



KING'S POND COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP

WEDNESDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER 2025

6:00 PM

ALTON ASSEMBLY ROOMS

MINUTES

Present:	C&SFG members	Councillor Don Hammond (DH) Councillor John Quincey –KPT&F Group (JQ) Terri Quincey – Resident (TQ) James Willis – Resident (JW) Patrick Swaby – Resident (PS) Jenny Griffiths – AVLAN (JG) Cathy Wilson – Alton Natural History Society (CW) Tim Pinchen - King's Pond T&F Group (TP) Paul Ebbutt – King's Pond T&F Group (PE) Dr June Chatfield – Resident (DRC) Catherine Ayres - Resident (CA)
	Officers	Tom Horwood – Town Clerk (TH) Hayley Carter – Deputy Town Clerk (HC)
	Charles Kaye – Amery Hill Residents Association (CK) Councillor Matthew Kellermann Councillor Roger Lamb Individual residents x 26	

1. Welcome & Introductions

Cllr Don Hammond welcomed all those present to the second meeting of the King's Pond Community & Stakeholder Focus Group and thanked them for attending. As so many individuals were present he suggested that only the actual appointed group introduce themselves, which they did. He then asked if anyone else was representing any other group in the town; Charles Kaye said he was there to represent AHRA, the Amery Hill Residents Association. Everyone else was there as individuals.

2. Apologies for Absence

None were noted, although an email was brought to HC's attention the morning after the meeting which had been sent to Samantha Brown giving apologies from Councillor Nick O'Brien.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July 2025 were proposed by CW and seconded by JG and were approved.

4. Project Structure

Due to the large number of attendees, DH briefly went through the Project Governance structure and responsibilities of the 3 Groups, the membership of the Focus Group and the Purpose of the Group

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/>

5. 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 reiterated that 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. Membership is not closed and more representatives would be welcome.

6. 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.

7. Election of Chair

DH asked for a volunteer or nomination. As no-one came forward TH agreed to chair the remainder of the meeting.

8. Report from the King's Pond Task & Finish Group

(Including questions and discussion on each section)

a. Phasing of the Project

Stage One – To public consultation and decision

- Pre-application consultation with planners and EA.
- Engineering and landscape design to sufficient detail for costing and for presentation to residents.
- Ecological strategies for both options to create/improve habitats and improve biodiversity to sufficient detail for costing and presentation to residents
- Flood Risk Assessment for the River & Pond option only
- Public consultation & selection of option.

Stage Two – Design, Approvals, Appointment of a contractor

Stage Three – Works on site

b. Outline Programme

The Stage One tender has been delayed by a month due to holidays holding up the presentations which were part of the tendering process. 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 still more or less achievable.

c. Ecology Surveys

CW had expressed concern at the previous meeting 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](#). It was confirmed that the consultants are using those sources and have referred to that information. CW explained to the meeting what the HBIC is.

DH reported that, following discussion at the last meeting, ecological considerations had been given more weighting in the Tender enquiry for Stage One. Ecology Partnership had prepared a draft ecological briefing document that would be given to the appointed design contractor. This

draft will be reviewed with Ecology Partnership by a panel of ecologists suggested by CW from her extensive contacts. Review on 24th September.

The surveys are ongoing. Surveys commissioned:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (to be updated following a summer visit)
- Wintering Birds
- Breeding Birds (survey complete, report awaited)
- Great Crested Newt (investigation completed, report awaited)
- Water Voles (investigation completed, report awaited)
- Bats (survey continues until October)
- Reptiles & Amphibians (current)

Identified Knowledge Gaps:

- Invertebrates - survey(s) required
- Algae – Dr June Chatfield suggests occasional sampling for analysis through the year
- Fish - An electro fishing survey would be required
- Water Oxygen levels - we have no records.
- Water temperatures - we have no records.
- Water Sampling and analysis - SE Water take monthly samples for analysis at the inflow and outflow of the pond and below the confluence with the Lasham Drain. They share this data

DRC confirmed that the condition of the pond is not good. She had prepared a brief report on recent sampling.

ACTION – Put the SE Water sampling results and Dr June Chatfield's reports on the website

d. Stage One Tender

Three tenders were received for the Stage One design works.

