

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 7.00PM AT THE ALTON ASSEMBLY ROOMS**

Present:	Councillor	Annette Eyre (Town Mayor)
		Matthew Bayliss
		Chris Botten
		Mark Boyce-Churn
		Don Hammond
		Graham Hill
		Matthew Kellermann
		Roger Lamb
		Nick O’Brien
		John Quincey
		Barbara Tansey
		Janice Treacher

In attendance: Tom Horwood - Town Clerk
Hayley Carter - Deputy Clerk
56 Members of the public and press (over the course of the meeting but some arrived late, and others left at different times throughout the evening).

123 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

124 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

No declarations of interest were received.

125 **Town Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

She went on to say:

“Many people care strongly about the issues on tonight’s agenda and about the future of King’s Pond. It is natural that this passion comes across in what we say and how we say it. But it is important that we speak and act with respect for other people at all times.

“While I have no intention of implementing any Standing Orders that would limit anyone from expressing their views, I must emphasize that anyone causing disruption will be asked to refrain from such behaviour. Should the disruption continue, I may be forced to use Standing Order 10 to exclude the individual from the

meeting, to suspend the meeting for 15 minutes, or even to adjourn the meeting to another day. Therefore, I kindly ask everyone to be mindful and considerate of all individuals present.

“Standing Orders state that a councillor should only speak once on each item or amendment, unless I allow otherwise. Given the complexity of some of tonight’s agenda items, I will allow councillors some leeway in coming back during debate within reason. In any case, I do insist that, before a councillor speaks, they please indicate to me and that they wait to be called by me before speaking.”

She then reminded the meeting about a few events coming up, including the Pancake Race in the Public Gardens on 17 February and ‘Dying Well Day’ in the Assembly Rooms on 28 February.

She finished by announcing that a by-election has been called for Eastbrooke ward and nominations are now open.

126 **Written Representations from the Public**

Correspondence was received in advance from the following people:

- Kay Rowan
- District Councillor Ginny Boxall
- Janice Montgomerie
- John Grace
- Louise Hilton
- Rob Smith
- Alison Reynolds
- Sarah Quick
- Paul Ebbutt
- Chris Chappell
- District Councillor Suzie Burns

All the correspondence was circulated to councillors before the meeting and printed copies were available in the meeting. It can be found in the supplementary papers on the website.

Councillor Quincey proposed that the correspondence and further comments be noted. This was seconded by Councillor O’Brien, and it was:

RESOLVED
to note the correspondence received.

Councillor Kellermann requested recorded votes throughout the meeting.

All councillors voted in favour.

127 **Questions and Statements by the Public**

The Mayor invited members of the public present to speak on any item on the agenda.

127.1 Anthony Furnival said he feels the results of the parish poll need to be considered in isolation. He said he had raised the point that people did not understand the jargon in the questions, such as 'Stage One' and that he is aware people will speak about the results of questions 5 and 6, but he said he was here to focus on the first four questions. He said it is clear that people are not happy with the way things are and there is an opportunity now for either continuity or change. He said only two of the councillors in the room had been through an election and therefore have a mandate.

He went on to say that he personally backs a change in direction. He believes there is an opportunity to build bridges and change the way people view the council. He said he had already heard people say that only 7% of the electorate turned out to vote but asked that the council look at it from another view; over 1000 people turned out on a very cold, wet evening to register their view. He asked again that the council view the poll results in isolation and give the people who are here today a true voice.

127.2 Jenny Griffiths said she hopes that the Council will reconfirm the decision they made at the meeting in December. She said she understands that whichever option is decided on for the pond will be expensive and so the Council have a responsibility to investigate properly and present all the facts to the public and the relevant authorities. She pointed out that Alton has several jewels in its crown; King's Pond of course, but also Flood Meadows and the River Wey. She said of course it costs money to investigate but it is essential to spend this relatively small amount of money to protect the large amount which must then be spent on the option taken.

127.3 Scott Goldie said he would like a sustainable option, whichever option is chosen. If dredging is done the habitats will be destroyed every thirty years. Methane emissions are also high while the silt is drying out. He then went on to say that he does not understand how the council can possibly make the process any more transparent than it already does and he thanked the Council for this.

