



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

Thursday 22nd May 2025

Present: Councillor Don Hammond (DH)
Councillor Peter Wadman (PW)
Pat Harris – Town Clerk (PH)
Natalie Beckell – Events & Marketing Lead Officer (NB)
Catherine Ayres – Resident representative (CA)
Paul Ebbutt – Resident representative (PE)
Ryan Doran – Resident representative (RD)
Tim Pinchen – Residents representative (TP)
Eric Phillips – Resident representative (EP)
John Quincey – Resident representative (JQ)

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Angela Owens – Resident representative
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting:** The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 28th April were proposed by Councillor Don Hammond and seconded by Councillor Peter Wadman and were thus approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.
3. **Review of Actions:**

Action 2 – CLOSED

Produce critical timeline for work programme and funding streams – PH and DH will continue to work to produce the timeline for funding purposes. The Kings Pond Outline Programme was tabled for discussion during the meeting.

Action 3 – Investigate where similar projects have been undertaken – TP offered to take this forward as he has previous experience having been chair of the Watercress & Winterbournes Project to enhance the headwaters of the Rivers Test & Itchen. TP has emailed a contact who was involved in the project and received an out of office, he is due to follow up this week. However, he felt that this would not be a good analogy and the work undertaken by Test Valley Council for on former gravel pits as although the water flow was significant, the gradient was too shallow, and he did not believe there were any silt filtration issues.

ACTION: Need to find more comparisons. TP to talk to Dr June Chatfield once Alton town Council had provided contact details by way of telephone number.

Action 10 – CA to seek information from CALA on the silt traps throughout the development on their construction and circulate to the group.

CA was informed by CALA they use a Marshalls Hydrofeed Downstream Defender.
ACTION – CA to find out more details / specification about the Downstream Defender

CALA advised CA that it is their belief that HCC Highways are not managing the storms drains and they are constantly overflowing and drain covers are lifting during heavy rains (and there are 5 drains within the CALA development). There also seems to be a lot of rubbish being deposited in the river due to overflowing bin by Majestic Wines.

NB recommended everyone downloaded the HCC app if they have a smartphone called 'OurHants' to report problems or directly on their website <https://www.hants.gov.uk/>

Action 11 – DH wrote to West Thames Consents inviting a representative to attend the meeting on 22nd May to provide guidance on approvals and permitting required from the EA. Declined the meeting but are happy to talk to us once we are in a position with a final proposal. See Item 5.

Action 12: DH to enquire of Ecology Partnership for regular updates rather than waiting for the final report. DH received an update on 21/05/25 (detailed below) which had been circulated to the group in advance of the meeting.

“Just a quick summary email further to our chat yesterday, to cover the current progress of the ecology works at King's Pond.

We have completed the PEA and wintering bird works and reporting, which have now been provided to yourselves.

At the moment, we are working on the bat activity surveys, and breeding bird surveys. We have undertaken the first of three nighttime walkover surveys for bats, with constant activity of low numbers of common species. We have also deployed our first two months of static detectors as well, we have partially analysed this and again it appears to be generally common species. This is to be expected given the fact the site is a good area of 'green' habitat within an urban area.

Our contracted bird surveyor has undertaken the first two of three breeding bird surveys on site. He is processing the data himself for these, once I have more information on what he has found I can update you accordingly. From the informal chat I had with him a couple of weeks back, it looks like high levels of bird activity on site, but less than during the winter. Obviously, the main breeding feature on site is the heronry, which we would seek to remain on a separated island as it is now.

I have completed the water vole walkover, with no signs of activity. I also had our GCN eDNA results back on Friday evening, which came back negative. We suspected this would be the case, but it gives us an additional piece of evidence to put forward in planning for them being absent from site and not a constraint to planning here. I can put together some reports for these and get them over to you.

I think this covers everything at the moment - but if there are any questions from your meeting, please let me know and I will advise where possible”

4. **Matters Arising and any further updates:**

Matters arising and any further updates -

(i) Review of responses to the Express of Interest

- Contractors (8 issued and 3 received)
- Project Management (3 issued and 1 received)
- Specialist Organisations (1 issued and 1 received?)