The final stage of evaluation of the tenders is a presentation and question session with each of the contractors. Although a diary date in August had been set for this, the holiday season meant that this proved impractical. A new date is to be agreed.

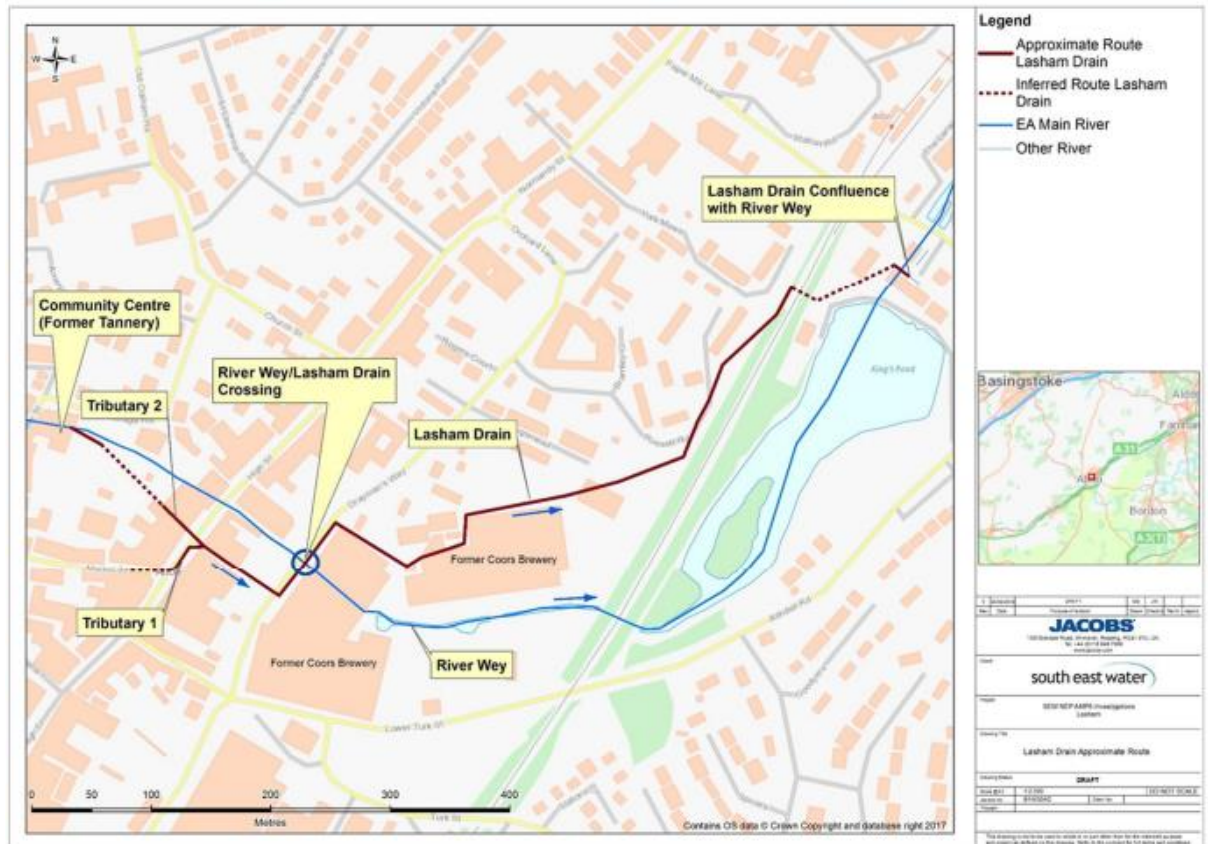
Consequently, a recommendation for appointment will not be made to Full Council on 3rd September as previously planned.

e. Lasham Drain and Associated Drainage

TP spoke about the huge amount of research he has been doing to find out where the Lasham Drain runs, and whether the water could somehow be used to improve the condition of the pond and/or river. The Lasham Drain, it is believed, picks up a number of natural springs, and you can see where it runs into the river at Waterside Court that it is a consistent flow of

