained that as Standing Order 3f allowed 20 minutes for public questions and thirteen people had registered to speak, three minutes would be allowed per person and the Chair would use her discretion to extend the time to allow all thirteen to speak, which would take public questions time to around 40 minutes.

- 97.1 An e-mail had been received and circulated prior to the meeting from Jenny Griffiths on behalf of AVLAN/ACAN:

“Could you please ensure that the statement below is seen by Alton Town Councillors ahead of your meeting on 8th January.

Many thanks, Jenny Griffiths (Alton Climate Action Network)

King’s Pond – The Way Forward

Statement from Alton and Villages Local Action for Nature (AVLAN), the nature group of Alton Climate Action Network

For Alton Town Council meeting 8th January 2025

AVLAN volunteers appreciated the detailed and very informative briefing sessions presented by Cllr Don Hammond in November on the possible options and next steps for deciding the way forward for King’s Pond.

Of the two main options that were presented at the briefing sessions, Alton Town Council is clear that it is already committed to conducting the technical and financial assessment of the Dredging option. AVLAN would strongly support a decision by the Town Council to conduct, at the same time, the technical and financial assessment of the alternative Pond & River option. We note that much of the work to be done is common to both options and they would be worked on in parallel.

AVLAN considers it important to maintain a respectful conversation about the future of a much-cherished amenity that is vital for both people and nature in the town, a conversation which needs good-quality information to support it.

As AVLAN said in its statement published in November 2022, the condition of King’s Pond and the condition of the River Wey, a precious chalk stream, are intimately linked. We want local people and visitors to enjoy King’s Pond as:

- a lovely amenity for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy.
- a healthy habitat for thriving and diverse wildlife.
- a space that isn't going to cost a fortune to maintain.

Undertaking technical and financial assessments of both the Dredging option and the Pond & River option is the obvious next step towards ensuring that a decision on the best outcome, for both people and nature, is based on the best possible information.”

- 97.2 Revd. Canon Andrew Micklefield, the Mayor’s Chaplain, sent his apologies that he would be unable to make the meeting.

- 97.3 The following e-mail had been received from residents Mr & Mrs Smith:

Dear Alton Town Council,

Please find herewith a representation to be included on the agenda for the January 2025 meeting in the section for questions to the council.

As pensioners, we have lived in Alton for longer than most, we brought up our children here and have seen a lot of change. We were here when Kings Pond became a public amenity and we even remember when it was fenced off as private land. In that time, like many Altonians, we have come to love the space and its wildlife. We strongly oppose any further council resources being wasted on the pond and river/ offline plan. It was rejected in 2017, again in 2022/23 by townsfolk - why must you keep rehashing plans we don't want when there is so much more you could be doing!

Democracy has failed in Alton - the desire of the council to disregard resident opinions and to keep pushing until they get their way is not what British values are

built on. Whether its Kings Pond, the neighbourhood plan or just about any other matter, you ignore residents. Our parents fought in the war against Nazi Germany, they fought for democracy, Michael's father died in the RAF for the liberties we have today. The constant neglectful attitude shown by our councillors towards democracy is an insult to those who fought for it, especially those who died. Democracy isn't about forcing through your ideologies - that is a dictatorship! To summarise, our first question to the council: We ask that the council commits to retaining Kings Pond as it is with silt removal works conducted as they have been before. We ask that this is responded to at the meeting with a clear rejection of alternative plans.

On a separate note, we contacted our ward councillors Mr Churn and Mr Kellernan earlier this year, requesting that Anthony Furnival be formally recognised and receive a mayoral award for his efforts in clearing blanket weed during the summer - the gentleman spent hours at the pond pulling out absolute mountains it and enabled water levels to go from flooding the path to normal. Day in and day out he was there for hours on end.

Both councillors committed in one way or another to exploring an award on emails dated 28th and 27th August respectively, however neither elected to feedback their findings to us - our request was forgotten about, just like Anthony's efforts.. A review of minutes show it wasn't even discussed by the council! What good are councillors who say they'll do something and then don't? Further, why when a resident gives up their time is it acceptable not to formally acknowledge these efforts? Is it the case that the council won't recognise a person who does not align to the ideology to remove the pond from the river?

To summarise this point, We therefore ask again that these efforts are acknowledged and that he receives a mayoral award for these efforts. Will the mayor publicly acknowledge the efforts and confirm that some kind of award will be forthcoming?

We look forward to your responses at the meeting. We would kindly request that this email is included in the agenda as a resident question to the council, as we would like to hear from our council as a group of elected representatives on these matters rather than the view of administrative staff who maintain these inboxes.

Many thanks and with the warmest wishes for 2025

Linda & Michael Smith

97.4 The following correspondence was received from Farnborough Noise Group:

Happy New Year to everyone.

2025 will be an important year for this area with decisions on Farnborough and Gatwick Airport's proposed expansion and the government's plans to introduce new flightpaths over us. The impact of these decisions will be felt by future generations in terms of pollution and climate change but more immediately in house prices and noise disturbance. For those of you who have not closely followed developments in 2024:

- Farnborough Airport's plans to double the number of flights is due for decision by Rushmoor Borough Council early in the New Year.
- Gatwick Airport's plans to start operating a second runway are in consultation.

- The government's plans to double the number of UK commercial flights by 2030, introduce much more dense flightpaths over the south east by 2027, as well as more night flights and holding stacks at 3,000ft over places like Petersfield and Farnham is at the final stages of consultation.

It is hard to understand how the government's legally binding commitment to deliver net zero by 2050 is achievable. Especially while the aviation industry plans to double the number of flights by 2030 at the same time it has said it will reduce aviation's emissions by 15% vs 2019 (FYI, they are still growing). Unrealistic and unsubstantiated goals set by governments do little to enhance their credibility and no wonder the public lose (or have lost) faith in elected authorities. Nobody with an unbiased perspective who has looked at the aviation industry's plans for Sustainable Aviation Fuel, electric or hydrogen powered aircraft believe they are credible or achievable, and that includes the government's Climate Change Committee.

The new Labour government has already jumped on the bandwagon of "growth at all costs" without understanding that is a 20th century response to a 20th century problem. The world isn't that simple anymore and when the money from such growth ends up in the pockets of corporates and the very wealthy, few "normal" people buy it. The situation with our rivers is a case in point and the owners of Farnborough Airport are the ex-owners of Thames Water and now Southern Water. Do we really expect such businesses to make decisions that benefit the population?

The reality in 2025 will be that growth will have to be balanced by the social and environmental impact of such growth and we can expect the courts to decide what is appropriate rather than governments. This has already been demonstrated by the Supreme Court who ruled in 2024 that all emissions must be included in Environmental Impact Assessments and so coal mining and oil drilling in the UK were stopped. Environmental Impact Assessments are also required for aviation's proposed expansion and so all emissions from flights will now have to be included in expansion plans....

Tickets available at: <https://www.zerocarbonguildford.org/event-details/farnborough-airport-expansion>

- 97.5 Jenny Griffiths spoke on behalf of AVLAN, ACAN's nature group, about the future assessment of options for King's Pond. She said how much they appreciate the briefings, and the quality of information gained was extremely useful. AVLAN support investigating both options. The River Wey is a very valuable waterway, and the most important thing is that the council obtains the best quality of information, both technical and financial, to support any decision in the future. King's Pond should offer people a lovely amenity to enjoy, with a healthy habitat for a diversity of wildlife, and it should also be sustainable financially. She said that AVLAN look forward to seeing the results of the assessments and to being able to comment further.
- 97.6 Gareth Hurd, a local resident and also a member of AVLAN, then spoke, to say his day job is to look after fairly similar but larger size sites nearer to Guildford and it is a maintenance-challenging site. As a standing body of water King's Pond is great for wildlife. However, it is a place where water, silt, pollutants, etc collects, and as such

it is a 'dirty' site - it has become that because of all the decisions of the past. It is up to us now to choose the best, financially and environmentally sustainable choice for the future.

- 97.7 John Quincey offered his thanks to the current Town Clerk for the non-adversarial manner in which ATC now treats people.
He went on to say that a project manager was needed back in 2023. He stated that the plan basis was a letter from the Environment Agency dated 20/7/2022 which said they wanted to take the pond offline and that it was the previous Town Clerk who had instigated it. South East Water were recently doing something at the pond but ATC had no knowledge of it – they had told Mr Quincey that they were doing the work because they knew Alton Town Council wanted to take the pond offline. He finished by saying that flood modelling is really important and part of what needs to be done to take the pond offline. He would have added more if he could have been permitted more time, but said he would email in to the Town Clerk.
- 97.8 James Willis said he has lived in the town for many years and wished to thank Alton Town Council for the excellent presentations. He caught the end of one and managed to attend the entirety of another. He also watched the online presentation. He said it was exemplary the way Alton Town Council has informed people on this subject and he is fully in support of exploring both options. He added that he is in awe of the amount of work that has been done and Alton Town Council deserves the public's utmost respect and support.
- 97.9 Anthony Furnival said that in agenda item 8, Alton Town Council commit to being engaged and transparent, but he has concerns about what that means and he would like them to clarify, or go back to the drawing board and say they will do x, y, z.
With regards the Task & Finish Group, he believes it is important that no one single ideology is represented. He thanked Councillors Hill, Bayliss and Kellermann for meeting with him and thinks they would be excellent councillors to take this to the next step.
With regards the future of King's Pond, he said that everyone knows he is committed to keeping the pond and when he looks at the two options he cannot see how, with the pollution and silt problems that we have in the town, taking it off-line will work.
- 97.10 Graeme Parkin thanked Councillor Hammond for his excellent presentation and said that it seemed clear that the opinions of some residents had already been formed. He said some of them had concerns that they would not be able to feed ducks and so on, but that future generations would not forgive us for committing to costly ongoing dredging without first exploring the other options.
- 97.11 Stephen Gough said that he had the opposite view to the previous speaker. He said that first he would like to ask if the dredging costs have been out to multiple tenders. Once in every twenty-five years is worth the cost to preserve the special pond we have. He added that his understanding was that the Redrow (CALA) estate has offered to have some kind of silt trap that will prevent the silt entering the pond and that will extend the amount of time before it needs dredging again.
He thought that Alton Town Council should have a referendum to ask if people would be happy to pay a few more pounds each year to contribute to the dredging that will be needed again in thirty years time and that managing the pond is the way forward.

97.12 Paul Ebbutt stated he had a lot of experience in managing large scale projects and that he has been a resident for over twenty years. He very much appreciates the fantastic open spaces we have in the town, including King's Pond. He said he had noted the options on the website and thanked Councillor Hammond for pulling it all together. Feasibility assessments and proper information is well worth the money; information gathering is so important.

He added that the ongoing cost of removing the silt is a concern and we need a proper, competent assessment so that the public and council can make a proper, informed decision.

97.13 Len Meek said he would like to remind everyone present that the pond is over two hundred years old and that if it was a listed building we would not even be having this discussion. On the noticeboard it says "no visit to Alton would be complete without a visit to King's Pond", so why is the council so hellbent on tearing it all apart? He said someone had asked for £17,000 to be spent on two extra surveys at the last council meeting, but that other things needed money spent on – for example have surveys been done on wheelchair accessibility, swans, etc? He asked what would happen to the swans if the pond was no longer there, and said that £17,000 seemed like a lot of money to spend.

97.14 Jancine Potts then spoke, saying she is new to Alton and one of the things that attracted her was King's Pond. To her it is the jewel in the crown. She said she was very confused by the presentation and thought it waffled a lot. She asked what would happen to the swans if the pond were to get smaller, and why anyone would want to get rid of the pond. She believes the island is a nesting ground, which you are not allowed to disturb. She believes that a provision should be made in the council budget for dredging as it is regular maintenance and so of course it is needed. Getting rid of the pond would be like chopping off your own foot.

97.15 Tony Day said he was there on behalf of the Waterside Court Residents Association and has been a resident of Waterside Court for over twenty years. There was a board meeting of the management committee yesterday – Waterside Court is the next place downstream from King's Pond and he says they have not been consulted at all. He is therefore making a formal request that they be consulted in full.

He went on to say that the dam which forms the downstream end of the pond was reinstated at the same time as Waterside Court was built. What to most people appears to be the footpath around that end of the pond, and the back wall of Waterside Court, is actually the dam. The stream was diverted at the same time. Waterside Court is shown on the Environment Agency's plans as a high flood risk area, and Mr Day stated that there was almost a flood there last year.

He said that the hydrology between the pond and Papermill Lane all goes through their site and they ask to be consulted in full on any proposals.

98 **King's Pond**

There were various discussions and queries raised by councillors, including some concerns from one about the amount of money being spent and the detail of the draft Terms of Reference for the proposed Task & Finish Group. It was pointed out that they are draft, councillors could make any amendments they felt were required, and the Task & Finish

Group, when established, could also propose amendments to Full Council at a later date should they deem it necessary.

The public were also thanked for coming along whether to voice their concerns or make their support known, and it was stressed that lots of questions had been thrown up during the session, which councillors were not yet able to answer. There were also questions raised during the public engagement sessions and experts need to be paid to provide the answers to all of those questions and provide the proper information for an informed decision to be made.

Councillors stressed what an important project this is, and that money is being spent very carefully on the surveys which must be done. In order to draw up tender documents to get quotes for any option, full technical specifications will need to be written and there requires a huge amount of work to be undertaken.

Thus, each item was taken individually, with Councillor Kellermann requesting a recorded vote on each one.

