



MINUTES OF THE KING'S POND TASK & FINISH GROUP

Monday 19 January 2026

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

1. Apologies

No apologies were received.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

As the minutes had been omitted from the reports, it was agreed that they would be circulated by email for approval by 22nd January.

3. Parish Poll

TP asked for an update on Question 9 that had been raised at the Parish meeting, relating to South East Water (SEW) installing free silt traps. He questioned where the idea of the free silt traps had come from. DH replied that this may have come from mention in meetings that SEW were working on reducing silt at Brick Kiln Lane. The Town Clerk had written to SEW to clarify the situation. TH said he would prepare a paragraph on the update following his communications with SEW to go to Full Council on 4th February and would circulate to the T&FG members. TH confirmed the process for the poll, saying that EHDC run the poll, then the result will go to Full Council for consideration. EP asked if this could become cyclical with another poll then being demanded, forcing the Council to keep spending money. JQ responded, saying it could but he felt it was unlikely. The draft report which had been prepared by TH ready to go to Full Council was circulated and noted.

ACTION – NB to circulate previous minutes and a link to the poll details.

4. Terms of Reference

PE said he was very concerned about the addition of silt investigations into the ToR as he “doesn’t want a job for life” and that is a mammoth task.

TP queried whether the ToR allow continuation of silt investigations into the construction of the dam. He said the dam is more important than anything as we do not know if we have a viable embankment or whether it will pass the inspections when legislation changes in a few years’ time. EP said the Council may be forced to investigate the dam anyway for safety reasons. TP said ATC owns the dam, but Waterside Court owns the sheet piling on their side of it. DH suggested the Council should maintain a liaison with the ownership of Waterside Court over the structure and integrity of the dam. TP said he would not want to get further down the road and find that this affects the project. This should go in the risk register for the project. The reduction in volume for inspections is going to drop from 25,000m³ to 10,000m³ so King’s Pond would be affected. The lower limit is already in force in Wales and Scotland but not yet England.

ACTION – Note the risk and continue to investigate and monitor.

All were happy with the ToR.

ACTION – ToR to go to Full Council on 4 February for approval.

5. Enquiry to Water Environment

DH explained that Water Environment is the company that did the investigations into the removal of the weir. With doubts raised within the group about whether Option 3c would have sufficient flow velocity to carry the silt, DH and TH had gone back to them to get a quote for further work as, since the report was done, we have more survey results and know we can achieve a lower water level at the outflow. We also know that we need to maintain the integrity of the island. They have therefore asked for a quote to reassess 3c in light of that updated information and do new layouts and an artist’s impression.

TP asked for clearer detail on the topographical maps. He said the pond is now bigger than it was and he is curious about why the topography now exists as it is. The questions asked of Water Environment are:

»Firstly?your.Option.9c.uses.the.outlet.level.of.the.pipes.(64.08).from.the.existing.weir.chamber;We.now.have.a.survey.of.the.downstream.pipework?chambers.and.culvert;. This.suggests.that?if.the.weir.chamber.were.to.be.removed.and.the.pipes.within.our.property.re_laid?an.outflow.level.of.64.08.could.be.achieved;.Secondly?our.ecology.consultants.are.recommending.retention.of.the.large.island.in.some.form;.

Councillors.and.residents.have.also.raised.some.questions.and.concerns;

/ .The.river.and.pond.would.share.the.same.chalk.aquifer.bed;.Is.there.a.risk.that.the.pond.may.drain.into.the.river.channel.through.the.chalk?

/ .Will.the.river.have.sufficient.fall.and.flow.velocity.to.keep.the.channel.clear.of.silt?

/ .Option.8a.shows.a.sediment.forebay.at.the.inflow.into.the.pond;What.is.this?.Can.a.silt.trap.be.constructed.here.that.would.retain.significant.amounts.of.silt?

We.request.a.quotation.for.your.re_appraisal.of.Option.9c.to.take.account.of.the.above?production.of.a.revised.layout.drawing.suitable.for.public.presentation.and.a.report.responding.to.the.questions.and.concerns.listed;In.addition?would.you.have.any.suggestions.as.to.how.we.can.commission.an.artist's.impression.of.what.the.scheme.might.look.like?<

6. **ITT for Stage One**

The updated draft was circulated and all comments made by members of the group had been incorporated apart from a few later circulated by TP. DH said he would add those in.