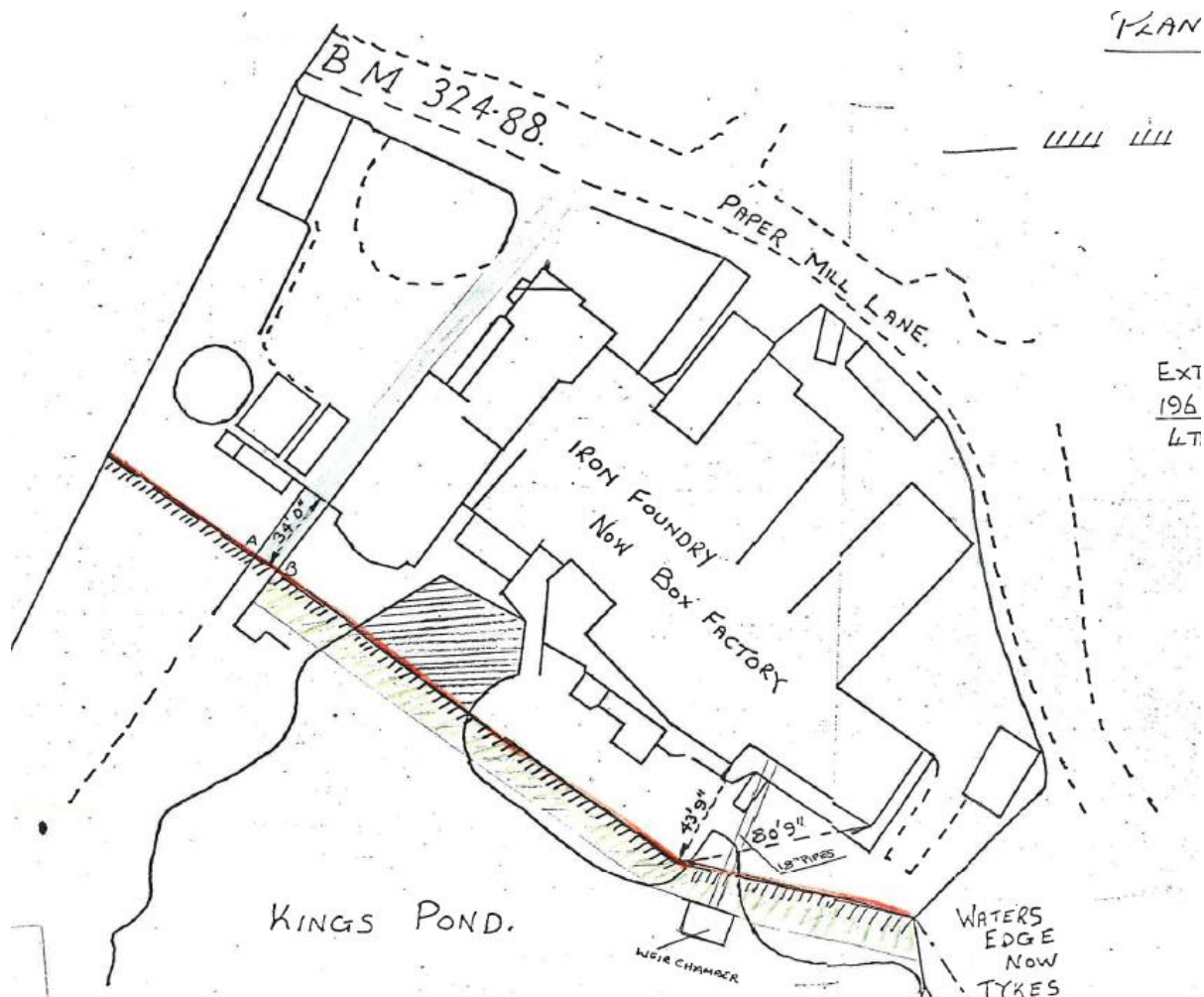
clear water, which does not fluctuate. The KPT&FG continue with investigations to see if the water from the Lasham Drain may be of use to improve the river or pond.

Figure 7.19: Lasham Drain Approximate Route



f. Recent History of the Dam and Weir

TP went on to explain the map below, saying the hatched area was where the water originally would have run into the paper mill for which the pond was built. Environment Agency regulations will be changing in the next three years and it will be important to know how the dam was constructed when Waterside Court was built in 1971. He appealed for information from anyone who remembers the construction taking place and who may have any photographs of the work taking place.



g. Upstream Surface Run-off

TP explained that there are around eight or more surface drains which run into the River Wey before King's Pond. The T&FG are trying to find out from Hampshire County Council whether their road drains also run into the pond. The chemicals identified in the pond suggest that at least some of them do.