This item was introduced by DH & PH who advised the following:

- Response had been somewhat disappointing, especially in the Project Management category.
- SERT although interested in project management and to talk with the group, perception may be an issue
- SERT approach is that they work in partnership with other third parties and are paid a management fee and the rest of the services which they are unable to cover off are tendered out
- Independence is key.
- Under the Contractor category – 3 responses received all of which are within the same ball park in terms of quote when you strip out those services which we already have tendered for

The group agreed that we are not yet in a position to accept the quotes submitted as the service(s) required and scope of work still are to be refined. DH to table at next meeting a scope of works against which more appropriate quotes can be obtained

5. **Consents & Permissions – West Thames Consents**

Unfortunately, unable to attend the meeting but grateful for the invite. Happy to provide pre-application guidance when we have a finalised proposal.

For context: There are three teams to approach within the Environment Agency. DH will follow up and advise at next meeting.

Partnership and Strategic Overview team focus on flood risk technical pre-application advice for flood risk activity permits in accordance with the Environment Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

Fisheries, Biodiversity Team will comment on the environmental aspects.
Assets performance team will comment on assets and access considerations.

DH & PH advised the group of the work currently being undertaken by Jacobs for SE Waters who are looking at abstraction from the acquiva at Lasham. Jacobs are doing survey works undertaking hydrological modelling and when ATC are looking at this as a requirement for the Kings Pond project, that it would seem appropriate to approach Jacobs as a lot of the required modelling will already have been undertaken as part of a separate South East Water project.

Depending on the final option, there will be a need for other permissions such as an impoundment licence and/or waste permit.

6. **Discussion of Next Steps**

DH said we need to evaluate the tender as much as we can based on the limited details we have received.

ACTION: DH to go back to Water Environment to ask if they can write a brief so that we can go back to the 3 companies who responded to the Expression of Interest as a “Contractor” to enable them to refine their tenders for Phase 1 of the project and also how they could transition from Phase 1 to Phase 3.

This approach was endorsed by PB and TP and agreed by the group that this was the appropriate action required.

7. **Financial:** The group noted that there had been no changes to the financial spreadsheet tabled at the last meeting and noted the monies which had already been expensed.

8. **Agree date and content of meeting with the Community Task & Finish Group:**
The first meeting of this group is to be arranged for Wednesday, 2nd July in the Town Hall at 6.00 p.m. when this group will be brought up to date with progress. At this meeting it will need to be determined the following and the agenda proposed to include:
- Purpose of the Group
 - Terms of Reference
 - Report on recent progress of the Technical (Operational) group
 - Where to find information to ensure information cascaded to the public is factual
 - Agree dates with the group until the end of the year proposing that they meet at least quarterly or more frequently as agreed with the group itself

The T&F group were concerned to learn that a local group are providing mis information about the project despite Alton Town Council having Resolved to explore both options and going back to the public once all of the required information has been obtained. A Press Release had been issued by the Town Council, but rumour continues to exist that ATC are planning on filling in the pond and building on it and that the public need to sign another petition.

TP suggested we register the pond as common land and therefore he believed that this will squash rumours that it can be built on?

There was considerable discussion about Run off from Ashdell Road and elsewhere. DH thought that this investigation would come under a separate (but connected) project. We will need to prove exactly how much run off is finding its way into the pond from the road network. TP argued that it was important to be done now. It was agreed that investigations would continue.

ACTION. DH to look at original surveys and ask EA/Thames Water & South East Water for drainage maps.

9. **Agree date for next meeting of the Task & Finish Technical Group:**
The next two meetings will be on Thursday 19th June and Thursday 31st July at 9.30 a.m. in the Town Hall.