127.4 Mark Rumsby said that he has no detailed understanding or strong opinion about the options being considered for the future of King's Pond and he has no axe to grind. But he does believe in democracy. The national government is given a remit to govern for up to 5 years. If we don't like what they do, we have an opportunity to change them at the next General Election.

In the same way, the council has been elected by people in each ward, to represent Altonians and serve the best interests of Alton, both in the short and long-term. That is what the council has been endeavouring to do by pursuing two options to fix the Kings Pond problem, prior to public consultation and a final decision.

He felt that a group of activists had tried to bypass the council's established consultation process over Kings Pond. He urged support for the elected council and its drive towards a solution for Kings Pond.

127.5 Brian Good said he has lived in Alton since the early 1990s and remembers the last time the pond was dredged, which was horrendous.

He has been part of Friends of Flood Meadows for many years, and currently leads the group. The River Wey is a Winterbourne, which means that the source of the river moves up and down depending on how wet it is. He said that the river picks up silt along the way and carries it all the way down to King's Pond before it drops it.

Councillor Kellermann said that there is silt at Tanhouse Lane. Dr Good said he had not seen any while walking the length of the river that morning.

127.6 Gary Clark said he was here to support the process. He is a civil engineer with thirty years' experience. He pointed out that the Stage One tender is to pay people to look at the two options and develop them. He said we do not know what the detail will be and so we pay people to tell us. It is an engineering matter, and we need to get the right answer.

He finished by saying he would like to thank the Council for its hard work and following the correct process.

127.7 Clive Hilton said that he had received a flyer from the King's Pond Preservation Society listing their aims. Other options could achieve those aims in a more cost-effective way. We should follow this process and allow the people of Alton to make an informed decision that will benefit future generations.

127.8 Graeme Parkin said that everyone in the room wants to save King's Pond and both options on the table do just that.

He said that before the recent parish poll he was aghast to see lots of misinformation on social media, including that the pond would be filled in and built on.

He thanked Councillor Hammond for the huge amount of work he has put in.

He asked Cllr Hammond to continue and build a legacy for future generations.

127.9 Ian Abbott said he lives close to the pond and visits most days. While individuals have different opinions of what the pond should look like, there is a lot of agreement.

Decisions should be made on proper investigations and facts.

He said that while not agreeing with decisions is part of democracy, personal attacks on councillors is not.

He went on to say that there are lots of different opinions but at the same time residents realise that dealing with run off and so on is costly. Decisions made properly and based on facts will be much more likely to be well-received.

- 127.10 Christopher Newton said he was in favour of an informed decision. He has attended past meetings. The whole process should be about weighing up the pros and cons and when the information is available then allowing people to make up their own mind on the options and have their say.
- 127.11 Jenny Abbott said she would quite like to keep King's Pond as it is but still wants to hear all the facts. She thanked all the councillors for their work on this, adding that there has been some really unpleasant things going on. She asked what will happen when we get to the end of Stage One. Councillor Kellermann replied saying the public will have their say by way of a non-binding consultation and the Council will make a decision. Councillor Hill said that a public consultation had always been the intention, with all facts disclosed, and it will ultimately be the Council's decision to make.
- 127.12 Dr June Chatfield read out a statement she had prepared:
- "1. Oiling of eggs of Canada Geese at King's Pond
- "I instigated the egg oiling after the last dredging of the pond around 1999 due to the rapid build-up of geese over the previous 10 years. In 1985 when the first King's Pond trail leaflet was issued there was no mention of Canada Geese.
- "I consulted beforehand with RSPCA Wildlife Department, the Wildfowl and Wetland Trust at Slimbridge, the London Lakes Project 1994 and obtained the DETR booklet 'Management of Canada Geese' that was backed by university research. As a qualified biologist (through two Russell Group universities) I was convinced that it was the most humane thing to do if done sensitively. I have operated at all the egg oiling sessions and when we had volunteers they were recruited from conservation and natural history organisations and also attended by the Environment Agency who advocated our method elsewhere.
- "The liquid paraffin (obtained from the vets) blocks up air holes in the shell cutting off the source of oxygen and halting development. A watching brief is kept on the birds in April and when the females start sitting, then is the time to oil. Early on embryonation is just at the blastula (ball of cells stage) with no nervous or blood systems or organ development involved.
- "This method continues to be advocated by Natural England, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in the UK and also overseas. I do not see any point in further investigation and suspension of egg control in 2026. The results would be to continue egg oiling.
- "In an ideal world we would not need to oil eggs of Canada Geese. It is needed as a consequence of humans interfering with wildlife by the importation of this non-native species that is very adaptable and not controlled here by Natural predators. A friend in Ontario, Canada lives behind a lake from a worked out gravel pit not open to the public and there the resident pair have a low success rate with the goslings due to predators like coyote, racoons and alligator