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

RESOLVED

To conduct a technical and financial assessment of the Pond and River option in parallel with the technical and financial assessment of the Dredging option

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Boyce-Churn, Chubb, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman

Against: Councillor Kellermann

Abstained: Councillor Bayliss

98.2 On the proposal of Councillor Hill, seconded by Councillor Tansey, it was

RESOLVED

To form a Task & Finish Group to take the project forward and adopt the draft Terms of Reference as tabled

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Boyce-Churn, Chubb, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman

Abstained: Councillors Kellermann and Bayliss

98.3 Proposals were received for Councillors Wadman, Richards and Hammond to join the Task & Finish Group. Councillor Kellermann requested that the nominations and appointments be voted on individually and that the vote be recorded.

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

RESOLVED

To appoint Councillor Wadman to the Task & Finish Group

All in favour.

98.3..2 On the proposal of Councillor O'Brien, seconded by Councillor Bayliss, seconded by Councillor O'Brien, it was

RESOLVED

To appoint Councillor Hammond to the Task & Finish Group

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Boyce-Churn, Chubb, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman
Against: Councillor Kellermann

98.3..3 On the proposal of Councillor Hammond, seconded by Councillor Hill, it was

RESOLVED

To appoint Councillor Richards to the Task & Finish Group

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Boyce-Churn, Chubb, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman
Abstained: Councillor Kellermann

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

RESOLVED

To reaffirm that the outcome of the technical and financial assessments of the Dredging and Pond & River options will go to public consultation before any decision is taken to proceed further

All in favour.

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

RESOLVED

To commit to having a full, engaged and transparent process involving the people of Alton and to maintain regular progress reports and information on the Alton Town Council website

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Boyce-Churn, Chubb, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman
Abstained: Councillor Kellermann

The town mayor adjourned the meeting for ten minutes to allow a comfort break and to allow any members of the public not wishing to stay for the remainder of the meeting to leave.

34 members of the public left the meeting.

When the meeting reconvened, items 13: Events Grant Applications: (i) Alton Jane Austen Group (ii) Victorian Cricket and 11: Alton Mens Shed: EHDC Community Climate Action Fund Grant Award Terms & Conditions were moved up the agenda.

99 **Events Grant: Alton Jane Austen Group**

99.1 On the proposal of Councillor Kellermann, seconded by Councillor Hammond, it was

RESOLVED

to APPROVE the events grant application received on behalf of the Alton Jane Austen Group in the sum of £500 (five hundred pounds)

All in favour.

99.2 On the proposal of Councillor Eyre, seconded by Councillor Kellermann, it was

RESOLVED

to APPROVE the events grant application received from Victorian Cricket in the sum of £400 (four hundred pounds)

All in favour.

100 **Alton Men's Shed: EHDC Community Climate Action Fund**

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

RESOLVED

to confirm that Alton Town Council intends to lease the property knowns as Edgar Hall for community use for at least 10 years

All in favour.

101 **Budget and Precept 2025/26**

Councillor Kellermann advised that he would be abstaining as he had not had time to review the budget.

On the proposal of Councillor Bayliss, seconded by Councillor Boyce-Churn, it was

RESOLVED to

- 1. Approve the budget and precept request for 2025/26**
- 2. Approve the revised budget for 2024/25 to enable the appropriate virements to be actioned**

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

Abstained: Councillor Kellermann

102 **Tree Works – Retrospective Approval of emergency tree works carried out at The Dell, Ashdell Road**

Emergency works had been undertaken following the tree reports identifying urgent works and subsequent high winds exacerbating the matter. Councillors had been appraised by the Town Clerk at the time. Due to the location of the site and the difficulty in accessing it to undertake the work safely, the cost of road closure and required equipment increased the cost to over that which the Town Clerk may authorise, thus, on the proposal of Councillor Eyre, seconded by Councillor Boyce-Churn, it was

RESOLVED

to grant retrospective approval of the tree works undertaken at The Dell at a total cost of £16,618 (sixteen thousand, six hundred and eighteen pounds)

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Boyce-Churn, Chubb, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman
Abstained: Councillor Kellermann

103 **Statement of Accounts to 31st December 2024**

Councillor Kellermann advised that as per agenda item 9, he would not be voting on this item as he had not had the opportunity to go through the accounts.

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

RESOLVED

To confirm approval of:

- 1. The balance sheet dated 31st December 2024**
- 2. The Income and Expenditure account to 31st December 2024**
- 3. The bank reconciliations for the Unity Account and the CCLA Deposit & Property Fund Accounts**
- 4. The Payments over £500 covering 1st November-31st December 2024**
- 5. To note the CCLA letter in respect of the Local Authority Property Fund held by ATC and the implementation of the FCA sustainability disclosure requirements**

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Bayliss, Boyce-Churn, Chubb, Hammond, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey, Treacher and Wadman
Abstained: Councillor Kellermann

104 **Review of Alton Town Council Policies**

Councillor Kellermann proposed an amendment – that in 4.1 – Gifts, any or all gifts should be reported, not just those over £25, and all gifts over that amount should be declined. There being no seconder this amendment was not carried.

Thus, on the proposal of Councillor Boyce-Churn, seconded by Councillor Bayliss, it was

RESOLVED

To APPROVE the new Bribery & Corruption for Staff Policy.

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

Against: Councillor Kellermann

105 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

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

RESOLVED

That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 section 1, subsection 2, and, as per subsection 3A, where the public are excluded from a meeting of a relevant local government body under subsection (2), the body may also prevent any person from reporting on the meeting using methods-

(a) which can be used without that person's presence at the meeting, and

(b) which enable persons not present at the meeting to see or hear the proceedings at the meeting as it takes place or later.

All in favour.

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION

106 **Recruitment**

See confidential minute.

107 **Code of Conduct complaint update**

See confidential minute.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm

COMMUNITY GRANTS

	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount Requested 2025/26</u>	<u>Cost of Project</u>	<u>Year End Balance of Account</u>	<u>Unallocated Reserves</u>	<u>Prior Year Fund Raising</u>
1	Alton Beer Festival	To purchase four beer dispensers, associated couplings, cleaning and gas.	4,374.52	4,374.52	12,308	Only a float of £25 as all profits are dispersed to grant recipients	9,055.05
2	Alton Climate Action Network (ACAN)	To cover ACAN's core costs, to include insurance, external examinatin of accounts, newsletter services, license, website hosting, maintenance and general costs eg room hire, data protection fees and leaflet printing.	3,590	35,000	12,269	1,688	2,710
3	Alton Community Association CIO	Core funding to help achieve charitable aims, support current services and new projects to support the community to include combating social isolation and enhancing areas with poor public transport links.	8,000	Ongoing	10,623.10	15,089.06	11,947.35
4	Alton Counselling Service	To continue to help subsidise counselling fees for people in the community from age 16. Current cost is £50 per session but almost 70% are unable to pay the full fee. The grant will provide the means to continue to offer much needed support.	10,000	15,000	5,627	14,407	N/A
5	Basingstoke and Alton Cardiac Rehab Charity	Installation of a screen and AV unit in Lecture Room where health education sessions and courses are delivered.	1,778.40	One-off	354,979	31,622	243,433
6	Bushy Leaze Family Support	Increase the capacity of the service to support more vulnerable and disadvantaged families in Alton.	10,000	Ongoing	134,264	39,225	2,835
7	Citizens Advice East Hampshire	To support the rent and service charge due to the potential move to new premises.	10,000	Ongoing	687,164	All reserves designated	N/A

SUMMARY OF GRANTS TO CONSIDER 2025/26

Updated 03/01/2025

	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount Requested 2025/26</u>	<u>Cost of Project</u>	<u>Year End Balance of Account</u>	<u>Unallocated Reserves</u>	<u>Prior Year Fund Raising</u>
8	Dogs for Autism	To go towards the task training costs, the dogs are trained to do specific tasks for their autistic recipient and vary according to individual need.	10,000	200,000	76,000	34,000	250,000
9	Home-Start Hampshire (Alton, Bordon, Liphook and surrounding area)	Providing essential support to families with children 0 - 11 years who are finding life challenging. Their goal is that parents feel confident and empowered to help their children thrive.	5,000	Ongoing	239,345	139,668	19,214
10	Miniland Farm	To part fund a new prefabrication wooden building to incorporate fun and engaging adapted physical education for students. The building will require adaptation and specialised equipment.	10,000	20,000	44,068	N/A	N/A
11	OpenSight (Hampshire Association for the Care of the Blind)	To benefit Alton Early Years Group and Alton Social Group enhancing the support provided to visually impaired individuals and their families in the community.	10,000	Ongoing	164,529	567,000	94,974
12	The Friendship Café	To provide 14 sessions of nature related activities, engage with nature to lessen stress levels, decrease anxiety and depression	1,402.50	1,805.00	2,777.21	917.19	472.05

84,145.42

CIL Evaluations for Alton Neighbourhood CIL grant applications									
	Applicant	Project	Cost of project	Amount Requested	Qualifies Y/N	ATC mark	EHDC (1) mark	Recommendation from councillor workshop	Amount recommended for payment
1	Alton Town Council	Appointment of PR company _ANP3 & Kings Pond	£20,000	£15,000	Y	N/A	37	Evaluation score by EHDC officer only as inappropriate for ATC officer to score as would not be independent.	
2	Holybourne Theatre	New firedoors	£3,840	£2,540	Y	35	32	Holybourne Theatre confirmed have been successful with £300 from Lions & £1000 from EHDC thus reducing their application to £2,540.	
3	Alton Town Council	Retrofitting ATC Properties - Town Hall	£109,616	£80,617	Y	N/A	42	Evaluation score by EHDC officer only as inappropriate for ATC officer to score as would not be independent.	
4	Alton Town Council	All weather surface for the Community Canopy	£41,652	£14,294	Y	N/A	44	Evaluation score by EHDC officer only as inappropriate for ATC officer to score as would not be independent.	
5	Alton Town Council	Fitting of Retractable Privacy Screens - Unit 16	£16,043	£14,353	Y	N/A	42	To provide partitioned confidential office accommodation for CAB who use the community office as interview areas for their clients	
6	ACAN	Eco-Street Phase 2 project	£9,200	£9,200	N	0	0	CIL cannot be used to cover consultants costs which this application is for. ACAN are awaiting the outcome of an application to EHDC's Community Climate Action Fund for £5,000 over two years. In November, they are applying to South Downs National Park (Small Grants Scheme) for a linked "Gateway" project on the Chawton SDNP boundary costed at £2,732. The SDNP grants scheme has a limit of £2,000 and will only fund 50% of the cost. They have also applied to the ATC's Community Grants Scheme for ACAN's core costs (insurance, external examination of accounts etc.).	
7	Allen Gallery	Major project for refurbishment of Gallery	£2,402,652	£10,000	Y	39	45	Previously benefitted from £15,000 Neighbourhood CIL in 2023 and are applying again to cover shortfall in Lottery funding . Total project cost £2,402,652	
8	Treloar College	Replace hoist project	£137,410	£9,100	Y	40	42	The request is for replacing 10 hoists only.	
9									

TOTAL GRANT REQUESTS

£155,104

£0.00

Qualifying marking:

Less than 33 (criteria not met)
34-38 further discussion
39+ should be granted



ALTON TOWN COUNCIL GRANT APPLICATION

PART 1 – YOUR ORGANISATION

NAME OF ORGANISATION

Alton Lions Club (CIO) Reg No. 1174502

NAME OF CONTACT

Frank Pote

ADDRESS OF CONTACT

**2 Epsom Down
Alton
GU34 2TS**

TELEPHONE NO:

DAYTIME

01420 83974 / 07788877484

EVENING

01420 83974 / 07788877484

EMAIL ADDRESS:

Frank.pote@btinternet.com

PLEASE OUTLINE BRIEFLY THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANISATION

Alton Lions Club (CIO) is part of Lions Clubs International, established to enable men and women to volunteer to serve their local communities. The UK Lions Club constitution objects are:

- 1. The advancement of citizenship;**
- 2. Promoting the Voluntary Sector for the public benefit;**
- 3. Promoting volunteering;**
- 4. The relief of poverty and relief of those in need;**
- 5. The advancement of health and the saving of lives;**
- 6. Promoting the conservation, protection, and improvement of the physical and natural environment;**
- 7. Promoting community participation in healthy recreation.**

PLEASE GIVE NUMBERS IN THE

ORGANISATION WHO ARE

A) PAID	None
B) VOLUNTEERS	35

HOW MANY MEMBERS/BENEFICIARIES
LIVE WITHIN ALTON

30 in Alton; 5 in villages

PART 2 – GRANT REQUEST

AMOUNT OF GRANT APPLIED FOR

£400

WHAT IS THE TOTAL COST OF THE
PROJECT/ITEM/SERVICE?

£655

HAS MATCHED FUNDING ALREADY
BEEN SECURED? IF SO, PLEASE STATE VALUE

£N/A

WHAT IS THE GRANT TO BE USED FOR?

- **Hire of the Alton Assembly Rooms for the Event – Saturday 1st March 2025 (Provisional Booking made)**
- **Advertising and Printing as well as Bus Stop signage outside Sainsbury's for two weeks in early February before the event.**

HAS YOUR ORGANISATION APPLIED FOR A
GRANT ELSEWHERE TOWARDS THIS PROJECT?

NO

IF YES, PLEASE
GIVE DETAILS

SECURED / PENDING

WHAT OTHER FUNDRAISING HAS BEEN DONE TOWARDS THIS ITEM/PROJECT?
EG CAKE STALL, COFFEE MORNING

Lions seed funding from its Service Budget has been used to enable this new initiative to commence.

This new event is in collaboration with Alton Primary Care Network (PCN) and Xyla Services.

The event will be hosted in the Alton Assembly Rooms on Saturday 1st March 2025 and intends to raise the awareness of Type 2 Diabetes within the local population.