CW recommended a sedimentologist who is a member of the Alton Natural History Society who may be willing to get involved.

ACTION – CW to invite the sedimentologist to get in touch with the T&F Group

SE Water are investigating upstream run-off to see what can be done to reduce the pollutants and sediment running into the stream. Much of this is in the power of other landowners and out of the power of ATC.

h. Next steps

- Complete the Stage One Tender Appraisal
- Complete Ecological Guidance Notes

- Complete Ecological Surveys
- Progress Stage One
- Continue investigation of upstream drainage
- Continue research into similar projects

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

DRC had been to look at a similar project in Letcombe Regis (Oxfordshire) and explained a little about it.

ACTION – Put the information about the Letcombe Regis (Oxfordshire) project on the website

9. General Discussion

Extensive discussion took place throughout the meeting and is not reported verbatim but main points are summarised here.

Flood Risk

Several residents raised questions / concerns about flood risk and flood modelling. There were questions about the role King's Pond may play in potential flooding in the town, whether removing the weir and reinstating the river could help to decrease potential flooding or increase the risk, and whether the flood risk assessment should be done before any money is spent on design.

DH explained that data cannot be input into the hydraulic models of the river, to give any projection of change in flood risk, until Stage One design has been done. It is therefore not yet known how any work on or changes to King's Pond would affect potential flooding in the town. The biggest flood risk in recent times had been last year when the weir was getting blocked by algae.

A resident suggested dredging the pond would increase the capacity so should surely help with flooding but members of the T&FG pointed out that that is only a short term remedy as once it is full it does not matter how much it is holding, the quantity flowing through the pond will be back to the same level as before dredging.

Another resident suggested making changes to the weir and sluice. DH confirmed that all of that is under investigation.

ACTION – upload the Jacobs 'report' on flood risk in the Tanhouse Lane / Town Centre area onto the website, or a link to it.

Conduct and Tone

TH acknowledged that there are strong views about the pond because people care strongly. He asked that everyone keep their tone respectful and focus on the fact that the site is a gem for Alton. He made it clear that, while he has heard about a 'hidden agenda' from some members of the public, he has seen no evidence of this since taking over the role of Town Clerk in June, or in any of the

meetings he has attended. He stated that councillors have had robust discussions on the subject and by no means all agree with each other, but they have considered carefully all the information put before them before making any resolutions for action.

A resident pointed out that the manner in which some people were speaking to each other and the animosity some people were showing would put people off coming to these meetings.

TH further confirmed that the decision on which option to take will be made after public consultation. The decision will be made in public, and councillors will be accountable to residents for their decision.

Comparable Projects

Work continues to identify appropriate sites for interested people to visit to see what has been done elsewhere and what may be achieved in Alton.

Public Benefit

Residents questioned why there had been no consideration of the public health and wellbeing benefits they get from the pond and asked whether a cost-benefit analysis could be done as part of Stage One.

TQ said that people come from far and wide to enjoy the pond and an assessment of public benefit would have to take more than just the people of Alton into account.

ACTION – Take this on board and find a way of building it in.

Path and Safety

TQ and HC had walked the circumference of the pond following the previous meeting and acknowledged that the work on the North side of the pond would be major engineering work and would be incorporated into the project. HC had not felt that there were many repairs which could be made prior to the project due to cost factor.

Residents felt that this was not the case and it was agreed to reinvestigate. TH offered to walk around the pond with anyone who wished to accompany him.

ACTION: Investigate possible patch repairs further. Full path works to remain part of the overall project.

Funding

Residents questioned the amount of money being spent on the project and where it had come from. Officers confirmed that £25,000 had come from the original amount put aside by the previous council for investigation works and DH confirmed that, as the need for thorough ecological surveys became clear a

further £15,000 and then £10,000 had also been approved by Council from the total of £250,000 set aside for work at King's Pond. HC informed the meeting that further funding would have to be found whichever option was chosen, but that the sources of funding available would differ depending on the option taken.

10. Next Meeting

Tuesday 4th November, 6:00pm, Alton Assembly Rooms