



5 May 2026

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday 6 May 2026 at 7.00pm

AGENDA – SUPPLEMENT

5. WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC – *see appendix*
Recommendation: To note written representations from the public.
14. KING’S POND STAGE ONE INVITATION TO TENDER
To consider the responses to the King’s Pond Stage One Invitation to Tender.

The motion will be proposed by Cllr Hammond with a minor amendment:

“To approve the appointment of Company A to ~~commence~~ carry out Stage One of the King’s Pond project as set out in the invitation to tender to be funded from the King’s Pond earmarked reserve.”

ITEM 5. WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC – 1

From Jenny Griffiths, Alton and Villages Local Action for Nature:

[Agenda item 8: Chalk streams and rivers]

As a member of the core group of AVLAN, I support the request of Cllrs Botten and Hammond that Alton Town Council notes and endorses the motion passed by East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) on 27 November 2025, to recognise and protect the rights of chalk streams and rivers, as set out in the report on the Town Council agenda.

The River Wey has only two sources: we are fortunate that one of them is in Alton. The Wey runs from Alton all the way to the Thames at Weybridge. The North Wey between Alton and Farnham is the only part of the River Wey that is a chalk stream. Chalk streams are important ecologically – there are only about 200 in the world, and 85% of them are in the southern half of England. They are one of Earth's rarest habitats. The rights and valuable guidance contained in the motion passed by EHDC are consistent with Alton Town Council's climate change strategy.

[Agenda item 14: King's Pond Stage One Tender]

AVLAN strongly supports the Town Council making a decision to award the contract for Stage One, the detailed design work for two options for future management of King's Pond – "Dredging Plus" and "Pond and River".

Alton Town Council has, in AVLAN's view, followed a well-managed process:

- well-received public briefing sessions in 2024
- the setting up of two groups to involve a wide range of individuals and community groups in the town
- the consideration of information, advice and guidance from a wide range of sources
- and, now, the commissioning of the necessary work on the detail of the two options, to produce information for public consultation later this year.

This expenditure on the contract for design work is essential to ensure that much larger sums of public and taxpayers' money are spent as effectively as possible in due course – whichever option for the future of King's Pond is decided upon following public consultation.

ITEM 5. WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC – 2

From Melba Kellermann:

In the minutes of the meeting on February 4th, Cllr Botten is recorded as saying that: “councillors have signed up to and must abide by the Nolan principles, which are: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership”. In the spirit of Mr Botten’s position, I feel compelled to ask why Barbara Tansey, Don Hammond, Nick O'Brien, former councillor Janice Treacher wilfully misled the public in their statement with claims that the parish poll could cost as much as £30,000?

In the days leading up to the poll Barbara Tansey spent time on Facebook spreading misinformation. At the time she circulated this information she would have reasonably known that she and her fellow councillors' claim was fabricated as the costs had yet to be calculated by East Hants District Council. The circulation of grossly exaggerated claims served only to undermine the integrity of the parish poll and to defame those who called or supported it. The motivation in my opinion was disingenuous, I personally cannot believe that this was an error when the clerk had sought and publicised the estimated costs.

The omission of context in the assertion that money was wasted further served to mislead the public. The actual cost of £10,816.97 is both far less than what had been spent on the Kings Pond project to date and a fraction of what the stage one tenders will likely cost the council in the coming months. The cost of the poll was negligible and gave the public an opportunity to express their concerns where they’ve been ignored previously. It’s no surprise they continue to be ignored by the majority of this council. The public made themselves clear with the results of:

Q1: Is Council listening to residents regarding King's Pond?

No: 544 (52.86%)

Q2: Do you trust the council to spend money wisely

No: 530 (51.5%)

Q3: Should residents be consulted on further spending?

