



MINUTES OF THE KING'S POND TASK & FINISH GROUP

Thursday 20th November 2025

Present: Councillor Don Hammond - Chair (DH)
Councillor John Quincey (JQ)
Hayley Carter - Deputy Town Clerk (HC)
Tim Pinchen - Resident representative (TP)
Angie Owens - Resident representative (AO)
Eric Phillips – Residents representative (EP)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Natalie Beckell (NB) – Alton Town Council, Tom Horwood – Town Clerk (TH), Cathy Ayres – Resident representative (CA) and Paul Ebbutt – Resident representative (PE)

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Two amendments had been requested by AO in advance of the meeting. These were both made and JQ proposed that the amended minutes of the 23rd October 2025 meeting were accepted as a true record of the meeting. This was seconded by EP and everyone voted in favour.

3. Feedback from KPC&SG meeting on 11th November

General feeling:

- Much better structure than last time with the actual C&SFG at the 'top table' and allowed to ask questions / make comments first and then help answer further questions from the public
- More constructive and respectful than the previous meeting, with the only real aggression coming from someone who was not at the meeting and had therefore not been aware of the updates on the project and whose comments were not based on anything that actually happened at the meeting. Question over whether this should be permitted in future.
- Lots of good points made at the meeting
 - Need to ensure there is definitely enough water so that any proposed river would not just be a series of puddles
 - Run-off from the A31 into the river along the length

- Better not to show the original outline designs at all as people think that is what is being done rather than a representation which will be properly designed taking into account everything learned throughout the investigation stage
- Following the points raised at the meeting TP had another look at the design of the dam and the work that was done there. Originally there was a sluice at that end.
- JQ made the point that DH gets a lot of criticism but it is entirely down to him that these meetings have been completely opened up to the public.

4. **Review of Actions**

- a. Programme – changes were made due to council having to determine whether to follow Option 3c instead of 4a. The important thing to note is that the work would not start at the pond until Winter 2027. Initial design must be done and get to the end of Stage One, then do public consultation. Detailed design can then be done and approvals sought while funding is looked for. Finally the tender can be done and a contractor appointed to do the work.
- b. EA Session – TH's notes from the meeting have been circulated. Not all departments of the EA were represented so some questions remain unanswered. Important to note that the EA said while the river is their preferred option they would not withhold their approval should ATC decide to dredge it. The EA would not use compulsory purchase powers to take over the pipes under Waterside Court so that does effectively limit what can be done. They also confirmed there may be some funding available for the river option. While the main funding for chalk streams has been reduced, there are other pots available. Their main concern was where the contaminated spoil goes – that is very heavily controlled.
- c. Ecology Reports – All reports have now been received and put on the website. They are all draft so if there are any comments to add this can be done so. They also might want to amend mitigations once they know which option will be taken forward. The ecology briefing notes for the Stage One designer still need a few amendments and will then be added to the website. Planners will be concerned with BNG so will want an ecologist to look at the proposed scheme, what the current ecology is like, how it will be affected, what we are doing to mitigate that, etc. This is something the ecologists are used to dealing with.
- d. Tree Works – HC provided an update on the tender process and deadlines for bids. It is hoped the Council will appoint a contractor to do the work on 10th December.

- e. Waterside Court – the freehold of this property is owned by an offshore company. TP is yet to contact Tony Day who was at the C&SFG meeting on 11th November, but will organize as soon as possible. He needs to find out what the dam is made of and how deep the piling for Waterside Court is. Dr June had said she remembers them using sheet piling but does not know how deep it is.

ACTION – TP to contact Mr Day

- f. SE Water – **ACTION – DH to chase SEW. If there is no reply TP will do an FOI request.**
- g. Thames Water – some replies were received to the enquiries TP had drafted and some of the group and the Town Clerk had a meeting with them yesterday. They are in the process of pulling together a report on all the outflows into the River Wey. They will do some limited investigation into areas where their information is scant. They were very enthusiastic about the Lasham Drain and had some years ago planned to divert it into the river at the same point on Drayman's Way that the group identified, but the project failed due to funding. They are happy to restart that. It would mean that there would be a small amount of water flowing all year round. That is a separate little project but would benefit either option for the pond.

ACTION – TH to chase HCC's Highways department to find out if any of their road drains go into Thames Water's system and into the River Wey.

The group expect to find there are no silt traps on any of those.

- h. Councillor Briefing – this was held prior to the C&SFG meeting and so the council is fully aware of the ownership issues.
- i. Stage One tenders – already discussed. Council to make decision on how to proceed at the meeting on 10th December. The tender can go back out fairly quickly after that.

ACTION – HC to prepare updated tender document with input from DH.

5. **Other Investigations**

None at the moment.

6. **Collation & Storage of Information**

The website is up-to-date with everything so far and being continually updated as anything new comes in. NB has set up Dropbox for any other large documents that need to be circulated within the group.

ACTION – NB to let the group know whether they need to set up an account and pay to be able to use this.

7. **Date of next meeting**

Monday 15th December: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square 11:00am – 12:30pm