snapping turtles. However, in Indiana, USA the large subspecies maxima, as we have, are in unsustainable populations due to mown amenity grass and uncontrolled feeding from the general public. Their leaflet 'The truth about Canada Geese' available online advocates egg oiling and restriction of public feeding. Similar interpretation panels on lakes in the UK also emphasise the need to stop feeding. The behaviour of the birds is changed by public feeding, but the general public do not or will not recognise this connection as the driver behind overpopulation of geese.

"Egg oiling just reduces the rate of increase. At King's Pond there were 8 nests last year and each pair can lay 7-10 eggs so without oiling that would mean 66-80 goslings a year. Last year we oiled 50 eggs – not all clutches were complete so these contributed some goslings.

"Overpopulation of geese, large birds that live for 20 years, cause harm to the habitat as well as geese and other bird species. This needs to be recognised.

"2. Comment on silt

"This indeed is a complex issue involving third party land and incomplete knowledge of the drainage system that has developed ad hoc over time.

"As pointed out road and surface water drains from King's View and Crowley Drive as well as The Maltings are directed into the pond or river. As well as this there is unofficial surface runoff from the road surface and crown of road not captured by drains that makes its own way to the pond. In addition to this local area surface drainage is the breakup of the island with time so a single silt trap at the Ashdell Road bridge would only intercept a certain percentage and there is still the need for regular dredging. However, where possible some of the road drainage could be intercepted in partnership with HCC road drainage dept."

127.13 Charan Singh thanked the Council for making all of the reports and surveys gained so far accessible. Looking at those reports, he said, it looks like dredging will only knock the problem into the long grass. He said everyone has spoken about the pond, but we also need to look at the long-term sustainability of the River Wey for future generations.

He said that the reduction of wildfowl that may come with it is not necessarily a bad thing. He said that biodiversity is unclear at the moment but that is why they need to continue and do more research.

He added that while silt traps seem like a good idea, we need to consider the maintenance of them.

He wanted to commend the availability of the information provided by ATC.

Councillor Kellermann said that removing King's Pond, which is a giant silt trap, will not allow the silt to be washed away.

Mr Singh said he would like to hear the opinion of the professionals.

127.14 Richard Dale said that chalk streams are one of the rarest habitats. He said our River Wey is not working as it should and the EA have said that serious consideration should be given to taking the pond offline, and it clear that is their preferred option. He said the Council cannot afford to ignore this. Only proper, thorough investigations will ensure that public money is well-spent.