JQ said he still had concerns over whether we should add in work on the upstream siltation, saying the drains need dealing with as the water needs to be clear. He said that any stream also needs to have meanders in it for ecological benefits.

TP said that he did not feel the Environment Agency (EA) were correct in their original correspondence with the then-Town Clerk, as the gauging station, culverts and so on are all barriers in the chalk stream, so unless the EA were prepared to spend millions of pounds to get rid of these barriers it can never be a pure, continuous chalk stream, as the normal slope is interrupted.

He added that with climate change he felt we would have trouble maintaining water flow unless they stop abstraction at Windmill Hill. With the level of the railway culvert we are limited to the 200mm drop and we need to go back to the EA to present our findings and get their permission.

JQ said that if we could go back to the original preferred scheme – 4a – it still would not work because of the railway culvert and the other barriers upstream. DH clarified that SEW looked at abstraction at Lasham as part of their ANP7 project which is now complete. ATC is yet to have a follow-up meeting with them about that, which we have been asking for. We understand that they have not been allowed to increase abstraction but, due to the work done by Jacobs which demonstrated a risk of increased flooding in the Tanhouse Lane area of the town, SEW have not been allowed to reduce it either. ANP8 is their next project, which includes looking at abstraction at Windmill Hill. Both projects were demanded by and paid for by the EA.

JQ said to clarify his position, we should not be going out to tender and spending £30-50k on a project that will not work due to not having clarity of water. It was agreed to add this to the risk register.

ACTION – add lack of clarity of water to the risk register.

JQ then asked if we can do something with the Lasham Drain.

DH said the 'pure chalk stream' is a figment of the imagination and the Council has never been trying to achieve that. We have a chalk stream. We should make it the best chalk stream we can. We have a pond. We should make it the best pond we can. The water entering from the drains affects either option and needs addressing but it cannot be part of this tender. The EA are still saying the pond and river is their preferred option.

TP noted that the EA is the final decision maker and if we cannot show them the reasons why the stream will not work they will keep bringing it back.

DH said the issue is what goes into the ITT. What TP has raised should go in. Trying to deal with silt and pollution from all the inlets into the river cannot as it would be impracticable.

As there is still disagreement between JQ and DH about this, the decision on whether to include that will need to go to Full Council.

HC said Full Council needs to be made aware that even if they pay for the engineering designs to deal with the water entering the river upstream, as none of that land is owned by the Town Council they do not have the power or funds to deal with it, they would need to liaise with appropriate landowners and organisations. The Town Council is meant to be dealing with their open space – King's Pond, which they do have the power to do.

ACTION – DH to incorporate the suggestions made by TP into the ITT.

ACTION – JQ to put together his suggestions of what else should go into the tender to go to Full Council on 4 February and forward to the Town Clerk.

ACTION – HC to research the Council's powers to determine whether they have the power to deal with the water coming into the river further upstream.

7. Review of Actions

The tree works and start date were noted as being 21 January. HC confirmed that the date had been set by the contractor, not by the Council.

TP offered to draft a letter to the National House Builders Registration Council because we believe they did the Building Regulations work for Taylor Wimpey in relation to Waterside Court.

ACTION – TP to draft letter and send to TH.

Thames Water is yet to survey the drain there had been a problem with.

DH had spoken to the project manager at SEW appointed to look after ANP8 and was trying to set up a meeting for them to come and brief councillors on their project. They are working with landowners about Brick Kiln Lane to try to reduce silt run-off there, and are looking at silt trapping in Will Hall Meadow. Also, other minor improvements along Will Hall Meadow, reprofiling the river alongside the

SEW land by the New Odiham Road and improvements through Flood Meadows were also being considered. Also, some improvements downstream of King's Pond. The project overall is looking at improving the River Wey and part of that is looking at the abstraction on Windmill Hill and its effects on both the River Wey and the Caker Stream. The project is important to the town and the river. It is being sponsored by the EA.

Dispute between DH and JQ to go to Full Council on 4 February. The whole agenda is being reserved for King's Pond matters as far as possible.

CA said the 'The Way Forward' document states that the next step will be to put the design out to tender and it needs to clarify that it is to get the detailed technical assessments done. DH agreed to review it.

ACTION – DH to review the 'The Way Forward' document on the website.

8. Collation & Storage of Information

Nothing further to report.

9. Date of next meeting

Monday 9th February: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Square 11:00am – 12:30pm

The date of the next C&SFG is yet to be set.