The event will be open to anyone over the age of 18, with no admission charge and will target specific groups within the community who are thought to be at most risk.

YOU ARE INVITED TO GIVE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT ASSIST THE
COUNCIL IN CONSIDERING YOUR APPLICATION

There are 13.6 million people in the UK at increased risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes.

This event will raise awareness of developing Type 2 Diabetes to anyone over the age of 18 in the local area. It will offer advice and information on how to make simple lifestyle changes that can lower the risk of developing this condition in the future.

This will be delivered via three sessions throughout the day, each with a series of speakers providing advice.

This includes:

- Know Your Risk – discover how to prevent developing type 2 diabetes
- Exercise for long term conditions
- Benefits of healthy sustainable eating and cooking from scratch.

These will be supported from other local organisations offering health, fitness and lifestyle advice at all levels. These include 'Everyone Active'; Alton Walking Group; Inclusion - Specialist Alcohol Team; Cycling UK North Hants; Xyla Services; Munch; Wellhouse Nutrition and Cardiac Rehab.

The event will also offer a Blood Pressure and BMI check as part of the individual Risk Assessment being offered to those attending the event.

PART 3 – TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL APPLICANTS

PLEASE STATE BALANCES IN HAND AT
THE END OF LAST FINANCIAL YEAR

£33,287 (Excluding grants, sponsorship
& special donations.)
(July to June 2023/24)

LEVEL OF UNALLOCATED RESERVES

None

HOW MUCH DID THE GROUP RAISE
LAST YEAR (EG FUNDRAISING BY THE
GROUP OTHER THAN BY GRANT
APPLICATION)?

Balance on 30 June 2024 - £45,031

PLEASE ENSURE ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION IS ENCLOSED WITH THIS APPLICATION

CHECKLIST



All relevant parts of the form completed



Form signed



Most recent accounts (Audited or draft)



Constitution/Rules



Child Protection Policy (if applicable)

Copies of this completed form and any supporting papers will appear on a Town Council Committee Agenda and will be discussed by the Committee in the presence of the Press and Public.

I DECLARE THAT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF THAT THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS CORRECT. I ALSO DECLARE THAT ANY GRANT AWARDED WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSES OUTLINED IN THIS APPLICATION AND I WILL COMPLETE A GRANT EVALUATION FORM WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF THE AWARD OF GRANT. I UNDERSTAND THAT ALTON TOWN COUNCIL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO RECLAIM THE GRANT IN THE EVENT OF IT NOT BEING USED FOR THE PURPOSE SPECIFIED.

NAME

Mark Francis P

SIGNATURE

.....

POSITION

Alton Lions Club Event Organiser

DATE 17 / January / 2025

Completed applications should be sent to: Alton Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1HD

Applications are also available from our web site www.alton.gov.uk

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL NON-FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW DOCUMENT 2025/26

Category	Risk	Risk level	Impact	Score	Mitigation	Recommendations/Actions	Latent Risk	Latent Impact	Latent Score	Source Document
Staffing	1 Prolonged staff absence may have a detrimental effect on services, reducing work capacity by 15-20%.	Med	High	300	Regular monitoring of staff requirements and absence in line with management procedures overseen by Town Clerk and Staffing Sub Committee	Staff development should focus on multi-skill training, enabling absences to be covered effectively. This has been effectively demonstrated during 2018 with covering for a staff member on long term sick leave in Grounds Dept.	Low	Med	150	Staffing Subcommittee
	2 Staff vacancies not filled and delay in appointment of replacement staff - need to prioritise work	Low	High	200	Restructuring on Grounds Team undertaken South East Employers in 2018. Forward planning required to mitigate future retirements or long terms absences	Procedure in place to enable Clerk and staffing sub committee to respond promptly to appoint replacement staff where appropriate or replace with external contractors where economically advantageous.	Low	Med	150	Staffing Subcommittee
Governance	3 Leases / Licences/ Rental Agreements or contracts out of date	High	High	400	Lease/Licence / Rental Agreements and contracts reviewed annually all information logged on Legal and Lease Master copy on website	Review complete and regularly monitored and updated as appropriate.	Low	Low	100	Legal and Lease Master Copy
	Lease & Licence Agreements not fit for purpose	High	High	400	Evaluate current agreements with a view to modifications as required upon renewal	Market valuations and review of tenant activities to take place 6 months prior to renewal dates to ensure adequate time for renegotiations. This is now being undertaken	Low	Low	100	Legal and Lease Master Copy
Buildings/ equipment/vehicles	3 Loss of or damage to major buildings, plant or equipment	High	High	400	All premises and plant are fully insured. A major review of Insurance schedules was carried out January 2022 and 3 year Agreement in place with Zurich. Due for review 2025.	Review of insurance schedule and financial evaluation as to level of cover afforded carried out as part of tender process for new insurance in April 2022. Insured amounts updated as a result and increased cover where necessary in line with RPI. Reviewed annually to ensure that all buildings and assets up updated.	Low	Low	100	Insurance Policy
	No current documentary evidence of council owned assets	Med	Med	225	Asset register kept of all major assets owned in accordance with audit regime	Full review undertaken annually with interim updates as required	Low	Low	100	Asset Register
	Correct Fire Protection Systems not in place	High	Med	300	Fire alarms and apparatus installed where needed and inspected annually.	Fire Risk Assessments undertaken and are reviewed in line with recommendations. All remedial work undertaken under Category 1 and 2. Category 3 are periodically to be reviewed	Low	Med	150	Fire Risk Assessments
	4 Criminal damage to buildings/plant/machinery	Med	Med	225	All buildings and vehicles secured and/or alarmed and regular checks. Comprehensive inventory of all equipment.	Continuation of liaison with Police directly and through CTCG, locking of public gardens, promotion of 101 calls at all other times.	Med	Med	150	Full Council Minutes
	Anti-social behaviour and low level crime	Low	Med	150	CCTV installed in high risk areas, controlled and/or monitored	CCTV monitoring relocated to Town Hall in 2017 following closure of Police Station. CCTV cameras installed at Anstey Park 2016. Further CCTV added to the Public Gardens with on site surveillance at the Assembly Rooms on the Lawned Garden.	Low	Med	150	Full Council Minutes
	5 Deterioration or failure of buildings, plant or equipment lack of maintenance.	Med	High	300	Maintenance budgets agreed and reviewed annually at Budget setting meeting (December each year). Rolling programme of maintenance work continues	Evaluate and reassess maintenance programme annually. This work is now being undertaken by the Deputy Town Clerk . A capital reserve was created in 2018 to assist with allocating funds for new capital equipment. As funding permits an earmarked contingency reserve for buildings maintenance will/may also be added.	Low	Med	150	Buildings Maintenance Schedule
	Insurance cover invalidated due to no maintenance programme in place	High	High	400	Building Surveys to be undertaken periodically and maintenance programmes are reviewed annually	Full maintenance and inspection regime in place and updated by Deputy Town Clerk.	Low	Med	150	Buildings Maintenance Schedule
	Asbestos Claim received - Disturbed due to non display of warning notices	Med	High	300	Asbestos Surveys undertaken	Surveys and re-surveys undertaken in accordance with recommendations. Latest inspections undertaken in 2022	Low	High	200	Asbestos Survey
	Failure of machinery	Med	High	300	Vehicles and grounds machinery serviced annually. Ensure appropriate staff are trained to undertake routine maintenance and visual checks on machinery and vehicles.	Vehicle and machinery replacement programme in place. Monitoring of servicing costs versus replacement. This is reviewed annually and is monitored and overseen by the Deputy Town Clerk	Low	High	200	Asset register

IT & Telecommunication	6	Loss of physical or electronic data	Low	High	200	Physical server removed 2022 and replaced with secure private cloud system. Paper and electronic copies kept of accounts information.	Regular backup of all data by Chalvington under contract and in line with Data Protection Requirements.	Low	Low	100	Business Continuity Plan
		No virus protection on systems	High	High	300	Anti-virus software kept up to date,	Undertaken under contract by Chalvington.	Low	Low	100	IT Policy
Injury to third parties (staff & public)	7	Litigation due to loss/ injury to third parties	Med	High	300	Public liability insurance carried for all services and sites and Risk Assessments in place. .	Review annually on renewal of insurance policy. All hirers of open spaces required to complete and submit copies of risk assessment and insurance. All contractors to confirm adequate insurances and method statements for works.	Med	High	300	Risk Assessment
		Litigation due to loss/ injury to staff	Low	High	200	Health & Safety consultants appointed and advising council.	Undertake regular reviews of recommendations and ensure implementation through staff training and staff awareness. Worknest (formerly Ellis Whitham) last visit was in August 2024 when they inspected our Health & Safety Manuals	Low	High	200	Health & Safety Policy
		Loss of life or limb	Low	High	200	Risk assessments for all activities regularly reviewed	Ensure action taken to address issues raised and that findings are communicated to all staff	Low	High	200	Risk Assessment
		Failure to comply with recommendations	Low	High	200	Inspection Audits to be implement for all sites	Maintain records to ensure compatability and adherence to all legal requirements and compliance. Annual refresher training for staff	Low	Low	100	Health & Safety Logs
		Falling trees/unsafe trees	Low	High	200	Tree inspection regime implemented and professional arboriculturalist reports are received annually on all open space owned by council	Action recommendations in surveys. Tree Works maintenance programme in place. 18 month detailed inspection regime by independent contractor. Next tree survey due Spring 2026. A number of grounds staff are qualified for visual tree inspections carried out regularly and reported as defects are identified	Low	Low	100	Tree Survey
		Failing to act upon professional reports	Low	High	200	Responsible manager must sign off reports	Ensure immediate action taken on high risks identified in Tree Survey reports. ITTs issued against all Urgent works and planning applications submitted as required. Contractors due to be appointed February 2025 for latest works identified in the Tree Surveys undertaken Oct/Nov 2024 to carry out all works required within 18 month time frame, concluding work over the coming month.	Low	Low	100	Tree Survey
Financial Loss		Financial loss due to debtors not being monitored	Med	Med	300	Finance system in place with debtors, creditors and purchase order system.	Monthly monitoring of debtors undertaken by the Town Clerk	Low	Low	100	Accounts Package
		Financial loss due to error or fraud	Low	High	200	Division of duties between staff, with ordering, payment and reconciliation carried out separately.	Ensure division of duties maintained	Low	Low	100	Financial Risk Assessment
		Financial loss due staff fraud	Low	High	200	Internal audit in place and reports made to council.	Review effectiveness annually. Internal audit carried out three times per year.	Low	Low	100	Financial Risk Assessment
		Lawsuit issued again insurance	Med	High	300	Fidelity insurance in place.	Review annually to ensure adequate level of cover	Low	Med	200	Insurance Policy
		Loss/theft of cash or cheques	Low	High	200	Cash banked on a weekly basis. Income and petty cash kept securely and insured.	Ensure all cash and cheques are safely stored in safe in Finance Office	Low	Low	100	Financial Risk Assessment
		Failure to collect income from debtors	High	High	400	Most debtors are regular customers, so lower likelihood of non-payment.	No outstanding Debtors over 30 days	Low	Low	100	Financial Risk Assessment
		Payment not received from hall/pitch hires	Med	High	300	All one off bookings to be paid for in advance of event	No outstanding Debtors	Low	Low	100	Financial Risk Assessment
		Lack of control over councils finances	Low	High	200	Finances system provides aged debtor information and internal auditors conduct quarterly review of councils finances	Reports received quarterly and reviewed with auditors. Accounts go to Full Council on a monthly basis.	Low	Low	100	Financial Risk Assessment
Banking		Loss of funds due to exposure to risk at Bank	Low	High	200	Banking services moved to Unity Trust Bank in 2012/13. New deposit account opened in July 2016 with CCLA to separate earmarked reserves. Property Fund opened with CCLA in November 2016	Reserves Strategy approved by Council in 2016 and reviewed in 2023 to ensure appropriate both long and short term investments provide acceptable risk/reward for Council. Monies now held with Unity Bank and CCLA. Further reviews to be carried out every three years to confirm competitive offering in the market place.	Low	High	200	Reserves Strategy
Government Legislation		Failure to comply with VAT/ revenue requirements	Low	High	200	VAT control incorporated in new finance system.	All finance staff aware of legal requirements and financial system produces reports in accordance with legislation	Low	Low	100	Financial Risk Assessment
		Failure to comply with HMRC requirements	Low	High	200	Tax assistance provided through payroll contractor.	Two Members of staff trained in payroll to ensure continued compliance in case of officer absent	Low	Low	100	Financial Risk Assessment
Fraud		Failure to comply with borrowing requirements	Low	High	200	Council has temporary borrowing from 2019, in line with Government guidance. No other requirements identified	Current PWLB loan repayable over 30 years. Monies set aside in budget to pay for this, set against the rental charged on the premises at Vicarage Hill (Tannery)	Low	Low	100	Public Works Loan Board
		Data Theft - IT	Low	High	200	All PC's password protected. Internet access protected by firewall.	Off-site back up (cloud based) in compliance with Data Protection . Review option for cyber insurance. Business Continuity Plan in place	Low	High	200	Business Continuity Plan
		Data Theft - physical	Low	Med	150	Documents in secure offices, limited access.	Ensure regular key code changes for office access. No public access to offices unless accompanied. Currently no public access to Town Hall without prior appointment and tracing.	Low	Med	150	