- 127.15 Sophie Dale said the Council should continue with Stage One. She said that presenting both options properly will ensure the best decision can be made, ensuring public money is well-spent. She said the common objective must be to best maintain the site for the benefit of the community, and that going forward with only conducting investigations into the dredging option could be more expensive as it will need dredging again. She noted that the parish poll did not allow modern ways of voting such as longer hours and postal votes had not been available
- 127.16 Melba Kellermann said that 602 people voted to stop all investigations. She said that just before the December meeting the Council had found out that they did not own the chamber downstream. She said that the previous council had rejected option 3c but it had been brought back. She said it isn't democracy to do this and ignore all those people who had come out and voted. She asked whether people had been through the CALA site and seen the ditch, adding "because that's what you're going to get – a ditch". Councillor Hammond asked Mrs Kellermann whether she had read or watched the council briefing that was given in 2024. She confirmed she had not.
- 127.17 Gareth Hurd said he would like to make his point for investigating both options. He said we normally make better decisions when we consider all the options and take time to consider it properly. He said that the Council have set out a good timetable, collecting all the information and then we have the opportunity to make the best decision if we fully explore both options.
- 127.18 Stan Meek asked that we bury the chalk stream. He said it is never going to be viable in this world, when it is only there 75% of the time, and the rest of the time you can walk along the side of Costa without getting your feet wet. He said this is our pond and he does not care what the EA says. It is for the benefit of the people who live here and it has a higher footfall than other areas of the town.
- 127.19 Chris Morley said thank you to the councillors and staff, then explained that he is here to support Councillor Quincey. He said he does not understand how pollution can not be part of the tender. He then asked how King's Pond became such a problem, saying it needs to be maintained. He said Anstey Park has to be maintained and that is not a problem, and the same with other areas of the town.
- 127.20 Nathan Cuff said that despite the dark, rainy conditions and the hurdles of in-person voting, 1,029 people turned out to make their voices heard. He said for many years those defending the pond have been dismissed as a vocal minority, but this showed they are in fact a vocal majority.

He said that 58.5% of voters want the Council to stop investigating alternatives and proceed with 'Dredge and Improve'. He said 80.75% of those who voted want to be consulted on further spending. He said that most critically, 51.5% of those voting say they do not trust the council to spend their money wisely, adding that this is no longer just about the pond, but is a crisis of local governance.

He went on to say that before we look forward we must address the attempts to influence this democratic process. He said that from the minutes of the King's Pond Task & Finish Group meeting on 15th December he could see the Town Clerk issued clear instructions that the Council must not try to influence how people vote and should try to avoid giving the appearance of doing so. He said that despite these warnings some councillors published a communication document in the Herald newspaper and on social media in an attempt to undermine the poll's validity.

He said that attempts on social media to frame it as a political-led initiative were factually incorrect and were a calculated attempt to suppress the vote. He said that to continue investigating a straighter river and an offline pond option is an insult to the electorate.

He went on to say that King's Pond has been at the heart of our community since the late 18th century and it is not our job to re-engineer it into a stream based on a temporary ecological trend.

He finished by asking the Council to listen to the voters who braved the rain and stop investigating rejected alternatives. He asked the Council to commit today to the 'Dredge and Improve' work to ensure that King's Pond remains as it has been for 20 years.

127.21 Steve Gough said he has lived in Alton for 50 years and is speaking as a taxpayer, a lover of King's Pond and an angler.

He said the parish poll was called in good faith to save taxpayers hundreds of thousands of pounds. He said that he does not know final costs but can tell that dredging will be much cheaper, adding that the Council does not own the land beyond the weir.

He said that almost 60% have said just dredge and improve.

He said as an angler chalk streams are very special and the chance of a chalk stream in the middle of Alton fed by a winterbourne river is ridiculous.

Councillor Hammond asked him to explain what spending he feels has been wasted.

Mr Gough replied that we have not seen any reports for our £50,000.

Councillor Hammond pointed out that all of the reports are published on the Town Council website.

The Mayor allowed a ten minute comfort break before the meeting progressed.

Councillor Eyre proposed that the questions and statements be noted. This was seconded by Councillor O'Brien.

Councillor Kellermann said that he wanted to debate some of the content now and proposed an amendment that:

“the Council note the correspondence with the proviso that all expenditure at King’s Pond, excluding essential maintenance, is halted immediately - pending the recommendations of a transparent, comprehensive and fully inclusive investigation (involving residents and ATC) as to how best to restore public confidence and move forward with the voters’ preferred option as expressed in the answer to question 6” This was seconded by Councillor Quincey, but the amendment was **not carried** with voting as follows:

In favour: Councillors Kellermann and Quincey

Against: Councillors Bayliss, Botten, Boyce-Churn, Eyre, Hammond, Hill, Lamb, O’Brien, Tansey and Treacher

Thus, on the proposal of Councillor Eyre, seconded by Councillor O’Brien, and it was:

RESOLVED

To note the questions and statements by the public.

All councillors voted in favour.