Yes: 831 (82.3%)

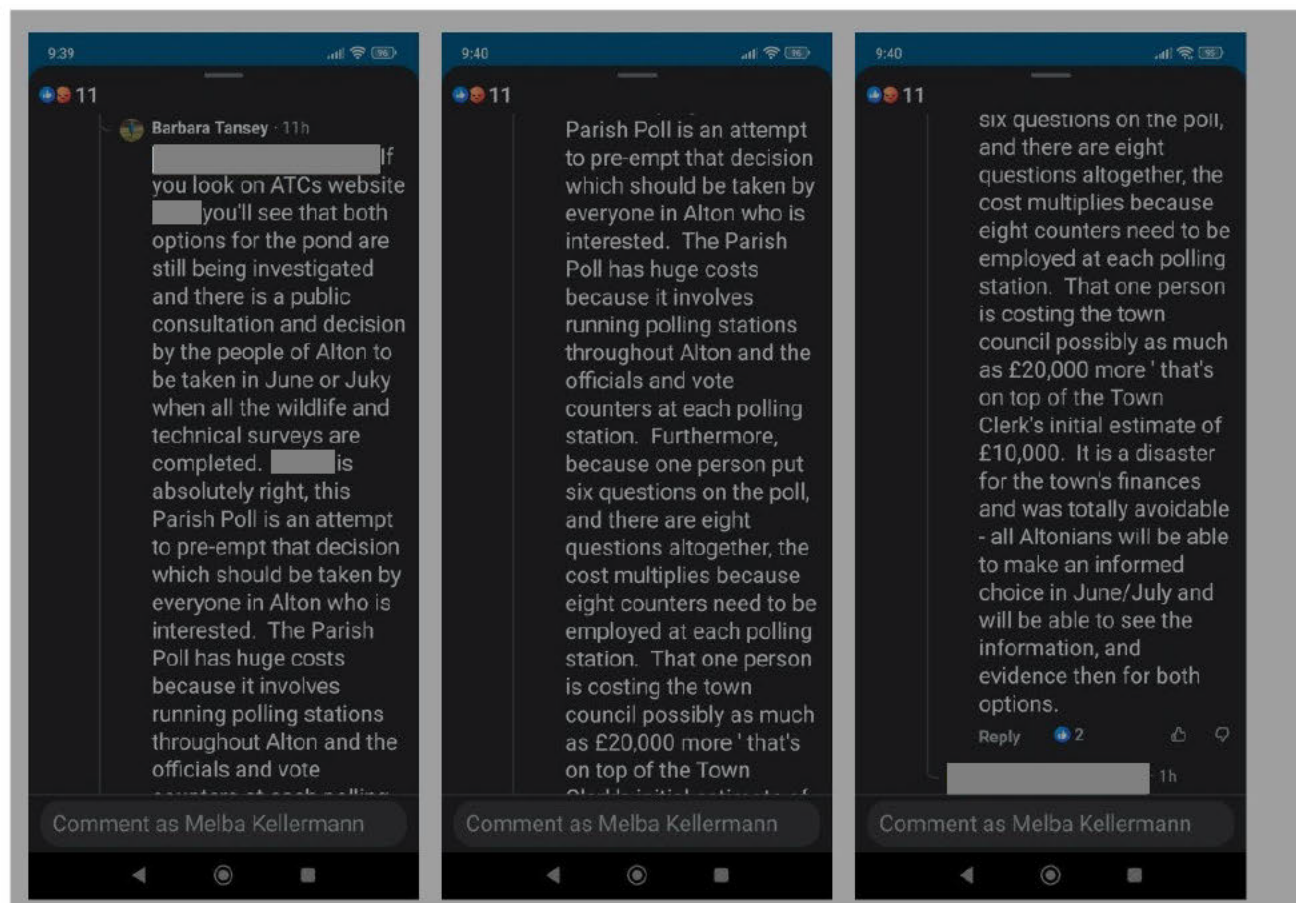
Q6: Stop alternatives and focus solely on dredging + improvements?

Yes: 602 (59.4%)

I believe that Councillors Tansey, Hammond, & O'Brien must apologise to the public as whatever their excuses may be for their actions the claim that the poll would cost up to £30,000 was dishonest and not reflective of the cost which came in very close to the estimate provided by the clerk. They have misled the public and by having done so, again bring the council into disrepute. A state it routinely seems to find itself in. If these councillors refuse to apologise, I ask that the mayor, despite having done no wrong, considers an apology to the public as they have been misled by four of her colleagues.

I further believe that the council must seek to correct the public record and implement appropriate training and processes to address the dissemination of dishonest information in the future. When you are claiming that the public need all the information to make an informed decision, then surely the council must agree that they also need that information to be accurate. Whilst dishonesty may serve a particular agenda at the council, you are theoretically at least to democratically represent the people of Alton with integrity, not for the furtherance of vanity projects.