Corporate Governance	Council acts outside its legal powers	Low	Med	150	Council belongs to NALC, HALC and South East Employers who provide advice.	Continue membership of all 3 organisations	Low	Med	150	Full Council Minutes
	Council is not uptodate with governance requirements	Low	Med	150	Main reference material kept up to date.	Town Clerk maintains up to date reference material	Low	Low	100	Office library of Policies
	Legal proceedings instigated by tenants	Low	High	200	Records kept of all lease agreements and ensure compliance with statutory responsibilities as landlord.	Ensure tenancy agreements are regularly reviewed, properties maintained and ATC compliant with Landlord and Tenant legislation (Clerk completed Level 6 Cilex Landlord and Tenant Law 2018)	Low	High	200	Legal and Lease Master Copy
	Legal proceedings instigated by individuals or employees	Med	High	300	Minutes record powers used for all decisions reached by councillors. Source documents retained to demonstrate legal compliance. Compliance with Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation	Electronic records held and hard copies of historic minutes are archived at Winchester Records Office. Records Retention Policy Implemented 2016. Full data cleansing undertaken in 2018 in advance of GDPR. Staff and Members received training on GDPR compliance on new regulations effective from May 2018 and procedure in the event of a data breach.	Low	High	200	Retention Policy

Notes: Scoring applied

Risk Scores

- High 20
- Medium 15
- Low 10

Impact scores

- High 20
- Medium 15
- Low 10

Non-financial risk assessments – responses to queries raised by Councillors **Janice Treacher and Graham Hill 16th January 2025**

Folder	Raised by	Query	Response
Risk Assess	GH	Progress of work in Fire Risk Assessment Action Plan	New Fire doors ordered for Assembly Rooms, awaiting installation All procedural actions have been undertaken by DFA All other actions complete
Electrical	GH	Do SSE undertake all of the repairs when they have inspected each premises?	Not necessarily; other quotes are also obtained
Risk Assess	GH	When is the next staff H&S training taking place?	It is booked in for 5 th February for the Grounds Team Display screen and work station assessments were completed for office staff on 6 th January
H&S	JT	How often are the ladder inspections done?	At least annually but if there are any defects noted in between staff are instructed to report them
Play inspect	GH	The last reports in here are for 2023	They are just example print outs – there is a screen shot of the new reports on the server

Signed

Janice Treacher

Graham Hill



The Clerk to the Council
Alton Town Council
Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HD

8th January 2025

Dear Pat

Re: Alton Town Council
Internal Audit Year Ended 31 March 2025 – Interim Audit report

Executive summary

Following completion of our interim internal audit on 8th January 2025 we enclose our report for your kind attention and presentation to the council. The audit was conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines and testing was risk based. Whilst we have not tested all transactions, our samples have where appropriate covered the entire year to date.

Our report is presented in the same order as the assertions on the internal auditor report within the published Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The start of each section details the nature of the assertion to be verified. Testing requirements follow those detailed in the audit plan previously sent to the council, a copy of which is available on request. The report concludes with an opinion as to whether each assertion has been met or not at this point in the year. Some assertions are tested only at the final internal audit, and this is reflected where appropriate in the report. **Recommendations for action are shown in bold text and are summarised in the table at the end of the report.**

Our sample testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements that require reporting to the external auditor at this time, nor did we identify any significant weaknesses in the internal controls such that public money would be put at risk.

It is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures seriously and I am pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose and whilst my report may contain recommendations to change these are not indicative of any significant failings, but rather are pointers to improving upon an already well-ordered system. The systems in place are a model of good practice.

It is therefore our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Alton Town Council are well established and followed.

Regulation

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts. In addition to this, a smaller authority is required by Regulation 5(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to “undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.”

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance activity designed to improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. The purpose of internal audit is to review and report to the authority on whether its systems of financial and other internal controls over its activities and operating procedures are effective.

Internal audit's function is to test and report to the authority on whether its specific system of internal control is adequate and working satisfactorily. The internal audit reports should therefore be made available to all Members to support and inform them when they considering the authority's approval of the annual governance statement.

Independence and competence

Your audit was conducted by Mark Mulberry of Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd, who has over 30 years' experience in the financial sector with the last 14 years specialising in local government.

Your auditor is independent from the management of the financial controls and procedures of the council and has no conflicts of interest with the audit client, nor do they provide any management or financial assistance to the client.

Engagement Letter

An engagement letter was previously issued to the council covering the 2024/25 internal audit assignment. Copies of this document are available on request.

Planning and inherent risk assessment

The scope and plan of works including fee structure was issued to the council under separate cover. Copies of this document are available on request. In summary, our work will address each of the internal control objectives as stated on the Annual Internal Audit Report of the AGAR.

It is our opinion that the inherent risk of error or misstatement is low, and the controls of the council can be relied upon and as such substantive testing of individual transactions is not required. Testing to be carried out will be "walk through testing" on sample data to encompass the period of the council year under review.

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		TEST AT INTERIM	TEST AT INTERIM	TEST AT INTERIM	TEST AT FINAL	PAGE
A	BOOKS OF ACCOUNT	✓				3
B	FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS	✓		✓		3
C	RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE		✓			3
D	BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES		✓	✓	✓	4
E	INCOME		✓			4
F	PETTY CASH	✓	✓	✓	✓	4
G	PAYROLL		✓		✓	4
H	ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS			✓	✓	4
I	BANK AND CASH	✓	✓	✓	✓	5
J	YEAR END ACCOUNTS	✓			✓	6
K	LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW	✓				6
L	PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION	✓				6
M	EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS – INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS	✓			✓	6
N	PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS	✓				6
O	TRUSTEESHIP	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6
	ACHIEVEMENT OF CONTROL ASSERTIONS AT INTERIM AUDIT DATE					7
	INTERIM AUDIT POINTS CARRIED FORWARD					8

A. BOOKS OF ACCOUNT**Internal audit requirement**

Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.

Tested at first interim

B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS**Internal audit requirement**

This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

Check the publication and minuting of the prior year audited AGAR and notice of conclusion of audit.

The external auditors report for the 2023/24 financial year was approved by full council on the 9th of October minute ref 67. The 2023/24 AGAR is correctly published on the website, together with the notice of conclusion.

I have noted with some surprise the comment in the minutes regarding a councillor being unable to “*approve the External Auditors Report*” on the basis they could “*not be sure of their impartiality*”. Please note the external auditors are independently appointed by SAAA (Smaller Authorities’ Audit Appointments Ltd). SAAA is the sector-led limited company appointed by the then Department of Communities and Local Government as the ‘specified person’ to, procure and appoint external auditors to smaller authorities in England, perform the functions set out in the relevant legislation, and monitor delivery of the ongoing audit contracts.

I can assure council that the externally appointed auditor is independent from the decision making of the council, is not under any influence from the council, is not reliant on the individual fee from the council and is not influenced by the opinion it gives, i.e. its position as auditor is not under threat of termination by issuing a qualified report. On this basis the external auditor can be considered impartial in its decision making.

Further payments testing at third interim

I reviewed the cashbook for October, November and December and selected a sample of payments to prove the purchasing process was being followed.

- 10/10/24 Roofix & Construction, BACS024, £9,500 – roof repairs at Jubilee Bungalow – Minute ref 53 FC 04/09/24
- 10/10/24 Axtell Surfacing & Ground Works, BACS002 £1,776 – Pothole work at Anstey Park
- 29/10/24 MH Goals Limited BACS011, £3,946.80 – New football goals
- 4/11/24 Gristwood & Toms Bacs018 £6,129.52 – tree work
- 4/11/24 Blachere BACS004 £5,760 – Christmas lights install
- 23/12/24 Green Frontiers BACS011 £19,941.60 – emergency tree works – retrospective approve in Jan Full council for emergency works

For all of the above items, I have verified the entry to the physical invoice, the bank statement entry the bacs report and where applicable the purchase order and officer approval. There were no errors in the process.

C. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE**Internal audit requirement**

This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

Audit findings

Tested at second interim

D. BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES

Internal audit requirement

The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

Audit findings

I reviewed the income and expenditure report as at 31st December 2024 and noted that whilst some individual line items were over budget the cost centres to which they related were within budget, with one exception.

Cost Centre 320 Allotments is showing as over budget by £3,984. I understand council is given the income and expenditure report on a monthly basis so will have had sight of this; however, **I recommend that for the avoidance of doubt the minutes show that council have been made aware of this and the implications. In addition to this, the minute would show that council gives approval for continued spending, otherwise it could be argued that further spending would be against financial regulations.**

E. INCOME

Internal audit requirement

Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

Tested at second interim

F. PETTY CASH

Internal audit requirement

Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

The council continues to maintain a minimal petty cash float and records the entries in a separate cashbook as well as populating the Rialtos bookkeeping package. A review of the entries shows that the petty cash is used appropriately for incidental expenditure, and the amounts are inconsequential to the overall finances of the council.

I tested the petty cash at December (including two entries for January 2025) and agreed it back to the cashbook and the cash analysis. There were no errors.

I am of the opinion that petty cash is properly maintained and supported by underlying receipts.

G. PAYROLL

Internal audit requirement

Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

Audit findings

Tested at second interim

H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS

Internal audit requirement

Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

The council maintains a simple fixed asset register in Excel, the list agrees to the AGAR and contains basic details regarding the asset and its insurance value. In terms of compliance with internal audit this is correct and there are no errors.

We had a discussion regarding improving the register to make it more of a working document that would assist in ensuring council can make proper provision for replacing and repairing its fixed assets.

The council already has a subscription to the fixed asset module in the Rialtus bookkeeping package, which will enable the population of further information regarding each asset, namely;

- Unique identification number
- Asset description
- Asset serial number
- Asset Grouping - identifying the type of asset eg: vehicles, land street furniture etc
- Original cost
- Current value
- Insurance value
- Detail of who supplied the asset
- Where the asset is located
- The date the asset was acquired

The population of this information will make the council in full compliance with FR 13.1 and FR13.2 as copied below.

13.1. Assets, properties and estates The Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.

13.2 The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

Finally, I would recommend the production of a fixed asset capitalisation policy to dovetail with the financial regulations, to provide officers and councillors with clear guidance of what constitutes a fixed asset or not. Please see appendix for an example. This should be tailored to the councils own requirements.

I. BANK AND CASH

Internal audit requirement

Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.

Audit findings

Financial regulation 2.2 states 'At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Council Chairman or a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the full council.'

Bank reconciliations continue to be completed on a monthly basis, taken to council and approved. I reviewed the reconciliations for December, November and October and was able to confirm the balances to the bank statements and found no errors.

I noted that the reconciliation and bank statement have been signed in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

I verified the reconciliations have been taken to council by reviewing the October and Nover minutes and am able to confirm that these have been properly minuted.

I am of the opinion that the council continues to properly carry out bank reconciliations in accordance with financial regulations.

J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Tested at first interim

K. LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW

Tested at first interim

L: PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

Tested at first interim

M: EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS

Tested at first interim

N: PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Tested at first interim

O. TRUSTEESHIP

Internal audit requirement

Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

Audit findings

The council has no trusts.

Achievement of control assertions at interim audit date

Based on the tests conducted during the interim audit, our conclusions on the achievement of the internal control objectives are summarised in the table below. A further review and update of this opinion will be conducted at the final audit.

	INTERNAL CONTROL OBJECTIVE	YES	NO	NOT COVERED
A	Appropriate accounting records have been properly 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 assesses the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these	✓		
D	The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
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 properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for	✓		
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I	Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the 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 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. <i>(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")</i>			✓ N/A
L	The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation	✓		
M	The authority, during the previous year (2022-23) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations <i>(evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set)</i> .	✓		
N	The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR.	✓		
O	Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓ N/A

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Mark Mulberry

Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd

Interim Audit 2024/25 - Points Carried Forward

Audit Point	Audit Findings	Council comments
VAT	I have reviewed a sample of sales invoices drawn at random and a sample of invoices to charities. I remind council that it is important to obtain a certificate of exemption from the charity in order to be able to zero rate the sales invoice to them. In the absence of a valid certificate of exemption VAT must be charged on invoices to charities. The certificates should be retained in the Vat permanent folder. I have provided the Assistant Clerk with the links to the HMRC website for pro form exemption certificates.	Completed
Budget	Cost Centre 320 Allotments is showing as over budget by £3,984. I understand council is given the income and expenditure report on a monthly basis so will have had sight of this; however, I recommend that for the avoidance of doubt the minutes show that council have been made aware of this and the implications. In addition to this, the minute would show that council gives approval for continued spending, otherwise it could be argued that further spending would be against financial regulations.	
Fixed Assets	We had a discussion regarding improving the register to make it more of a working document that would assist in ensuring council can make proper provision for replacing and repairing its fixed assets. I would recommend the production of a fixed asset capitalisation policy to dovetail with the financial regulations, to provide officers and councillors with clear guidance of what constitutes a fixed asset or not. Please see appendix for an example. This should be tailored to the councils own requirements.	

Appendix

Fixed Asset Register

Local councils must maintain an asset register to ensure fixed assets are appropriately safeguarded and maintained. The Fixed Asset Register has four main purposes:

- It forms a basis for the completion of box 9 in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).
- It forms a basis for decisions on risk and insurance issues.
- It provides information on the age and potential lifespan of certain assets.
- It provides assurance of the continued existence of Council's property.

The Register is adopted by the Council at the end of each Financial Year. It is, however, a working document that will be maintained by the Finance Officer throughout the subsequent Financial Year.

Scope of the Asset Register

In order to ensure transparency and reasonableness, the following items are included in the Council's asset register, whether purchased, gifted or otherwise acquired, together with their holding location:

- Land and buildings held freehold or on long term lease in the name of the Council.
- Community assets.
- Vehicles, plant and machinery.
- Assets considered to be portable, attractive or of community significance.
- Other assets estimated or known to have a minimum purchase or resale value of £100. (Note – here you may want to consider expected life of the item, purchase value and use)
- Long term investments, shares and loans made by the Council.
- Assets held on trust – if any.