128 Parish Poll on King’s Pond

Councillor Botten proposed that the results of the parish meeting and parish poll be noted and that the cost of the parish poll (estimated at around £10,000) be met from General Reserves. This was seconded by Councillor O’Brien.

He then introduced the item and during the debate the following points were made:

- Interpretation of the results are subjective and there are some challenges to the way they are interpreted, including the fact that the responses to questions 5 and 6 are contradictory.
- Councillors have signed up to and must abide by the Nolan principles, which are: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- The people who set the questions for the poll have not signed up to that and are not held to the same high standards of behaviour, which is particularly evident in question 4, which is regrettable.
- Holders of public office should challenge bad behaviour.
- Holders of public office should have the best evidence available before making decisions; that is not yet available as the investigations are incomplete.
- Decisions we make are not just for now; they are for our children and our children’s children.
- Councillor Hammond has demonstrated outstanding leadership, resilience and courage in the way he has handled the project and in particular this whole situation.

- The poll drew out the people who are advocating for exploring both options who had previously been quieter, and it is now more evident than ever that there is a need to have the best possible evidence in place before making a decision.
- The question about finance is very leading.
- At the moment there is not enough information to make a decision; even many of the people who would prefer to see the pond maintained as it is believe it is too early to make a decision.
- The poll is a legal right and should be respected, but it is consultative.
- We need to bring rational process to this project and get the full information before considering it carefully and making a decision.
- One councillor said that everyone has thanked Councillor Hammond for doing such an excellent job.
- One councillor disagreed and said that he has never thanked Councillor Hammond for his work.

As it was now 9.25pm Councillor Eyre proposed that Standing Order 3x be suspended to allow the meeting to continue beyond two and a half hours. This was seconded by Councillor Quincey, and it was:

RESOLVED

That Standing Order 3x be suspended.

All councillors voted in favour.

Councillor Kellermann proposed an amendment that the following be added to the resolution

“And once it is known, the total (itemised) cost will be publicised via ATC’s social media, the Altonian and the Council website.”

Councillor Botten said that he was happy with the amendment. As his seconder, Councillor O’Brien, was in agreement that could be added, further debate was not required, and the amendment was changed to incorporate Councillor Kellermann’s suggestion.

Thus, on the proposal of Councillor Botten, seconded by Councillor O’Brien, it was

RESOLVED

- 1. To note the results of the Parish Meeting and the Parish Poll.**
- 2. To approve that the cost of the parish poll (estimated at around £10,000) be met from General Reserves, and once it is known, the total (itemised) cost will be publicised via ATC’s social media, the Altonian and the Council website.**

All councillors voted in favour.

129 King's Pond Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference and membership

129.1 Councillor Hammond proposed that the Council approve the revised Terms of Reference of the King's Pond Task and Finish Group.

This was seconded by Councillor Eyre.

Councillor Quincey proposed an amendment to:

"Replace the words (in section 3), 'possible mitigation strategies,' with, 'include mitigation thereof in the ITT for Stage One'".

This was seconded by Councillor Bayliss.

There followed debate on whether the silt and pollution were within the scope of the Town Council and whether it should be considered as part of the tender or as a separate project to be looked at in isolation. Everyone agreed that the silt and pollution need to be dealt with. The question was about how this should happen.

The amendment was **not carried** with voting as follows:

In favour: Councillors Eyre, Hill, Kellermann and Quincey

Against: Councillors Bayliss, Botten, Boyce-Churn, Hammond, Lamb, O'Brien, Tansey and Treacher

Councillor Kellermann proposed an amendment that 1d of the ToR read:

"To make recommendations to Council so that it (ATC) can perform a public consultation and oversee that consultation. Following this consultation the public will decide (by binding referendum) which of the two options to progress. At which point the Group ceases unless the Council provides a new mandate."

This was seconded by Councillor Bayliss.

Councillor Boyce-Churn asked the Town Clerk whether the Town Council has the power or authority to hold a binding referendum.

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council does not run elections or referendums. That is up to East Hampshire District Council (EHDC). He added that one of the questions that had been put to the parish poll was about making it binding and had been rejected as unlawful by the Returning Officer after taking legal advice. Alton Town Council does not have the lawful authority to use the Electoral Register to run any kind of election. A parish poll can be done again, and the Town Council can make a policy that they will stand by the result, but that is not legally binding, and they can resolve not to follow their policy at any time.

