



KING'S POND COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP

WEDNESDAY 2ND JULY

6:00 PM

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL, TOWN HALL, MARKET SQUARE, ALTON, GU34 1HD

Minutes

Present: Councillor Don Hammond (DH)
Councillor Peter Wadman (PW)
Councillor Nick O'Brien (NOB)
Tom Horwood – Town Clerk
Hayley Carter – Deputy Town Clerk (HC)
Natalie Beckell – Events & Marketing Lead Officer (NB)
John Quincey – King's Pond T&F Group (JQ)
Terri Quincey – Resident (TQ)
James Willis – Resident (JW)
Jenny Griffiths – AVLAN (JG)
Cathy Wilson – Alton Natural History Society (CW)
Maggie Hage – Resident (MH)
Paul Coates – Herald Newspaper
David Simpkins – Alton Society
Tim Pinchen - King's Pond T&F Group (TP)
Dr June Chatfield – Resident (DRC)
Olivia Paynter - Resident (OP)
Catherine Ayres - Resident (CA)

1. Welcome & Introductions

Cllr Don Hammond welcomed all those present to the first meeting of the King's Pond Community & Stakeholder Focus Group and thanked them for putting their names forward to assist the council with the King's Pond project. Everyone introduced themselves

2. Apologies for Absence

Patrick Swaby
Paul Ebbutt

3. Project Structure

DH briefly went through the Project Governance structure and responsibilities of the 3 Groups.

FULL COUNCIL has Strategic Oversight, controls the finances and is the ultimate decision maker.

The TASK & FINISH GROUP (T&FG) prepares and implements action plans

The COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP (C&SFG) is a disseminator and sharer of information on the King's Pond Management Project and a conduit for community feedback to the Task & Finish Group.

Detail on Project Governance is on the ATC website
<https://www.alton.gov.uk/kings-pond-project/>

DH mentioned that he has invited Environment Agency and Water Companies along to the T&FG and C&SFG meetings, but so far they have declined. Perhaps they are waiting for the project to be further along to have more substantive plans to comment on.

4. Membership of the Focus Group

The Project Governance document describes

Membership: Town Council Officers, Town Councillors, individual residents, pond users and representatives of local organisations such as ACAN, Alton Society, Residents Associations, Community Groups, Watercress Line, Schools, Voluntary Groups. Surrey Wildlife Trust, etc. Potential for core group plus other members drawn in as required at specific stages of the project.

DH commented that the membership should expand beyond those present this evening to bring in more local organisations and residents' groups.

ACTION: ATC to send invitations to appropriate local organisations

CW asked if other individual members of the community would be welcome to join. DH agreed and said that we will be opening the meetings up for anyone to attend.

DH said the initial opportunity to take part had been widely publicised. No-one who had responded to the Invitation had been turned away. Some were invited to join the T&FG; everyone else invited to join the C&SFG. JW agreed that this group was open to anyone and the opportunity was well publicised.

ACTION: ATC to publicise meetings of the C&SFG

5. Purpose of the Focus Group

The Project Governance document describes this as:

- Primarily the group is a disseminator and sharer of information on the King's Pond Management Project and a conduit for community feedback to the Task & Finish Group.
- Meets every two months.
- Potential for members to assist with preparing funding bids and could also have a consultee and consulting role in specific areas.
- Potential for the group to undertake some research and to be involved in wider public engagement.
- Membership of the group may change according to the stage of the project.
- Review the group on six-monthly basis.

6. Election of Chair

DH said he thought it important that the Chair should be someone from the Community and not a Councillor or a member of the T&FG. He asked for a volunteer or nomination. No-one came forward on the night and the meeting moved on with DH chairing.

ACTION: All to consider an appropriate Chair before the next meeting.

7. Report from the Kings Pond Task & Finish Group

(Including questions and discussion on each section)

a. Brief History

b. Surveys: Topographical & Hydrological, Silt.

c. Phasing of the Project

d. Outline Programme

NOB asked how confident the T&FG were about this programme. DH responded that it is both 'Outline' and 'Draft'. There are areas such as the application period for approvals from the EA and the time needed to secure funding where timing was uncertain but, otherwise, this programme is achievable.

e. Ecology Surveys

CW expressed concern that, from reading the ecology reports, it was not clear that the consultants had referred to HBIC (Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre) [Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre \(HBIC\) | Environment | Hampshire County Council](#)

ACTION: DH to query

f. Project Managers, Consultants & Contractors

DH explained the two possible approaches to the design and costing of Stage One and explained the rationale for using the 'Early Contractor Involvement' route.

g. Next steps

TP outlined the current investigation of the 'Lasham Drain' to see if this water could be useful if brought into the pond or river at a different point and if this was possible.

(A copy of the presentation is attached and forms part of these minutes)

8. General Discussion

Funding

DH confirmed that ATC had put aside £250,000 for the KP project. HC clarified that £170,000 of this was from a CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) grant and £80,000 from council funds from the sale of 13 Market Square.

All acknowledged that more funding would be needed for either option. This probably means applying for grants.

OP suggested that crowd funding may be helpful. HC said that ATC would need to investigate this as there are legalities around fundraising by councils.

DH advised that, so far, ATC had authorised expenditure of £40,000. Of this, £34,000 has been committed to date.

Ecology

CW & TQ asked if there will be a report on what wildlife / plant species we could lose and what we could gain for both options.

DH responded that for public presentation we would need to set out the advantages and disadvantages of the options and the ecology was an important part of this. Ecology Partnership would be asked to make Ecological impact assessments.

CW queried ecology not being listed in the Stage One summary. DH responded that this had been written in to the invitation to tender but agreed that it should be given more weight.

CW & JG requested community input into the ecology specifications before the designer-contractor starts work on Stage One.

ACTION: DH/NB to redraft Stage One description

ACTION: DH to discuss preparation of an ecological brief for the design with our ecologist.

Comparable Projects

TP and JC reported on their efforts to identify projects that we could perhaps learn from. None identified to date, but this work continues. All agreed it would be good to visit other sites where similar work has been done.

Drainage

T&FG is aware of the importance of local drainage into the pond and the River Wey and intends to investigate this. SE Water have been working on a River Wey project for the last couple of years and we understand that their consultant, Jacobs, has investigated this drainage. We don't want to duplicate effort. We have been promised the information, but it has not yet been released.

Flood Risk

JG asked if there would be a Flood Risk Assessment on both options. DH said this was not currently included as they are very costly. The thinking was that this would be done in Stage Two. JG and others were very concerned about this. JG believes the public will want to know about this risk before they make a choice, flooding is a real concern for Altonians and that money sometimes needs to be spent to make the correct decisions. MH also made the point that it was worth spending money in the early stages to enable good decision making.

DH commented that this would be made easier by recent modelling undertaken by Jacobs for SE Water. The updated model is made available to the EA and to us.

ACTION: DH to add Flood Risk Assessment into the Stage One work.

Path

TQ said she thought that the condition of the path on the N side of the pond was dangerous and asked what ATC will do about it.

ACTION: HC meeting on site with TQ to inspect and discuss concerns

Early Contractor Involvement

CW commented that by putting all design work in the hands of a designer-contractor there was a risk that, compared with assembling a team of consultants, there would be a lack creative relationships. DH commented that none of the designer-contractors had all the necessary skill in house; they would probably have the core skills of management and engineering and bring in their own consultants to complete their team.

9. Next Meeting(s)

Tuesday 2nd September 6:00pm (Location TBC)

Tuesday 4th November 6:00pm (Location TBC)