Additionally, and returning to Mr Botten's arguments of 4th February, he also noted that "holders of public office should challenge bad behaviour". Given that the Nolan principles are apparently of great importance to him, might I ask why he failed to challenge the dishonest conduct of his colleague? Should this not be universally applied? Or is it a case that he only intends to use his position to take aim at the public rather than uphold the integrity of public office and local government?



ITEM 5. WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC – 3

From Anthony Furnival:

[Agenda item 8: Chalk streams and rivers]

It is unfortunate that following the diabolical decision to suspend the automatic right to make amendments that all public representations including this will now have no purpose whatsoever in an increasingly dictatorial council. However, I'd like to place the following points on record for the 'rights of rivers' motion which will I've no doubt will be invariably voted through.

1) When it comes to planning, Alton Town Council are merely statutory consultants - the authority has no binding governance on planning matters and thus to adopt such a policy seems to have little practical application when EHDC have already done so. Surely a pragmatic approach that considers the value of ALL green space and wildlife habitats during discussion and debate offers a broader spectrum approach rather than a blinkered river-centric alternative such as per the motion tabled.

2) The Wey through Alton is culverted from just after Flood Meadows to Kings Pond and again through Waterside Court - to treat this as a natural chalk stream when it has been subject to the impact of such heavy urbanisation is disingenuous at best. This is before considering that the aquifer feeding the Wey is subject to abstraction resulting in insufficient flow rates to allow the river to function as a chalk stream (notably the ability to effectively scour the river bed to create the conditions and habitat associated with chalk streams). Whilst this will invariably be dismissed as 'misinformation' by the usual sources, councillors with whom I have conducted a pond and river walk will have seen first hand this problem. I'd encourage councillors not to accept what they have been spoon fed by a project lead and instead get out there and see these problems with their own eyes. We have a chalk stream in name only - it hasn't functioned as one ecologically for a long time and likely never will!

3) According to South East Water, cessation of abstraction would lead to flooding events in the town. Abstraction thus cannot cease without endangering lives and properties. We have to work with what we have, not the unachievable.

4) Thames Water have refused to provide reassurances that they have sufficient capacity to cater for the projected expansion of Alton and its population in line with housing quotas. ATC are powerless from a legal perspective to impose any requirement to reduce or cease discharge of sewage into the Wey - thus again rendering this motion meaningless.

5) Drainage concerns were raised by residents opposed to the offline option for Kings Pond. This council opted not to include this as part of stage one - despite the fact that the pollution introduced by drainage is one of the greatest barriers to achieving a habitat that would support the biodiversity synonymous with a chalk stream. If the motion is passed then surely drainage must be included as part of the offline project and subsequent coatings. Whilst invariably hypocrisy will prevail and the motion will likely be used only to support certain agendas rather than be applied universally - if the rivers are to have rights then it's reasonable to expect a fully costed proposal for your consultation. (Though I hold out no hope of this as to openly admit the cost of tens of millions to achieve the chalk stream pipe dream would be a nail in the coffin of the vanity project).

6) The motion will rightly be perceived as part of a wider agenda by certain councillors to enforce upon the public what they want rather than to democratically represent the views of the people they are elected for.

This motion is ultimately the product of virtue signalling councillors with a distinct agenda and little to no ecological training to back it up. The quality of the presentation slides is poor, has vast gaps in both evidence and argument - if submitted as a piece of degree level academia it would likely only scrape a third - big topics like this need better analysis than what has been presented. Starting with the ideology rather than the issues only ever leads to poor work. This isn't personal - studied in the field, what I'm saying is a fair critique of what has been presented.

I'm all in favour of protecting wildlife - I spent long enough training and working in such fields - but this motion is fundamentally flawed as it has been built on predetermined agendas rather than being motivated by genuine environmentalism or ecological knowledge. Whilst there are some merits to the information presented, any policy needs to be built on something far stronger! To avoid all doubt I'm not critical of notions to protect the environment and its wildlife, I'm critical of this as it is fundamentally flawed.

A much simpler and more effective motion would be to adopt a broad spectrum policy which (as reasonably as possible) protects all wildlife and habitats from the impact of development. Rivers are only a small part of the ecosystem - you achieve more when focused on the whole rather than its constituent parts.