The values indicated in the asset register will inform the 'Total Fixed Assets' section of the AGAR (section 9).

The following items fall outside the definition for inclusion and are therefore excluded from the Council's asset register:

- Land and buildings held on short term lease or rented
- Land and buildings maintained or serviced, but not owned by the Council
- Assets rented by or loaned to the Council
- Stock items intended for resale
- Stationery and other consumable items
- Plants and trees
- Cash, short term investments and other current assets
- Intangible assets (e.g. trademarks, internet domain names, contingent assets, broadcast rights)
- 'Negative' assets (e.g. provisions, borrowings, creditors and contingent liabilities)

Once recorded on the asset register, the value of assets must not change from year to year until disposal. Commercial concepts of depreciation, impairment adjustments, and revaluation are not required or appropriate for the 'Fixed' method of asset valuation. For reporting purposes therefore, the original value of fixed assets will usually stay constant throughout their life until disposal (Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioner's Guide (England)).

All Revenue Expenditure (consumable) items worth less than £2,000 such as computers, printers, brush cutter, hand tools, chain saws etc. are to be included on the Council's inventory as an appendix to the Asset Register.

Procedure for Updating the Asset Register

The Finance Officer is required to update the Fixed Asset Register throughout the year, as and when assets are purchased or disposed of.

Statement of Account

Mrs Harris
Alton Town Council
Markets Street
Alton
GU34 1HD

5 January 2025

Account name: **ALTON TOWN COUNCIL-ALTON TOWN COUNCIL**
Account number: **LA3077669-001**
Statement period: **30/11/2024 to 31/12/2024**

Account summary

Total valuation as at 31 December 2024 **£331,108.02**
Total valuation as at last statement at 30 November 2024 **£329,690.72**

Holdings as at 31 December 2024

Fund name	Unit/share holdings	Net Asset Value price per unit/share (£)	Net Asset Value valuation (£)	Bid price per unit/share (£)	Bid Value valuation (£)
The Local Authorities Property Fund Inc GB0005216642	118,266.0000	2.799689	331,108.02	2.756294	325,975.87

Mid Value	Bid Value
£331,108.02	£325,975.87

Correspondence address: PO Box 12892, Dunmow, Essex CM6 9DL

clientservices@ccla.co.uk

Freephone 0800 022 3505

www.ccla.co.uk

Fund documentation is available at www.ccla.co.uk/investments, or may be requested from our Client Services team. Telephone calls are recorded.
CCLA Fund Managers Limited (registered in England and Wales, No. 8735639) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.
Registered address: One Angel Lane, London EC4R 3AB.

Before making any additional investments into CCLA funds, please read the most recent version of the relevant fund's key information document (KID). KIDs can help investors understand the nature, risks, costs, potential gains and potential losses of fund, and compare the fund with other products. The KIDs for our funds are available in the investments section of our website at, www.ccla.co.uk. Or, you can ask us to send you copies, free of charge, by emailing our Client Services team at clientservices@ccla.co.uk.

Please keep all documents (including this statement) safe as you may need to refer to the information in the future.

Please note due to a change in which the Fund's income distribution calculation is now completed, your income payments may display two values on this statement if a transaction took place during the period in question.

If you would like to discuss any of the information on your statement please contact Client Services.

A glossary of terms used in this communication is available on **www.ccla.co.uk/glossary**. If you would like the information in an alternative format or have any queries, please call us on **0800 022 3505** or email us at **clientservices@ccla.co.uk**.

Statement of Account

Mrs Harris
Alton Town Council
Markets Street
Alton
GU34 1HD

5 January 2025

Account name: **ALTON TOWN COUNCIL**
Account number: **PS3078535-001**
Statement period: **30/11/2024 to 31/12/2024**

Account summary

Total valuation as at 31 December 2024 **£1,817,896.65**
Total valuation as at last statement at 30 November 2024 **£1,810,748.81**

Holdings as at 31 December 2024

Fund name	Unit/share holdings	Price per unit/share	Value
The Public Sector Deposit Fund SC4 GB00B3LDFH01	1,817,896.6500	£1.00	£1,817,896.65
			Total value
			£1,817,896.65

Transactions for the period from 30 November 2024 to 31 December 2024

The Public Sector Deposit Fund SC4

Transaction date	Transaction type	Unit/shares	Price per unit/share	Amount (GBP)
03/12/2024	Income Reinvestment	7,147.8400	£1.0000	£7,147.84

Correspondence address: PO Box 12892, Dunmow, Essex CM6 9DL

clientservices@ccla.co.uk

Freephone 0800 022 3505

www.ccla.co.uk

Fund documentation is available at www.ccla.co.uk/investments, or may be requested from our Client Services team. Telephone calls are recorded.
CCLA Investment Management Limited (registered in England & Wales, No. 2183088) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.
Registered address: One Angel Lane, London EC4R 3AB.

The average Fund yield for this period was 4.75% p.a.

Income for the period is as follows:

Month	Date paid	Method	Amount (£)	Destination
Dec 2024	03/01/2025	Reinvestment	£7,334.28	PS3078535-001

Before making any additional investments into CCLA funds, please read the most recent version of the relevant fund's key information document (KID). KIDs can help investors understand the nature, risks, costs, potential gains and potential losses of fund, and compare the fund with other products. The KIDs for our funds are available in the investments section of our website at, www.ccla.co.uk. Or, you can ask us to send you copies, free of charge, by emailing our Client Services team at clientservices@ccla.co.uk.

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ALTON TOWN COUNCIL (ATC)

USE OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES POLICY (2025)

Since 2021 when this policy was first created to allow people and businesses to use the open spaces for a variety of reasons during the covid-19 pandemic, the number of businesses using Alton's open spaces has increased dramatically, the impact of which is costing ATC money to repair and maintain. In response, this policy has been updated in order to reduce the number of people permitted to attend a business activity without ATC charging for the use.

ATC wish to continue to support small businesses, and anyone providing easy access to health and fitness, and so charging will be at a reasonable level to not discourage this, but to prevent the cost of this business use to be shouldered by the Council. There must therefore be more structure to how this is booked and charged on ATC sites.

In addition to this, activities which in themselves are seen as "kind" to the environment will be promoted on our open spaces, using natural sources of energy and reducing pollution and littering.

Outdoor classes.

ATC will permit, free of charge across all open spaces (except those managed through the use of livestock i.e. Northanger) free-to-attend classes of either physical activity or mindfulness. These classes can have a maximum attendance 25 people (unless organised directly by ATC) and organisers must provide their contact details to ATC prior to undertaking any activity.

Commercial enterprises (defined as those classes whereby a charge is made by the organiser) are subject to permission from ATC and a hire fee being paid for each use. The organiser must contact ATC at info@alton.gov.uk to book the facilities. Charges will be applied as follows:

- 0 to 10 attendants £20
- 10 to 20 attendants £30
- 20 to 50 attendants £50
- 50+ attendants will not normally be permitted unless for a one-off event, in which case the Event Booking Application Form should be used and the Events Terms and Conditions adhered to

Organisers are responsible for their participants and should ensure they have adequate public liability insurance for their activity, a copy of which must be provided to ATC. This would normally be a minimum of £5 million.

No loud music will be permitted.

Organisers should ensure that they do not obstruct pathways or cause nuisance to other open space users.

When using Jubilee Fields and Anstey Park organisers must ensure they do not encroach onto marked areas or interfere with football, cricket, rugby or other organised sports taking place.

ATC accept no liability for any damages or injuries to any Organiser or Attendant, or to anything whatsoever. Anything left on the site by the Organiser or any Attendant may be removed by ATC and taken to the Town Hall or one of the ATC compounds; if it is not claimed within fourteen days it will be disposed of.

It is the responsibility of the organiser to assess the suitability and usability of the site on each occasion; any repairs which ATC need to make to restore surfaces damaged by their activities to



ALTON TOWN COUNCIL (ATC)

USE OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES POLICY (2025)

their former condition will be charged to the Organiser. ATC, whose decision is final, shall certify the amount of such damage.

BBQs and Camp Fires

ATC continues to ban the use of BBQs and camp fires across all sites. Disposable BBQs and naked flames are a fire hazard, charcoal barbeques add to global warming and the littering associated with BBQs and campfires remains a concern.

Drones

ATC will continue to consider approval of applications for the use of drones on a case-by-case basis. All applicants must demonstrate adherence to current Civil Aviation Authority Regulations in respect of legal and safe deployment of unmanned aircraft and will be required to produce their Flyer ID and Operator ID for any drone over 250g with or without a camera and all drones under 250g with a camera. For more information go to: <https://www.caa.co.uk/consumers/unmanned-aircraft-and-drones/>

Metal Detecting

ATC will continue to issue upon application, free of charge, annual metal detecting licences for the open spaces located at Windmill Hill, Flood Meadows and King's Pond.

Street Vendors

ATC will permit the use of their open spaces by street vendors where they can demonstrate that they are carbon neutral. This means, where vehicles or trailers are used for trading purposes, they must not use generators, gas stoves/ovens or keep their engines running (idling). Where vendors are permitted to trade, they will be charged a flat rate of £50 per week regardless of trading times, which will be limited to between the hours of 9am and 6pm each day. Vendors are requested to trade from hardstanding areas wherever possible to avoid damage to grass but must ensure they do not obstruct the use of parking bays or footways. All litter associated with their trade must be removed from site otherwise a charge of £50 will be made for every occasion when the ATC grounds team has to clean up afterwards. Vendors trade at their own risk, and must ensure they carry adequate insurance and all required health and safety and food hygiene certification for their business.

This policy will become mandatory from 1st April 2025 for all vendors including those at ATC hosted events and those operated by third parties, with a specific exemption for the Funfair and Circus at the Butts given the nature of their activities. Until such time as this section of the policy comes into effect, traders are requested to seek to minimise the use of generators and diesel engines wherever possible.

Sky Lanterns

ATC prohibits the use of Sky Lanterns from its open spaces due to the risk to farm animals and wildlife through ingesting the wires in the spent lantern frame, the risk to aircraft through distraction of pilots and the risk of fire from lanterns landing on property (e.g. thatched roofs), crops or areas of heath or bracken.



ALTON TOWN COUNCIL (ATC)

USE OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES POLICY (2025)

Public Spaces Protection Order.

ATC's public open spaces are subject to the District Council Public Spaces Protection Order and as such members of the public may be fined for not removing dog waste, allowing dogs to enter fenced play areas or not putting their dog on a lead when requested to by an enforcement officer.

ATC reserves the right to alter this policy at any time and/or to prohibit any individual, business or organisation from using the town's public open spaces if they violate any of the terms of this policy.

For a full list of the ATC's open spaces please go to
http://www.alton.gov.uk/Open_Spaces_6315.aspx

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL
CLIMATE CHANGE SUB COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, 22nd JANUARY 2025
Held in the Town Hall, Market Square**

Present: Councillor Barbara Tansey (Chair)
Councillor Don Hammond
Councillor Janice Treacher
Kevin Ray (Energy Alton)
John Hubbard (Energy Alton)
Chris Chappell (Active Travel Representative)
Rod Painell (ACAN)

Apologies: Pennie Brown (Strategy Manager for Sustainable Growth, EHDC)

In attendance: Wendy Simson (Assistant to Town Clerk)

61 Chairman's Announcements

The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting.

The Chair introduced Kevin Ray who has joined Energy Alton as Project Manager and will replace Stuart Mills on the Climate Change Committee. John Hubbard has also joined the meeting to support Kevin but has offered to attend on a regular basis, which the Chair accepted. The Chair informed the Committee that Janos Huszar has stepped down as members of the Committee. Thanks to him for the work done on the Committee was recorded.

The Committee agreed to recruit to fill the Business Representative role, and an advert is to be drafted for the Altonian.

The vacant role for a Youth Representative was discussed and the Committee agreed that the candidate did not need to be under 18 years old but needed to represent the youth. The Chair included the job description for the Young ACAN Administrator in the papers, the Committee agreed that Scott Gudrich who currently hold the position would meet the criteria for the Youth Representative role on the Committee.

The Chair informed the Committee that all Councillors had been approached but most were involved with other projects at this time and did not have the ability to take on another role. The Committee agree to leave the fourth Councillor role vacant at this time.

62 Apologies for absence

Pennie Brown sent her apologies along with a report on activity at EHDC.
Harriet Coombes has left EHDC.

63 Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded members of their obligation to disclose any pecuniary interest in items on the agenda.

John Hubbard and the Chair both declared that they are members of Cycle Alton and so would not be involved with the grant application made by them.

64 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2024 were agreed as a true record. Don Hammond proposed that they are approved, Rod Painell, seconded this, the Committee approved the minutes. The Assistant to the Clerk provided a set of minutes for signature.

65 Update from Dementia Friends

Karen Murrell joined the meeting to give an update on work at the Assembly Rooms. Dementia Friends moved to the Assembly Rooms from Edgar Hall on 2nd January 2024 and received a grant from ATC towards improvements to the building. They were also able to have a grant from EHDC of £305,000 reallocated from Edgar Hall to the Assembly Rooms.

An energy survey was completed in 2021 which identified a number of areas to improve the carbon footprint of the property including replacing the gas fired boilers a insulation. Dementia Friends have completed a number of projects to improve the venue, and secondary glazing is currently being install which will improve the insulation of the building. The gas boiler is not at end of life and so will not be replaced at this time, but solar panels are being investigated.

John Hubbard suggested that Energy Alton redo the survey including the Power Up tool which assesses the number of solar panels that could be used and the estimated energy generated. Energise South Downs may be able to offer a community funded proposal similar to Energique. Karen confirmed that the next faze of the plans for the Assembly Rooms will take 12 to 18 months.

