



MINUTES OF THE KING'S POND TASK & FINISH GROUP

Thursday 23rd October 2025

Present: Councillor Don Hammond - Chair (DH)
Councillor John Quincey (JQ)
Tom Horwood – Town Clerk (TH) from 10.45am
Hayley Carter - Deputy Town Clerk (HC)
Tim Pinchen - Resident representative (TP)
Cathy Ayres – Resident representative (CA)
Paul Ebbutt – Resident representative (PE)
Angie Owens - Resident representative (AO)
Eric Phillips – Residents representative (EP)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Natalie Beckell (NB) – Alton Town Council

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

AO queried why all the discussion was not in the minutes. HC replied that minutes were not verbatim accounts of everything said at the meeting but a factual account of any resulting actions. DH queried what she felt was missing and AO offered to email it over to the group prior to the next meeting.

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 25th September were proposed by JQ and TP seconded, with voting in favour. AO abstained.

2. Review of Actions

- The website was updated to include information on Flood Risk and modelling.
- The website was updated with recent reports.
- The date of the next Community & Stakeholder Group has been moved to 11th November.
- NB added the information on similar projects to the website.
- Further copies of the Pond Book had been purchased and were circulated amongst group members.
- October's monthly update was put on the website and circulated to the mailing list, which now stands at 153 people (increase from 70 since August). It has also been placed on the noticeboards.

- The programme is behind schedule and was updated during the meeting.
- A councillor briefing has been organised for Wednesday 29th October.
- All the information is now on the website assembled in folders.
- NB created a Dropbox account for the project rather than using Google Drive for everyone.
- A meeting with the Environment Agency has now been arranged for Monday 27th October via Teams. TH, DH, JQ, TP & HC will be in the meeting. Only certain subjects can be covered as it is the Assets team involved at this stage. A further meeting will need to be arranged in due course with the Rivers team.
- The draft briefing paper from Ecology Partnership had been received and shared with local naturalists and ecologists, who had commented and amendments made. The updated briefing paper has now been shared and is awaiting further comment. Members of the Task & Finish Group were encouraged to email their comments too so everything can be collated and fed back and further updates made. A key point which came out of the discussions was that the current paper focuses on the meandering stream option, which may not be an option due to the ownership of the pipework beyond the weir, and so the draft briefing paper needs to be updated further to also consider that option. At this stage it was suggested they do not remove the meandering stream option as the Waterside Court Management Committee have not been formally engaged with.
- The Tender for the overdue tree maintenance works has been prepared and is currently in the bids stage. Contractors have been invited to attend one of two site meetings and the deadline for submission of bids is 28th November with the intention of awarding the contract at the Full Council meeting on 10th December.

4. **Current Investigations**

Mostly covered under Review of Actions above. TH has taken legal advice, and the legal position is that Waterside Court owns all the pipework that goes through their land (i.e. that immediately beyond the weir). If the weir cannot be removed and this pipework changed then the drop in height from the entry to the site to the exit from the site will not be sufficient to have a meandering river as the flow would be too slow, therefore the only option will be the straight river. At some point ATC will need to state why it is changing from the meandering river to the straight river in the options it is investigating and therefore it will have to put into the public domain that the ownership of the pipework rests with Waterside Court. ATC has been attempting to engage with the Directors of the Management Company directly first.

ACTION – TH to continue to try engage with the Waterside Court Management Committee to ensure they are aware of the ownership of the pipework and ask whether they would be open to discussing any changes.

DH reported that two actions with South East Water are outstanding. Jacobs and South East Water did lots of investigation last year and we therefore need to put in an Environmental Information Request (EIR) for the Lasham Drain and Local Drainage.

ACTION: DH to submit EIR to South East Water

5. Tenders for Stage One Design

The project lost momentum when the tendering process stalled due to investigations into the ownership of the pipework and weir. The brief will now need to be rewritten and therefore TH advised that the tendering process would need to be redone. There was discussion about timescales and HC advised that the minimum tender period would be 35 days. *(Upon further investigation as long as all information is provided at the same time then the period may be reduced to 30 days.)*

DH stated that as the Council had resolved to investigate option 4b for the Pond and River option there would need to be a new resolution from Council to shift to option 3c.

ACTION: Update Councillors at the workshop on Wednesday 29th October and then place the item on the agenda for Full Council on 10th December.

6. Next Steps

TH reported that while the dredging option would probably be cheaper but there may be more funding available for the Pond & River option. There was discussion over how to get quotes for works for a CIL application in early 2026 as the Stage One works will not have been completed by then. The feeling was that the successful contractor for the Stage One work should be asked to provide a ball-park figure of what they thought the project would cost overall within the first two weeks of their contract period. The group was not sure this would be practical or possible. TH reported that he had approached EHDC about creating a second window for applications due to their need to distribute funds prior to LGR but this suggestion had not been accepted. HC suggested that an application could be made using costs of similar projects to back up the funding request.

ACTION: Research costs of similar projects to obtain a ballpark figure for the purposes of a CIL application.

Other grant sources suggested would be:

- Environment Agency
- National Lottery
- Veolia

ACTION: Research other grant funding available for the project.

DH tabled a draft revision of the Outline Programme. This was updated during the meeting.

ACTION: DH to update the document. NB to put the updated document on the website.

ACTION: HC to book the Assembly Rooms for the meeting on 10th December in anticipation of a large attendance. If the Assembly Rooms are not available then the Alton Maltings.

TP asked TH if he had received any information from EHDC Building Regs about how deep the piling goes at Waterside Court.

TP said he is going to sit down with JC and go through all the information she has.

ACTION: TH to write to the technical director at CALA to ask for any technical / bore hole information they have for the old brewery site.

ACTION: PE is giving an overview of the project to the Alton Society at their next meeting and HC will supply him with the slides from the Community Group meeting.

7. Collation & Storage of Information

No further updates were noted at this time.

8. Agree date for next Task & Finish Group Meeting

Thursday 20th November: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square 10:00am – 11:30am