Councillor Bayliss said that he had seconded the amendment because he agreed that something like a referendum is warranted when the time comes but felt in light of the Town Clerk's advice that rather than this amendment the words "by Council" should simply be removed from 1d.

Councillor Kellermann, as proposer, agreed with this change to the amendment, but with voting as follows the amendment was **not carried**.

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Hammond, Kellermann and Quincey
Against: Councillors Botten, Eyre, Hill, O'Brien, Tansey and Treacher
Abstained: Councillors Boyce-Churn and Lamb

Councillor Kellermann proposed another amendment that under Roles and Responsibilities it should say

“That the T&F provides full and transparent reports to the elected body on any and all recommendations.”

There being no seconder the amendment was **not carried**.

Councillor Kellermann proposed another amendment that under Reporting it should read:

“The Task & Finish Group must ensure that it submits, to Full Council, its recommendations and approved minutes in a timely fashion. Also, it should deliver a written progress report in advance of each Full Council Meeting at which at least one of the councillor members of the Group must attend to answer questions.”

There being no seconder the amendment was **not carried**.

Thus, on the proposal of Councillor Hammond, seconded by Councillor Eyre, it was

RESOLVED

To approve the revised Terms of Reference of the King's Pond Task and Finish Group as tabled.

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Botten, Boyce-Churn, Eyre, Hammond, Hill, Lamb, O'Brien, Tansey and Treacher

Against: Councillors Kellermann and Quincey

129.2 Councillor O'Brien proposed that the Council confirm the following non-councillor appointments to the Task and Finish Group: Catherine Ayres, Ryan Doran, Paul Ebbutt, Eric Phillips, Angela Owens and Tim Pinchen.

This was seconded by Councillor Quincey.

Councillor Kellermann proposed that

“The Council defers appointment of the T&F group until the public is given a fresh opportunity to apply for membership. Application period and process to be determined by the Council and office.”

There being no seconder the amendment was **not carried**.

Thus, on the proposal of Councillor O'Brien, seconded by Councillor Quincey, it was

RESOLVED

To confirm the following non-councillor appointments to the Task and Finish Group: Catherine Ayres, Ryan Doran, Paul Ebbutt, Eric Phillips, Angela Owens and Tim Pinchen.

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Botten, Boyce-Churn, Eyre, Hammond, Hill, Lamb, O'Brien, Quincey, Tansey and Treacher
Against: Councillor Kellermann

129.3 Councillor Quincey proposed that the Council confirm the following councillor appointments to the Task and Finish Group: Cllr Chris Botten, Cllr Don Hammond and Cllr John Quincey.

This was seconded by Councillor O'Brien, and Councillor Botten said he would be honoured to join.

Councillor Kellermann proposed an amendment

"That the Council defers appointment of councillors to the T&F group until all councillors have had the opportunity to apply to join. Application period and process to be determined by the Council and office."

The Town Clerk advised that this agenda item was their opportunity to join, and any councillor was welcome to put their name forward for consideration.

Councillor Kellermann said he would propose that he be added as the fourth councillor so proposed an amendment that "he be added as a fourth councillor member of the Task & Finish Group"

This was seconded by Councillor Bayliss.

The amendment was **not carried** with voting as follows:

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Hill, Quincey and Kellermann
Against: Councillors Botten, Eyre, Hammond, O'Brien, Tansey and Treacher
Abstained: Councillors Boyce-Churn and Lamb

Thus, on the proposal of Councillor Quincey, seconded by Councillor O'Brien, it was

RESOLVED

To confirm the following councillor appointments to the Task and Finish Group: Cllr Chris Botten, Cllr Don Hammond and Cllr John Quincey.

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Botten, Boyce-Churn, Eyre, Hammond, Hill, Lamb, O'Brien, Quincey, Tansey and Treacher
Against: Councillor Kellermann

129.4 Councillor O'Brien proposed that the Council confirm Cllr Don Hammond as Chair of the Task and Finish Group.

This was seconded by Councillor Boyce-Churn.