66 Actions from the last meeting

Ref.	Action	Person responsible	Date due	Comments
Aim 1.2	Meeting with Clerk & Head Groundsman to discuss electric tools	Cllr Hammond	30.06.24	To be booked
Transport	Assistant to Town Clerk to update fuel consumption to 31 st Dec 24	Wendy	15.01.25	Completed
Jubilee Bungalows	Apply for grant for insulation	Wendy	11.12.24	Ongoing
Jubilee Bungalows	Allocation of funding for heat pumps at Jubilee Bungalows to be discussed at Budget Workshop	Wendy	11.12.24	To look at grants
Youth role	Speak to Young ACAN about promoting the role	Rod	31.10.24	Completed
Cllr role	Speak to all Councillors about role	Chair	22.01.25	Completed
Meeting attendance	Contact Janos Huszar about attendance	Chair	31.10.224	Completed
Action Plan	Include section 2 on January agenda	Wendy	22.01.25	Completed
Finnimore Pavilion	Contact Bradley Ransome to visit the site and report issues with heat pump	Wendy	31.10.24	ATC under contract with Rossair
Finnimore Pavilion	Assess possibility of solar panels for roof	Kevin – Energy Alton	31.12.24	In progress
16 Market Square	Replace insulation for door	Wendy	31.10.24	Ongoing
Hedging	Request for volunteers to help plant hedges in late November	Rod - ACAN	31.10.24	Completed
Grant paperwork	Amendments to be made and circulated to Committee for approval	Wendy	31.10.24	Completed
Water fountains	Identify units which are tamper proof to prevent vandalism	Rod	22.01.25	In progress
Kings Pond bungalows	Energy survey to be arranged with tenants	Wendy	31.10.24	Write to offer survey

67 Questions/Representation to the Committee

A grant application has been received from Cycle Alton for £200 to support Led Cycle Session in Alton to improve confidence to use a bicycle in the town instead of driving.

The funds are to be used to purchase Hi-Viz gilets, arm bands or gloves and to print marketing flyers. Initially 4 sessions are planned for Saturdays in March. There will be 6 people on each ride plus 2 leaders who will ride at the front and behind the group to keep them all safe.

Cllr Treacher proposed that the application be approved, Cllr Hammond seconded the motion. The application was approved by the Committee.

68 **Climate Change Action Plan**

All three section of the Action Plan are now on the Agenda, the Chair explained that Section One would remain the focus on the Committee as these were the areas in which the Committee could have greatest impact but it was important to review Section Two and Three.

Aim 1

ATC Transport & Carbon Emissions

Cllr Hammond agreed to arrange to meet with the Clerk and Head Groundsman to discuss electric tools.

The three vehicles used by the Grounds Team are all about 10-12 years old but are running well so these will not be changed until this is required. The Councillors will look at leasing as well as buying when the time comes to replace.

Retrofitting ATC buildings

Jubilee Bungalows – Assistant to Town Clerk to check if insulation was included in the roof work complete in 2024. The grants through Greater Southeast Net Zero Hub are currently not available but an application will be when the window next opens.

Solar Lighting – The Chair asked about the use of solar lighting and why it wasn't installed as part of the Jubilee project. The Assistant to the Clerk explained that the decision was made not to install flood lighting on the path as the light pollution would affect the homes in the area. The motion activated floodlights would highlight when someone was using the path which would potentially cause an issue.

Kings Pond Bungalows – The Assistant to the Clerk explained that the tenants were on a full repairing lease and so any actions identified by an energy survey would be at the tenants own cost but grants may be available. The Committee agreed that a letter be written to offer the energy survey and explain that this would be the case. Assistant to Clerk agreed to send the letter sent to residents who request an energy survey so this can be used as the basis for the communication.

Retrofitting properties – The Chair asked that each of the ATC properties be added to the action plan as a separate action.

Town Hall – the Chair, Cllr Hammond and Assistant to Town Clerk met with were Molly Gregory and Manali Kulkarni from the government funded Greater Southeast Net Zero Hub, along with Neil Appleton and John Ransford from the Infrastructure and Energy Team at Innovate Exchange UK.

Innovate Exchange UK seek to find innovative solutions to difficult requirements for reducing carbon emissions, so the aim of the meeting was to glean information needed to create a Challenge Statement for inviting bids for innovative retrofitting of Alton Town Hall bearing in mind it's grade II listed building status and setting. The building presents the challenge of being an 1871 listed building with solid walls, single glazing, some loft insulation, a 15 year old gas boiler, old style radiators and 2 electric heaters for hot water. The Conservation Officer at EHDC has already ruled out an air sourced heat pump being installed on the outside of the building and there appears insufficient indoor space for a pump room for a ground sourced heat pump. Innovation UK will invite bids from innovative companies to look at alternatives including the possibility of putting an air source heat pump in either of the 'loft' areas above the kitchen and toilets along with other options to reduce the carbon footprint of the building.

including underfloor heating in the chamber and offices upstairs, insulation between the ceiling of the retail units and the floor of the Town Hall, fans to drive the heat down towards the floor requiring electrical works and channelling of the walls. The on-site nature of the meeting allowed both the Hub and Innovate Exchange UK Teams to observe all the issues at first hand.

Rugby Club building – The Rugby Club were awarded £8,000 towards solar panels from the Community Climate Action Fund from EHDC. The Chair suggested that a representative be asked to attend the next Climate Change Meeting to give an update on the project.

Finnimore Pavilion – Kevin agreed to carry out an energy survey including the Power Up tool to assess the building for solar panels.

Energique – Energise South Downs sent the proposal to the owner of Energique on 1st November, however the use of the building has changed, and the energy consumption has decreased considerably so there is not requirement to pursue the project at this time. The Committee suggested that this is reviewed in 6 months to ascertain if the needs have changed.

Jubilee Pavilions – Cllr Hammond explained that the Deputy Clerk was working on designs, this project would start in the 2025/26 financial year.

Carbon Sequestration from planting trees and Hedges

Cllr Treacher updated the Committee on the tree planting work.

Hedging

Jubilee 420 (grounds team on 27th November 2024)

Whitedown 420 (grounds team on 11th December 2024)

Anstey Park 420 (to be planted by Eggars School on 28th January with Grounds Team support)

Kings Pond 120 (Friends of Kings Pond on 11th December 2024)

Trees

17 trees picked up 9th December 2024 to be planted:

- Jubilee - 6 (to form new small copse) planted before Christmas
- Anstey Park - 9 (to go along London Road railings) to be planted on 28th January.
- The Butts 1 (Hornbeam to replace the Horse Chestnut that is to be felled) – to be retained in compound until ready to plant 2025

40 feathers and an addition 6 standard trees to be collected on Tuesday 21st January for Flood Meadows, Will Hall Meadow & Windmill Hill.

The Assistant to the Clerk is working with HCC to access any additional trees when available.

Active Travel

A grant has been awarded from the Community Climate Action Fund for updating the Cycle Alton Map and for additional signage and cycle storage. A meeting is planned to look at the map and assess what is required and how to make best use of the document for a wide audience. The safest routes for cycling through the town particularly from the new estates needs to be reviewed along with positions for markers to direct cyclists. Cycle parking is also to be reviewed at the ATC properties and in the Town Centre.

Electric Car Use – at next meeting ask for an update on the survey complete by EHDC.

Aim 2

Promotion of waste reduction

ACAN are working with Surfers Against Sewage to look at reducing the volume of plastic waste which ultimately ends up in the sea. Part of Young ACAN Administrator Role will be promote waste reduction. The Eating for Tomorrow event is taking place on 25th January at Alton Maltings.

Alton in Bloom and Grow Up

Emily Messenger to be invited to next Climate Change Meeting to give an update on planting in the town and use of the polytunnel to reuse and grow plants.

Sustainability Hub

The Chair informed the Committee that prior to the pandemic funding was made available for the Community Centre to host a sustainable hub, this funding stopped during the pandemic and

the Town Council offered 16 Market Square as a venue in 2021. The facility was open for 2 years but wasn't well used due to the position. ACAN are investigating if there is an option to have a premises on the High Street.

Water Fountains

Rod has been looking for vandal proof models that can be used in the Public Gardens and at Jubilee Playing field. Currently there isn't a product available so the Chair asked that details of any models which may be suitable be brought to the next meeting.

69 Energy Alton Update

Energy Alton are currently applying to become a charity.

The Home Energy Support Team continue to complete home surveys, the new Power Up tool is being offered where applicable.

A new role as part of the Energy Redress Scheme is being created, this will be 3 days a week and will host events and contact residents about their needs. The role will be in conjunction with PeCAN and WeCAN.

Planning has just been requested for a new solar farm behind the lavender farm, it is 150-acre site and will generate 44 megawatts of energy. Energy Alton are hosting a consultation meeting at Selbourne Village Hall to allow the public to see plans and ask any questions.

70 District Council Update

Pennie provided the following update:

- 1) **Roadmap:** EHDC has completed its roadmap to net zero report.
 - EHDC set itself a target of reaching net-zero by 2035 across its operational activities (Scope 1, 2 and 3). It established its baseline in 2022/23 of 7423.12 tCO₂e. The report examined the potential "roadmap" of opportunities and options that EHDC could take to move towards and reach its net-zero target.
 - The Council's biggest areas of emissions sit outside of its direct control, within the two large external contracts of waste collection and leisure provision. Whilst some carbon savings can be made within these areas, reaching net-zero by 2035 within these contracts may not be possible.
 - The study shows that even with the delivery of all of the potential options the Council might only be able to reduce its carbon emissions by 70% by 2035. However, at the time of writing not all technological improvements and advances are fully realised, and some areas of reduction might increase and/or new opportunities may arise before 2035. Offsetting may also have to be considered.
- 2) **LCWIP:** The LCWIP currently remains on track to be considered for adoption at HCC's executive member decision day on the 6th March (and is therefore expected to be published online at the end of February on HCC's website). EHDC officers have worked closely with HCC to review the final post-consultation chapter and revised network, while prioritisation of the primary routes within the Plan has been completed.
- 3) **Air Quality** - EHDC are currently producing its Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) for DEFRA. It is anticipated an Air Quality Strategy will be developed in 2025.
- 4) **EV infrastructure** - High level feasibility has been carried out on EHDC car parks across the district. Proposals are being considered internally.
- 5) **Community Climate Action Fund (CCAF)** – 8 projects were successful in receiving a share of £70,000 which includes £43,000 of the Green Councillor Grant. This will be the last round of CCAF, where we have allocated £250,000 to community projects over the last two years: Press release: <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/news>
- 6) **Communications:** We continue to progress on our climate change communications plan with our Green Steps bulletins - residents can sign up to these monthly bulletins on this link: <https://www.easthants.gov.uk/climate/green-steps-bulletins>

71 Community Climate Action Fund

Over three rounds, EHDC has provided a total of £250,000 to support projects that help improve energy efficiency and educate local people about climate change.

15 applications were received for this round with a value of more than double the available budget (£158,000).

Grants allocated in this round are:

- £5,361 to Alton Climate Action Network for community outreach, guided walks and creative workshops to create a culture of action.
- £12,000 to Horndean Parish Council towards the Horndean Green Trail and Heritage Network which will create a network of footpaths and trails around the parish to encourage walking and cycling.
- £6,478 to Cycle Alton to improve their 'cycling in Alton' map and help fund a cycle shelter.
- £8,000 to Alton Rugby Club towards solar panels for their club house.
- £8,000 to Petersfield Community Association towards solar panels at Petersfield Community Centre.
- £8,000 to The Grain House Trust towards solar panels at Alton Maltings.
- £9,000 to Alton Men's Shed towards replacing single glazing on windows and doors of their headquarters.
- £12,500 to Petersfield Climate Action Network to support their continuing climate change community outreach programme.

Date of next meeting – Wednesday 23rd April 2025 at 9:30am to 11:30am

Ref.	Action	Person responsible	Date due
Invitees	Include John Hubbard on invite list	Wendy	23.04.25
Business Representative	Draft advert for Business Representative role for Altonian.	Wendy	31.01.25
Youth Representative	Include Scott Gudrich on the invite list for future meetings.	Wendy	23.04.25
ATC machinery	Meeting with Clerk & Head Groundsman to discuss electric tools	Cllr Hammond	23.04.25
Green Audit	Review carbon use against baseline	Cllr Hammond	23.04.25
Assembly Rooms	Redo Energy Survey including the Poer Up tool to look at solar opportunities.	Kevin & John	23.04.25
Jubilee Bungalows	Check if insulation has been fitted and if not apply for grant for insulation	Wendy	23.04.25
Jubilee Bungalows	Identify grants for heat pumps at Jubilee Bungalows	Wendy	23.04.25
Action Plan	Add action against all ATC properties	Wendy	23.04.25
Ruby Club	Invite representative to give an update on the solar panel project	Wendy	23.04.25
Finnimore Pavilion	Assess possibility of solar panels for roof	Kevin	23.04.25
16 Market Square	Replace insulation for door	Wendy	23.04.25
Energique	Offer a review of the Energise South Downs proposal to see if needs have changed.	Cllr Hammond	01.07.25

Water fountains	Identify units which are tamper proof to prevent vandalism	Rod	23.04.25
King's Pond bungalows	Draft letter to tenants to offer a energy survey	Wendy	23.04.25
Carbon Sequestration	Report to Committee any further tree and hedge planting opportunities	Cllr Treacher	23.04.25
Cycle parking	Review cycle parking at all ATC properties	Chair & Chris	23.04.25

Report to Alton Full Town Council Meeting: 1st Sept 2024 – 31st Dec 2024

We are pleased to provide the Council with an update on KA youth work for young people in the Alton area during the above-mentioned period. This term, we've introduced a few changes. Annemarie Woods and I (Mandy-May Martin) have transitioned from Petersfield, and we are now trialling a new structure with me as the Centre Manager for Alton. Dom continues to lead the Faith Group, while Jen has taken on the role of Young Carers Manager.