ACTIONS FOR THE TASK & FINISH GROUP - **OPEN**

Meeting held on 25 th March 2025			
No.	Action	Who	Update
3	Investigate where similar projects have been undertaken i.e. Anton Lakes, Andover (speak with June Chatfield)	TP	TP will be taking this forward and will provide an update at the next meeting. 22/05/25 Awaiting a response from Test Valley Council with TP chasing up 23 rd May.
Meeting held on 28 th April 2025			
No.	Action	Who	Update
10	CA to seek information from CALA on the silt traps throughout the development on their construction and circulate to the group	CA	CA was informed by CALA they use a Marshalls Hydro Downstream Defender. 22/05/25 CA will investigate further to advise the group of the details of the silt traps.
11	DH will explore with the EA exactly which consents are required for Kings Pond.	DH	West Thames Consents declined the invitation to attend the meeting on 22 nd May. However, they are happy to provide pre-application guidance when we have a finalised proposal.
12	DH was asked to enquire of Ecology Partnership for regular updates rather than waiting for the final report which he agreed would be useful.	DH	Update received on 21/05/2025. Progressing with breeding birds and BAT surveys with further site visits scheduled. Great Crested Newts and water voles presence were both negative.
13	Evaluation of responses to Expressions of Interest Stage 1	DH/PH/PW	Preliminary responses to be evaluated and report prepared to be circulated to this group for final recommendation to Full Council
Meeting held on 22 nd May 2025			
14	Investigate where similar projects have been undertaken	TP	TP to speak to Dr June Chatfield (Alton Town Council to provide contact details by way of telephone number.)
15	Downstream Defender	CA	To find out more details / specification about the Hydro Downstream Defender
16	Share details HCC APP Our Hants App	NB	https://www.hants.gov.uk/
17	Approach to Water Environment	DH	To enquire whether they could write a scope and brief that could be issued to the 3 organisations under the “Contractor” category of the Expression of Interest responses received.
18	Approach Environment Agency/Thames Water/South East Water for drainage maps	DH	To seek further input from various agencies/bodies to see exactly where drainage output and input are within the site to determine whether an additional study is required

ACTIONS FOR THE TASK & FINISH GROUP – **CLOSED**

No.	Detail	Action	Update
Meeting held on 25th March 2025			
1	Send JQ minutes of the SE Water meeting (Brad Evans)	PH	Minutes sent 25/3/25. Action Closed
2	Produce critical timeline for work program and funding streams	PH	Kings Pond Outline Programme tabled at the meeting on 22 nd May to be amended to read “DRAFT” and then published
4	Draft letter for Expression of Interest and produce list of intended recipients	DH	Circulated brief to members of T&F by PH. Action Closed
5	Issue Expression of Interest letters to (a) project managers (b) potential design & build contractors)	PH	Issued 7/4/25 with responses requested by Friday 9 th May (due to bank holidays). Action Closed
6	Contact to be established with angling clubs who manage large lakes	PW	Regarding the action required to seek out any advice from local angling groups I had a very large enterprise in mind but have now discovered that they have sold off all the lakes to smaller clubs. My other choice was the local group known as Reading & District Angling Association (RDAA), a large club with responsibility for many ponds and lakes. I have had a recommendation back; Nick Haycock (nick_haycock@me.com). He is online as a Director at Haycock Environmental Consultants Ltd. Describes himself as a senior hydrologist and project manager specialising in lake, river and wetland creation with over 25 years’ experience. Action Closed.
7.	Contact to be established with Nick Haycock (plus recommendation from Tim Pinchen: Aquascience & Cain Bioengineering. Contact established & Expression of Interest issued	DH	Information sent to Nick Haycock, Aquascience & Cain Bioengineering.
8	Terms of Reference to be tabled at Full Council	PH/DH	Adopted by Full Council 9 th April 2025. Action Closed
9	JQ to approach Anthony Furnival to ask for a copy of the quote he obtained for a dredging + option for KP several years ago.	JQ	JQ advised that the Minutes should state that Anthony Furnival had “estimates” only. Therefore the action is closed and no quotes exist. Action, therefore, closed.
Meeting held on 28th April 2025			
No.	Action	Who	Update
9	JQ to approach Anthony Furnival to ask for a copy of the quote he	JQ	JQ advised that the Minutes should state that Anthony Furnival had “estimates” and that he declined to show ATC.

	obtained for a dredging + option for KP several years ago.		
10	CA to seek information from CALA on the silt traps throughout the development on their construction and circulate to the group	CA	CA was informed by CALA they use a Marshalls Hydro Downstream Defender.
11	DH will explore with the EA exactly which consents are required for Kings Pond.	DH	Happy to provide pre-application guidance when we have a finalised proposal.
12	DH was asked to enquire of Ecology Partnership for regular updates rather than waiting for the final report which he agreed would be useful.	DH	Update received on 21/05/2025 no signs of water voles and Great Chested Newt.
13	Evaluation of responses to Expressions of Interest Stage 1	DH/PH/PW	Preliminary responses to be evaluated and report prepared to be circulated to this group for final recommendation to Full Council