



MINUTES OF THE KING'S POND TASK & FINISH (OPERATIONAL) GROUP

TUESDAY, 25TH MARCH 2025

Present: Councillor Don Hammond (DH)
Councillor Peter Wadman (PW)
Pat Harris – Town Clerk (PH)
Natalie Beckell – Events & Marketing Lead Officer (NB)
Paul Ebbutt – Resident representative (PE)
Angela Owers – Resident representative (AO)
Eric Phillips – Resident representative (EP)
John Quincey – Resident representative (JQ)

1. **Welcome:** Councillor Don Hammond welcomed all those present to the inaugural meeting of the Kings Pond Task & Finish Group and thanked them for putting their names forward to assist the councillor with the Kings Pond project.
2. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Ryan Doran & Tim Pinchen.
3. **Introductions:** All those present introduced themselves and gave a brief resume of their skills and what they could add to the group. NB sought clarification from those in attendance that they were happy for their e-mail addressed to be circulated to all members of the T&F group. So confirmed.
4. **Terms of Reference:** The draft Terms of Reference were then discussed in detail and clarification sought:
 - (a) what funding would be required? Funding would need to be secured for which ever option was eventually decided upon to be pursued and at this preliminary stage irrespective of the eventual decision there were parallels of work that had to be undertaken regardless i.e. planning and ecological surveys, together with environment impact assessment.
 - (b) who would invite other consultees, contractors of stakeholders to these meetings? That would be a decision of the group to extend invitations to those that would add value or expertise to the process. Councillor Hammond advised that the Town Council were also involved in discussions with SE Water and their extraction project and the effect on the river if abstraction rates are amended.
 - (c) The group wished to see in the opening paragraph the objective of the group which should reflect the decisions taken by Council. This was agreed and the Terms of Reference so amended.
 - Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council held on 18th January 2023 (minute references 162.2 & 162.3 refer)
 - Conduct a technical and financial assessment of the dredging option
 - Conduct a technical and financial assessment of removing the outlet weir to enable an offline option to be considered further
 - Full Council meeting held on 8th January 2025 (minute references 98.1 refers)

- 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
- 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

Action: PH to include in the Terms of Reference the objectives of the group to go before Full Council on 9th April for adoption. No other changes required.

Action: PH to draft a timeline plan with critical path milestones including dates for grant funding applications to be submitted.

(d) The question of how this group would liaise with the Community & Stakeholder group was raised. Reference was sought from the Kings Pond Project Governance (January 2025) which states that primarily the Community & Stakeholder Focus Group is a disseminator and sharer of information on the Kings Pond Management project and will act as a conduit for community feedback to the T&F group. This would best be handled by the Town Clerk with a councillor and/or a resident representative attending their meeting and providing an update on the progress being made and where the group was.

Action: PH to send out an update to the Community & Stakeholder Focus Group advising that the first meeting would be delayed until such time as responses had been received to the Expression of Interest enquiries to be issued to organisations/contractors seeking clarification as to what they could offer/provide in terms of project management etc as scoped by DH.

(e) The group believed that it would be most useful to have a timeline critical path project plan to work to especially in determining timescales for submission of grant funding applications and milestones that need to be achieved including briefings sessions and feedback meetings. **Action: PH to draft a critical path project plan timeline for the group**

5. **Recap of recent activities and current project status:** Councillor Don Hammond provided a resume of the surveys already requested, reports received and confirmed that these were all accessible on the council's website: <https://www.alton.gov.uk/kings-pond-update/> (please scroll down to the bottom of the page for survey results).

- King's Pond archives
- Topographic survey of the whole site
- Hydrological survey – depth of silt and analysis of the silt
- Water sampling
- Instructed specialist company in feasibility of removal of the Weir
- Detailed survey work on the downstream chambers – topographical and section drawings - outfall - drainage of the pond

In clarification to questions raised:

- Weir is 1.5 mtrs drop
- 9400 cubic metres of silt removed 29 years ago
- Today, it would be 10,000 (estimated) which is contaminated and thus has restricted use

6. **Discussion of Next steps:** The group discussed its options:

- Appoint a project manager – noting going into specialist territory

- Do it ourselves
- Go out and appoint a single project manager or advise – someone who has done this before
- Go to contractors who offer a design & built but we would need to do comprehensive scope of what it is we are looking for
- Look at where this sort of project has been successfully done and seek references on how they did it and who did it for them (check with June Chatfield (Anton Lakes) and Graham Hill
- Look to specialists – River Wey is covered by Surrey Wildlife Trust they are a charitable organisation – consultants are South East Rivers Trust (We do not come under Hampshire as the River Wey disappears into Surrey)
- Look to approach more commercial organisation – with a view to approaching some and for them to respond with their solutions.
- For costings there is a need to keep quantity surveyor independent of any project manager/project engineer

Action: DH to (1) draft an enquiry letter to be issued to project managers, design & build contractors (2) circulate to group identified potential contractors

Action: PW to contact angling lakes (some of the big groups, especially those managing many lakes) to enquire as to whether they have had such work undertaken and seek references/referrals

The group acknowledged that there would be a delay before it meets again in order to receive information back from those contractors/organisations to the scope being issued by DH

7. Agree calendar of meetings, locations etc

The next meeting will be held on Friday, 25th April at 2.00 p.m. in the Town Hall.