

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 19 MARCH 2026 AT 7.00PM AT THE TOWN HALL**

Present: **Councillor** **Annette Eyre (Town Mayor)**
 Matthew Bayliss
 Chris Botten
 Graham Hill
 Roger Lamb
 Nick O'Brien
 Janice Treacher
 Lorna Woodcroft

In attendance: **Tom Horwood (Town Clerk)**

8 members of the public and press

145 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Mark Boyce-Churn, Don Hammond, Matthew Kellermann, John Quincey and Barbara Tansey.

146 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation

No declarations of interest were received.

147 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 4 March 2026 for Approval

Councillor Eyre proposed that the minutes be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Botten, and it was:

RESOLVED
to APPROVE the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 4
March 2026.

All councillors voted in favour.

148 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor welcomed Cllr Lorna Woodcroft to her first council meeting since her election. She welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

The Mayor mentioned her charity quiz night, which will be on 23 March, and encouraged attendance.

She added: “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 the agenda item tonight, 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.”

149 **Written Representations from the Public**

Correspondence was received in advance from:

- Carol Palmer & Clare Klaire, Say NO to 1100 Houses at Chawton Park Farm Campaign (4 documents) – item 7
- John Millar – item 7
- Sue Petas – item 7
- Jenny Griffiths, Alton Climate Action Network – item 7

All the correspondence was circulated to councillors before the meeting and can be found in the supplementary papers on the website.

Those who had written in were then invited to speak.

Jenny Griffiths addressed the meeting and reflected the strong views of the trustees of Alton Climate Action Network opposed to the planning application. She referred to its size, its position in a cherished landscape and its lack of sustainability. She highlighted the ancient woodland, which would be damaged.

Councillor Eyre proposed that the written representations be noted. This was seconded by Councillor O’Brien, and it was:

RESOLVED
to note the written representations received.

All councillors voted in favour.

150 **Questions and Statements by the Public**

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

150.1 District Councillor Ginny Boxall spoke on item 7. Cllr Boxall is the ward councillor for Whitedown and raised Planning objections. She said that this is

a speculative application and the environmental assessment must be robust. There are significant site constraints, such as ancient woodland, sites of importance for nature conservation, a listed building and its distance from Alton town centre. Traffic impacts are likely to be severe, with 1,500 additional vehicles. The environmental statement must address the cumulative impacts of this with other developments. The road infrastructure is constrained and development would have a severe impact. The site's sustainability is in doubt and will entail a car-dependent development with its impact on carbon emissions. The chalk aquifer is critical but also highly sensitive. Hydrogeology must be taken into account. The site is part of a valued rural landscape. The scale of development proposed would reduce access to the countryside.

150.2 Mike Hannan spoke on item 7 and referred to the recent developers' consultation. He could see some potential advantages in the plans for cyclists if junctions were improved. Additional traffic lights were suggested. It is important for transport and roads to be in place before houses.

150.3 County Cllr Andrew Joy spoke on item 7 and referred to plans some years ago for a western by-pass to alleviate traffic from the A339 to the Chawton roundabout, which was not implemented. The proposed development, in his view, reinforces the need for supportive road infrastructure as a mandatory condition. It is not mentioned in the current proposals and so the environmental impact is unacceptable.

Councillor Eyre proposed that the questions and statements be noted. This was seconded by Councillor Hill, and it was:

RESOLVED

To note the questions and statements by the public.

All councillors voted in favour.

151 **Planning Applications**

Councillor Hill proposed that the Town Clerk be authorised to respond to East Hampshire District Council on application EHDC-25-1383-EIA, Chawton Park Farm, Chawton Park Road, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1SW, reflecting the points raised in the debate. This was seconded by Councillor Botten.

The points made in the debate were as follows:

- i. The proposal is one of the largest in East Hampshire – in effect, a new village.
- ii. There is not yet a Planning application and the town council is being consulted on the environmental impact assessment (EIA) scoping.
- iii. A western bypass should be a prior condition for this development
- iv. Groundwater and surface water flooding and implications must be included, but are currently missing.

- v. The assumption appears to be for residents to rely on walking long distances or non-existent public transport. In practice, it is intended to be car-dependent because it is isolated from facilities. This is unrealistic. A comprehensive, deep study of modes of transport is critical, including how the roads are currently used and by which types of vehicles and at what times.
- vi. The noise, light, vibration and air quality impacts of construction are not compatible with its rural setting.
- vii. The mental health impacts on the existing community caused by construction, noise and vibration will be substantial for many years.
- viii. There are various community uses along Chawton Park Road, involving vulnerable young and older residents, which will be adversely affected by the idling and slow-moving vehicles. The applicant appears to have “scoped out” air quality and odour, whereas – for the above reasons – it must be “scoped in”.
- ix. The direct impact on ancient woodland and its dependent wildlife will be substantial. The EIA must include the environmental impacts of creating an urban extension from what is currently a rural setting.
- x. It is inconceivable that the application states that flood risk and hydrology are “scoped out” of the EIA. This area is highly susceptible to flood risk. Groundwater, keeping pollution out of water courses, sustainable urban drainage systems, maintaining water neutrality and the impact on rivers and water quality must all be considered thoroughly with clear and robust mitigations.
- xi. The size of the proposed development will require an upgrade in sewerage capacity, and clear, strong conditions must be included if the proposed application commences, with infrastructure in place as a Grampian condition.
- xii. There are concerns about the devastating impacts on archaeology, architectural and cultural heritage, landscape and visual impact, which must be clearly and thoroughly understood and mitigated, noting the landscape value that has historically been placed on this setting.
- xiii. The loss of local natural resources must be assessed and considered in the planning balance. The site is grazed by sheep and deer, and the impacts must be understood.
- xiv. There is great scepticism that the environmental quality of the site will be decimated by a development of this scale.
- xv. The cumulative impact on the environment of this with other nearby sites (both already developed and proposed) should be included; the site must not be looked at in isolation.
- xvi. The roads are already stretched to capacity and in poor condition. They are not adequate to manage the resultant new demand. Improving the quality of the existing roads and other infrastructure, must be a precondition of any development, including direct access from the A31.
- xvii. The proposed methodology is not sufficient, and we would wish the above points to be given serious consideration and included.

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

RESOLVED

To authorise the Town Clerk to respond to East Hampshire District Council on planning application EHDC-25-1383-EIA, Chawton Park Farm, Chawton Park Road, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1SW, reflecting the points raised in the debate.

All councillors voted in favour.

The meeting closed at 8.04pm.