Councillor Kellermann proposed an amendment that

"Councillor John Quincey be the Chair."

There being no seconder the amendment was **not carried**.

Thus, on the proposal of Councillor O'Brien, seconded by Councillor Boyce-Churn, it was:

RESOLVED

To confirm Cllr Don Hammond as Chair of the Task and Finish Group.

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Botten, Boyce-Churn, Eyre, Hammond, Lamb, O'Brien, Tansey and Treacher

Against: Councillors Hill and Kellermann

Abstained: Councillor Quincey

130 **Minutes of King's Pond Task & Finish Group Meeting, 15 December 2025**

Councillor Boyce-Churn was temporarily absent for this item.

Councillor Eyre proposed that the minutes of the King's Pond Task & Finish Group's 15 December 2025 meeting be noted. This was seconded by Councillor O'Brien, and it was:

RESOLVED

To note the minutes of the King's Pond Task & Finish Group 15 December 2025 meeting.

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Botten, Eyre, Hammond, Hill, Lamb, O'Brien, Quincey, Tansey and Treacher

Abstained: Councillor Kellermann (who wished it to be noted that he could not possibly know if the minutes were correct.)

131 **King's Pond Project Stage One Tender**

The Mayor proposed that this item be conducted in two parts. Firstly, at the request of Cllr Quincey and Cllr Hammond, she said it would be helpful to invite Mr Tim Pinchen to outline his research and findings in relation to pollution at King's Pond. Mr Pinchen is a member of the Task and Finish Group, and his research has proven invaluable. This would give councillors a chance to hear his findings and ask him questions in an open session. This part will not be the time for debate. When all councillors have had the chance to raise questions, she said she would ask Cllr Quincey to propose the motion to enable the debate among councillors.

To enable the item to be handled in this way, she proposed the following motion under Standing Orders 10a(xv) and 26a:

"To temporarily suspend the time limits and processes in Standing Orders 3f to 3j to enable a councillor question-and-answer session with Mr Tim Pinchen prior to the debate resuming".

This was seconded by Councillor Quincey, and it was

RESOLVED

To temporarily suspend Standing Orders 3f to 3j to enable a councillor question-and-answer session with Mr Tim Pinchen prior to the debate resuming.

All councillors voted in favour

Mr Pinchen advised that work with Thames Water and surface water outfalls was ongoing and likely to take some time. The Town Clerk had received a response from Hampshire County Council (HCC) with plans. These showed the gullies and drains operated by HCC and showed that most of the town roads drain into gullies. There were three areas of importance to investigate more fully; drainage indicated as possibly emptying into the River Wey at Odiham Road bridge, Tanhouse Lane and Drayman's Way.

Further details are still needed about the High Steet. This will probably take some time to sort out.

Mr Pinchen mentioned briefly other matters that need work including water sampling to determine the silt particle size as this would affect the design of any silt traps.

Mr Pinchen mentioned the next agenda item being a dispute between Councillor Hammond and Councillor Quincey and said he was supportive of both points of view. He pointed out that at present many of the background tasks were being conducted in parallel because of the timescale imposed by the CIL funding window. In a different situation the tasks could be more sequential but for the time being the Council had to accept that there might be some nugatory design work by an appointed consultant if material information was arriving late in the design and estimate process.

Councillors accepted that work on the silt reduction upstream was necessary, whatever and however that may be, and in the light of Mr Pinchen's answers to some of the questions, and the decision taken on his proposed amendment during Item 7 (approval of the Terms of Reference), Councillor Quincey withdrew his request for a debate on the dispute between himself and Councillor Hammond on whether this should be included in the Stage One tender.

132 King's Pond Egg Oiling

Councillor Kellermann proposed that the Council suspend egg oiling until the Council has reviewed and approved a new policy on managing the Canada goose population at King's Pond.

This was seconded by Councillor Quincey, but the motion failed with voting as follows:

In favour: Councillor Kellermann

Against: Councillors Bayliss, Botten, Eyre, Hill, Lamb, Tansey and Treacher

Abstained: Councillors Boyce-Churn, Hammond, O'Brien and Quincey

The meeting closed at 11.05pm.