We are still awaiting the necessary planning permission to proceed with our heating installation, which remains a priority as the building continues to be very cold during the winter months. We would like to acknowledge and express our gratitude for the support we've received from the town council in addressing this matter.

In addition, our volunteer base across the Alton provision has grown significantly during this period. We're thrilled to welcome two new volunteers to the after-school team, which will enhance our ability to support the young people we serve.

Open Access Programme

Programme Manager: Annemarie Woods/Mandy May-Martin

After School – A drop-in session for young people aged 11-18, providing a safe space where they can feel a sense of belonging and have fun.

Number of sessions: 63

Number of different young people: 67

After School has remained a vital part of The King's Arms' work and is often the first point of contact with young people, this term, however, due to limited funding, we have only been able to open four days a week. We are actively exploring new funding opportunities to restore full service. We launched a lunch club at Eggars on Thursdays to encourage more young people to attend our after-school sessions. The response has been positive, and we have successfully welcomed several new students from Eggars into our after-school programme. Just before Christmas the Town Mayor came in for a visit and our young people had the chance to chat with her, she then joined them in making Christmas decorations.

Additional Needs Programme

Programme Manager: Mandy May-Martin

Supersonics – Funded by the HCC Short Breaks programme, Supersonics provides a safe and supportive environment for young people with additional needs. It allows them to socialise and have fun with their peers while also giving parents valuable respite.

Number of sessions: 13

Number of different persons: 8

This term, the young people at Supersonics have enjoyed cooking activities after expressing an interest in learning new skills in the kitchen. At Christmas, they were visited by Santa and each received a gift, which was greatly appreciated. Annemarie also joined the programme and shared her love of crafts with the group. They had fun making Christmas decorations, which were displayed on our tree at St. Lawrence's Church.

Mentoring Programmes

Programme Manager: Mandy May-Martin

Empower – We were thrilled to launch the Empower programme this term in partnership with Eggars School. The programme provides an alternative educational setting for Year 11 students who are struggling with high levels of anxiety or trauma, preventing them from fully engaging with school.

Students attend every day from 9:45 am to 12:45 pm during this time, they receive two lessons in core subjects—Maths, English, and Science—taught by their regular teachers who come to our centre. Following this, we run life skills sessions, equipping students with coping strategies to help them feel better prepared for the next stage of their lives. At Christmas we took them into a local retirement home where they chatted to residents and handed out greeting cards that they had made for them, this was to help them feel they had value in the community.

No of sessions: 71

No of different young people: 6

The group has made great progress with their attendance, thanks to the support from both us and their parents. We are fortunate to have four volunteers across five days, which is fantastic and enables us to offer mentoring to the students during their sessions. Earlier this term, they took their mock exams at our centre and performed better than expected. We were all incredibly proud of their achievements, and it provided a real boost to their confidence. While the group has faced its challenges, we are tackling them together and learning along the way.

Thrive – Thrive is a well-being-focused group where we focus on building self-esteem, developing emotional resilience, and fostering positive relationships. These goals are achieved through group activities that emphasise feeling safe, supported, and having fun together.

No of sessions: 11

No of different young people: 7

This term, we combined the two groups to attend weekly instead of fortnightly. This decision was made together with input from both us and the young people. The change has been very successful, and the groups have bonded, building new friendships. Some of the young people have since left, feeling confident and ready to move on to the next steps in their lives. Over Christmas, we took the group to a local coffee shop, where they confidently played games and ordered their own drinks. However, we still need to secure additional funding to ensure Thrive can continue, as it is currently only partially funded.

Aspire – Aspire supports young people who are at risk of exclusion. We work with them to address risky behaviours, promote positive decision-making, and encourage re-engagement in school.

No of sessions: 12

No of different young people: 6

This term, we've been working with a group of young people from Amery Hill School. They have engaged well and have supported each other as a group. We've covered important topics, including alcohol, county lines, and risky behaviours in the community. Over Christmas, we took the group out to lunch at a local café, where they had the opportunity to put into practice some of the positive behaviours we've been teaching them.

1-1 Mentoring – We are currently mentoring five young people at Amery Hill. Each student has the opportunity to meet with a mentor once a week, providing them with a safe space to discuss anything they need. This offers consistent support while they're at school.

East Hants Young Carers Programme

Programme Manager: Jen Hammersley

Young Carers – A programme for young carers aged 8-18 living in the East Hants area. A young carer is a person under 18 who provides regular care for a family member, friend, or neighbour who is unable to care for themselves. Young carers may provide emotional or practical support, or both.

Number of club/ exploration sessions: 15

Number of Activities and event sessions: 7

Number of different young people: 39

This term from September we began delivering the East Hants Young Carers programme in our Alton centre as well as Petersfield making it more accessible for the young people.

We've run challenges, had craft activities, hunted for treasure, traversed the centre with a ball/drainpipes and shared meals together during which we discussed our lives, hobbies and interests. We've looked at common statements about young carers and discussed whether they are true/false, worked as a team on challenges, and at Christmas played lots of games and had fun. At our activity sessions, we have run Quiz night, wicker lantern making, gingerbread baking, trampolining session (with Alpha Trampoline Club, funded by EHDC), Illuminated walk (family event) at Wyld's Christmas Tree Farm and 2 Christmas parties/meals

Journey Programme

Programme Manager: Dom Clarke

Unite – Our faith-based programme for young people who want to explore and deepen their faith.

Number of sessions: 35

Number of different young people: 37

This term our Unite group in Alton has seen substantial growth following an influx of young people from the local church who have recently moved to year 7. This is a highly motivated group with an average of 18 young people attending weekly. Each session includes a time to share the weeks highs and lows, to pray together, eat together and then to spend some time exploring a question of faith. This term we have been looking specifically at 'resilience' and how this is illustrated in scripture. The young people attending have all contributed well to discussions and have led prayers and shared their opinions well.

Our lunch club at Eggar's school also meets weekly and is well attended by a group who generally do not have contact with KA in any other context. We have also been able to start a new lunch group at Amery Hill School which has also been well supported by the same group who attend on a Monday evening, plus some others too. These quick sessions are a great opportunity for young people to connect together as a group of Christians and is a place also to invite friends and meet with their youth worker for support and prayer.

Youthlink

Programme Manager: Lisa Hillan

The impact of the National Lottery's Communities Fund grant for the "Youthlink" programme, which ended at the start of September 2024, continues to bear fruit, strengthening the programmes and influence of The King's Arms Youth Project in Alton as well as East Hampshire. Youthlink Manager Lisa Hillan remains on staff with KA, with a focus on policies and procedures. In a volunteer capacity, she continues as Chair of the East Hampshire Local Children's Partnership (LCP). Director of Children's Services for HCC, Stuart Ashley, has recently committed to the continuation of all eleven of Hampshire's LCPs, despite funding challenges. The

East Hants LCP, with over 100 partners involved with children and young people ages 0-19, is a dynamic diverse network of professionals and volunteers.

In December, Lisa agreed to serve as representative of all eleven LCPs on the newly forming Hampshire Food Alliance (HFA), led by HCC's Food Insecurity Partnership Officer. Through Youthlink, Lisa established good communication links with Sandy Marks at the Alton Community Cupboard and Sian Mills at the Alton Food Bank. The strategic vision and objectives of HFA are in development.

The Alton Community Exchange continues to develop, with over 200 contacts and between 20-35 people attending our in-person meetings every other month. Alton and EHDC councilors have attended some meetings, as have town council staff, whose input and participation are quite valuable. The next meeting is 24th March, 12.00-14.00 at the Alton Community Center; all welcome. The King's Arms staff provide updates about the young people we support at each meeting. The next step involve strengthening ties with Petersfield's Agencies Working Together, with Facilitator Steve Field, and Whitehill/Bordon's Community Catch Up, with facilitator Jane Linford.



Service Level Agreement Report for Full Council

End of Year One - Jan 2025

Activity Report - 1st July - 31st Dec 2024

From Dementia-friendly Alton

Outcome 1- Deliver an organised programme of drop-in sessions, mentoring and workshops, creating a centrally located hub for the Dementia organisation within Alton.

Following initial refurbishment of AAR with funds made available from Alton Town Council, the full Dementia-friendly Service was relocated on Friday 29th March. Since the last report at end June 2024, the dementia support service offered has nearly doubled and been able to offer a total of 626 different sessions across five days of the week (Jul-Dec 2024) (see Appendix 1 for updated weekly Plan from January 2025 & Appendix 2 for Bookings Data). The number of sessions offered continues to increase and vary in response to demand from the membership. (From Jan 2025 DFA sessions will be recorded / audited in terms of hours of service rather than number of sessions in order to simplify room booking process).

Greater visibility of DFA within the High street has significantly increased visitors to the charity and membership of the service / support provided.

The monthly information sharing events that had been introduced during the first 4-6 months of the tenancy, to showcase the service and share best practice with other service providers and dementia-related community groups, has now been significantly enhanced with: the licence to occupy being offered to A31 PCN so there is now a NHS presence in the building; the introduction of the Health Van visits on Fridays from August to October; and then the start of over the 'Health on the High Street' initiative in collaboration with A31 PCN on 6th November 2024. This new initiative is proving to be very significant in supporting access to health and wellbeing services and in raising the profile of the dementia support programme.

Outcome 2 - DFA will make the Assembly Rooms available for third party community, commercial and casual hirings, managing such bookings around their own use of the building, to ensure the building remains an accessible community facility.

Around the extensive use of the venue by DFA and the successful completion of the refurbishment, there has been an increase in use by others - from 330 non-DFA to 501 during second six months (an increase in over 50%). See data in Appendix Two. Positive feedback has been received from hirers / users in response to and Online survey sent to hirers / users during July - Dec Period (Appendix 3)

Outcome 3 - To maintain the current levels of occupancy at the Assembly Rooms, seeking to increase occupancy wherever possible.

The number of hirers has continued to increase over the last six months, and has now increased from 43% to 60% more from start of Jan 2024. Occupancy levels have also continued to increase throughout the venue, with bookings increasing in the Upper studio - now in use from 2-4 hours five days a week. With A31 PCN now having a Licence to Occupy for the Rear Rooms area, and current refurbishment with CIL funding fitting out the dressing room area as a 'flexible use area', full (day time) use of this new facility will start from April 2025.

Outcome 4 - To ensure hiring charges are maintained at a level which is consistent and commensurate with other locally available hiring venues to ensure the building remains available for community hirings as well as commercial.

The May 2024 review of the inherited hire rates led to: maintaining community rate at existing level; reducing commercial rates from £44.00 to £35.00 per hour (Main Hall) and £29.00 to £25.00 per hour (Upper and Lower Rooms), to ensure they are in line with nearby community facilities. This has continued to encourage enquiries for bookings, some of which now have to be declined as there is no availability, with a 'waiting list' starting. Additional community groups have been supported with fund raising events by being able to offer a further reduced community rate.

Outcome 5 - To use appropriately qualified staff and volunteers to provide booking and caretaking services for such hirings, with all staff and volunteers representing DFA demonstrating the values and standards of both the Council and DFA.

This continues to be achieved with great success and is noticed by visitors.

Outcome 6 - To maintain the reputation of the Assembly Rooms as a hiring facility, ensuring it is well maintained, clean and tidy.

The venue is considered by all users to be maintained and cleaned to a very high quality / standard now. Maintaining this standard has clear implications for 'running costs' and will be reviewed at the end of Year 2 to consider how best this valuable asset / reputation can be maintained / sustained. Newly assessed at Grade 5 for Food Hygiene in November 2024.

Outcome 7 - To market the Assembly Rooms as appropriate to attract hirers to the facility.

The electronic 'Point of Sale' Display Board installed in the foyer and the pavement display boards are updated regularly and draw visitors to the venue throughout the day. Installation of an additional electronic board is being considered to enhance advertising within

the venue. The website is updated with support from Alton Town Council and has enhanced with a 'Forthcoming Events Tab'. DFA are currently exploring the possibility of reviewing host for the Website to make it easier to update. Reminder of request made by DFA to Council staff (In July 2024) to ensure that a banner publicising events at Alton Assembly Rooms, is included when the current / new range of banners (hanging from street lights) is next reviewed / updated in 2025).

Increase in use of the venue for the benefit of the Town has included: regular Sunday film events; support for Alton Arts Festival, introduction of live music 'tribute nights'; comedy night coming soon and other new ventures such as Craft Fayre, return of Panto, Teddy Bear Fair and Dolls House day, not to mention the successful contribution of the Assembly Rooms to the Yuletide Fair.

Outcome 8 - To follow up any actions from Town Council meetings and report back on progress and to agree any changes to the service description required as a Regular constructive meetings / catch ups have been held between DFA and ATC to review / monitor the: ongoing refurbishment at the Assembly Rooms; relationships with current Licence to Occupy Holders and agree baseline / process for 'effective facilities management of the venue' for all stakeholders and to develop the much needed 'Guide / Handbook to the Venue'. Whilst this has been commenced, it is anticipated that this will be finalised following completion of the current CIL refurbishment.

Outcome 9 - DFA will ensure any relevant forms, agreements, applications and other documents required as part of the project are completed and held by DFA. This is being completed as part of Outcome 8 as work / updates still continue, and will form an integral part of the 'Guide to Facilities Management at AAR'.

Outcome 10 - Both parties will ensure the good reputation of the other is maintained and work towards excellent levels of relationship and communication. There remains clear evidence in email communication and notes of meetings held between both parties, that there is a collaborative working relationship, safeguarding the reputation of both parties whilst ensuring effective management of the venue. Alton Town Council have been able to hold many successful meetings at the venue in the last six months.



Appendix One - Current plan for dementia activities from January 2025



**Dementia
Friendly
Alton**

Charity Number - 1202095



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service



MEETING CENTRES UK
ALTON MEETING CENTRE

JANUARY 2025 - Programme for Health and Well-being provided by:

www.dementia-friendly-alton.org.uk

Call for more information 01420 551455

Or Email - dementia_friends@btinternet.com

Day Time	MON	TUES	WED Health Hub 1000 - 1400	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
1000 - 1100	Tea and chat every weekday – Pop in for a cuppa & catch up with other members and carers before the sessions start. Centre staff will be undertaking preparation and admin for the day					1030-1530 First Saturday of the month join us at Alice Holt for Flourish in the Forest (Mar-Dec) - See website for details	
1100 – 1300	Creative and Curious	1100-1200 Fit Steps with Glenda 1100 – 1300 Volunteer Interviews	Carer Support (Princess Royal Trust 3 rd Wed of the month) Weekly Health Checks Memory Lane (Crafts/Tai Chi/ Reflexology)	Health Walk @ 1000 1100-1145 Golden Grooves and/ or Bowls	1100-1230 Music Café/ Dementia Choir Legal Surgery (1 st Friday of the month)		
1300 – 1330 - Friendship Lunch (Mon/Wed/Thurs/Frid) – join with friends for Group Lunch session (Fish and Chips on Friday)							
1330 – 1530	1400-1530 Love to Move 1400-1600 Garden Gang @ Town Park	1430-1530 Yoga with Rebecca James Time for Volunteers (Induction / Drop-in / Training)	1300-1400 Get Active for Carers Starts 15/01 Indoor Games OR Garden Gang @Town Park / Station / Assembly Rooms 1500 – 1600 MONTHLY (Last Wed) Neuroactive chairbics 1630 – 1730 Yoga with Sue Tupper	Heritage and Culture Club (Games / Movies / Quiz / Guest speakers) Garden Gang @ Allotment NURTURE GROUP Young Onset Meeting 3rd Thurs 10-2 Alice Holt	1330-1530 Grand Tea Dance in the Ballroom		
Centre for Health and Well-being at Alton Assembly Rooms - Centrally located in Alton High Street. GU34 1BA							



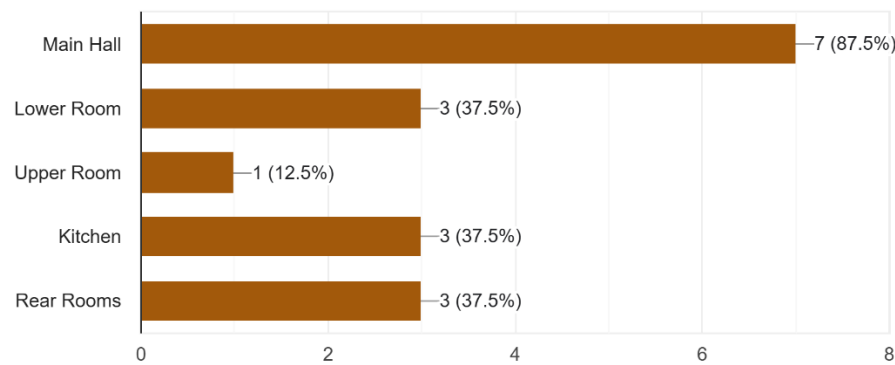
Appendix Two - Data taken from the Hallmaster Booking System

AS AT 27th Jan 2025

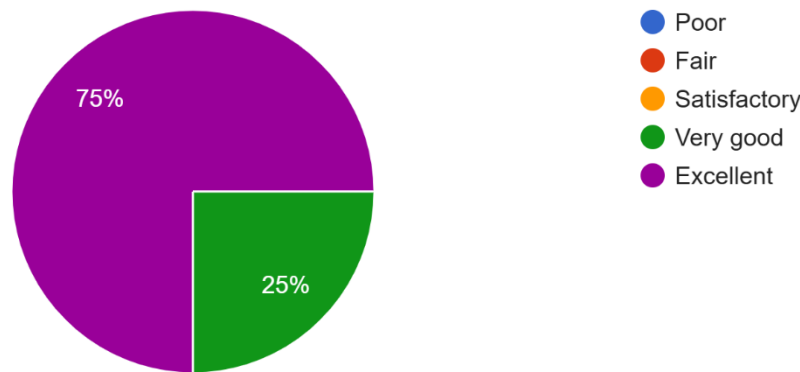
		No. of bookings	Column Labels		
			2024		2024 Total
Frequency	Nature of booking	Row Labels	Jan-Jun	Jul-Dec	
		Licencee/Tenant	536	941	1477
		Dementia-friendly Alton	308	626	934
		Art V Motion	117	146	263
		PCN Activity		136	136
		AODS	24	33	57
		Brazilian Jiu Jitsu	87		87
		Regular user	74	130	204
		Hampshire Dance	23	32	55
		Alton Hook and Yarn	11	28	39
		Home Instead Community Coffee Morning		20	20
		Alton Art Society	3	16	19
		U3A Scottish Dance	9	10	19
		Pilates, Phoebe Barrow		10	10
		Health on the High Street		6	6
		Parkinsons Support Group	3	4	7
		Alton Arts Festival	1	2	3
		Social Prescriber Clinic	10	2	12
		Yoga Class	7		7
		Regency Week Committee	7		7
		Other users	28	56	84
		Beth Wills		8	8
		Neighbourhood Plan event	1	6	7
		Alton Town Council events	1	6	7
		The Soul Shed		4	4
		Pumpkin Pantos		3	3
		Dance Sanctuary	5	3	8
		ACT Tanzania	1	2	3
		The Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society Ltd Court 5373		2	2
		Yoga		2	2
		Hampshire Ghost Club	1	2	3
		Lampports Leaseholder Association	1	2	3
		Alton Football Club		1	1
		Party - De La Pena, Alison		1	1
		Multiply Course		1	1
		Daniel Payne		1	1
		Party (Christening) - Fardell, Marie		1	1
		Digital Cyber Crime Event		1	1
		Moirs Baker		1	1
		Elsie Rose Product Sale		1	1
		Party - Ballard, Karen		1	1
		John Eggars Residents Association		1	1
		Party - Longland, George		1	1
		AMJ Int'l		1	1
		Ballroom Dance		1	1
		Wrestling		1	1
		Cardiac Rehab		1	1
		Meeting	1	1	2
		Hampshire and IOW ICB	1		1
		Soundbathing	1		1
		Party - Sleeman, Kerrie			
		Allen Gallery	1		1
		Board Game Group			
		LDN Wrestling	1		1
		Party - Poulter, Sophie			
		Legal Services Meeting	1		1
		JAR Activity			
		Manor Colts YFC	1		1
		Dementia Pathfinders	1		1
		Duke of Edinburgh			
		Party - Jones, Sophie			
		EIEF Services Easter Holiday session			
		Party - Padilla, Pauline	2		2
		Electors Meeting			
		Party - Sherwin, Guia	1		1
		Community First	1		1
		Altonu3a	1		1
		Music Video	1		1
		Rotherfield District Scouts			
		ArtLux / DFA collaboration			
		Teddy Bear Fair	1		1
		Energy Alton	1		1
		The Sassy Psychics Tour			
		Party - Connor, Michelle			
		Jon Hawkins			
		Friendship Cafe	1		1
		Churcher's College	1		1
		Mk25			
		Grand Total	638	1127	1765

Appendix Three - Results from 8 recent hirers who responded to online survey

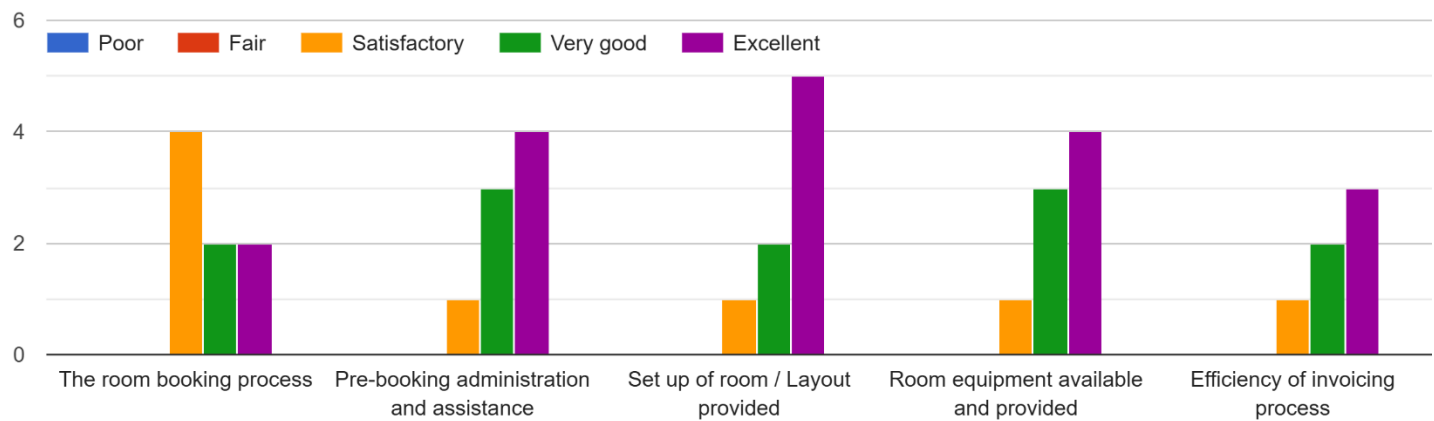
Rooms used as part of your booking
8 responses



Your overall first impression of the venue
8 responses

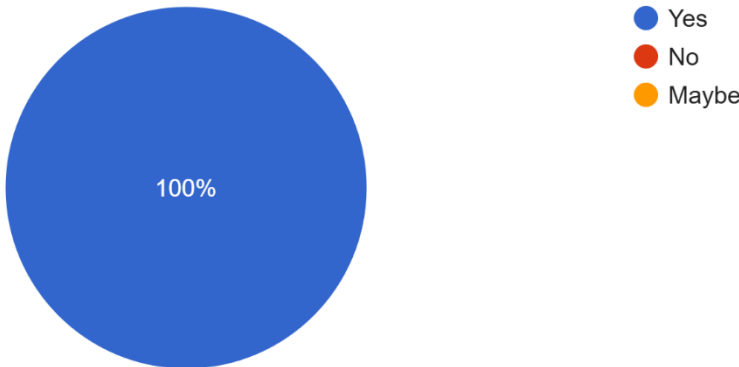


Booking the Venue

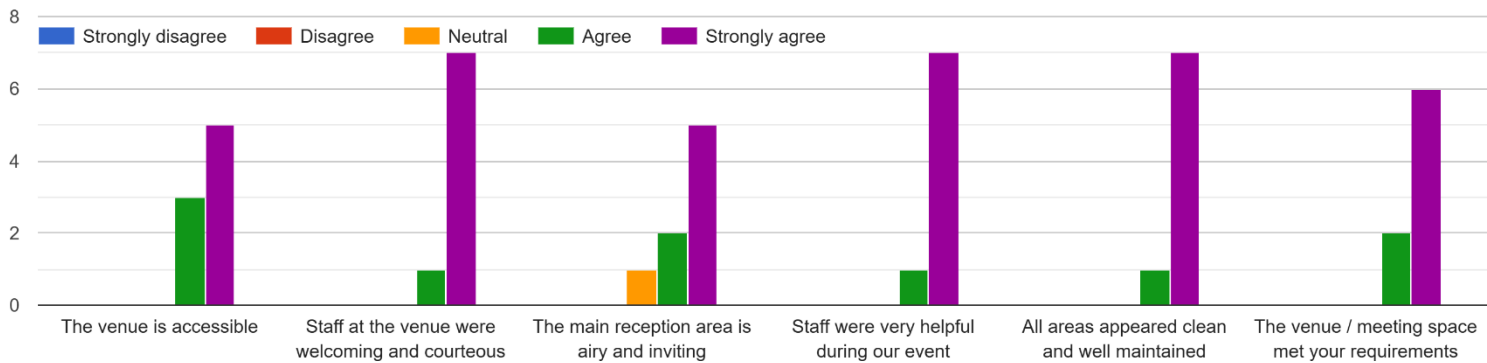


Would you recommend this venue to others?

8 responses



Customer experience within the venue



How could we make your visit even better next time? 8 responses

- Nothing springs to mind.
- More six foot tables. Otherwise it is a fantastic venue.
- They couldn't. It's a beautiful hall, very clean and staff are lovely and very helpful. It's a big hall with lovely high ceiling
- Everything was absolutely perfect, nothing more needs to be done. Karen's help throughout the whole process was invaluable and she is to be commended for that.
- N/A
- All great
- Reliable, good quality equipment for screening films (suitable also for other uses) in place to minimise set-up and be easily controllable, with as good sound quality as can be achieved in practice. Lighting levels for the main hall also easily controllable from within the main hall. Potentially more events staff/volunteers to share the load of hosting weekend events in relatively frequent intervals, as fits in with other bookings. A weatherproof way of updating promotional posters and dispensing leaflets in a prominent but acceptable position outside the Assembly Rooms - perhaps an electronic noticeboard which can be updated remotely.
- Very happy with our meeting place once a month which provides 'excellent' facilities backed up with helpful Staff