



11 May 2026

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday 13 May 2026 at 7.00pm

AGENDA – SUPPLEMENT

5. WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC – *appended*

Recommendation: To note written representations from the public.

ITEM 5. WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC – 1

From District Councillor Ginny Boxall:

[Agenda item 3.1: Planning application EHDC-26-0331-CONVR]

Dear Councillors

The application seeks to vary previously agreed ecological mitigation in a manner that poses a significant risk to an existing chalk grassland habitat, a recognised priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.

Chalk grassland is an irreplaceable ecosystem characterised by thin, nutrient-poor, alkaline soils and highly specialised plant communities, including orchid species. These habitats develop over long timescales and depend on intact soil structure, stable chemistry, and established mycorrhizal networks.

The proposed deposition of 400–500mm of soil across the site would effectively bury the existing habitat, fundamentally altering surface conditions and eliminating the ecological niche required for chalk grassland species.

Although the soil is to be sourced from within the site, its excavation, handling, and redistribution will disrupt soil horizons, degrade soil structure, and alter chemical properties, including soil pH and nutrient status. Such changes are highly likely to result in the loss of characteristic species and a shift toward more competitive vegetation.

Critically, the process will destroy the mycorrhizal associations essential for orchid establishment and survival, which cannot be reinstated through soil replacement.

The proposal appears to prioritise cost-saving over ecological integrity and does not represent genuine mitigation. Instead, it introduces a high likelihood of irreversible harm to a priority habitat.

This is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework and East Hampshire District Council's policies requiring the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, and it conflicts with biodiversity net gain objectives.

In the absence of robust, site-specific evidence demonstrating no adverse impact, the proposed variation should be refused.

From Carol Palmer:

[Agenda item 3.1: Planning application EHDC-26-0331-CONVR]

Until recently, when Crest Nicholson (CN) disbanded it, I had been a member of the CN Developer's Liaison Committee representing the residents of the Treloars Estate since Jan 2020. There are two issues concerning this application that I want to write to you about.

1. "Country Park" management and ownership

The understanding was that the 'country park' - see graphic – the bit top right where CN aren't building – was to be managed by Alton Town Council (ATC). The expectation was that ATC would be given the Country park along with possibly some funds to take it on and maintain it.



Please see the **Ecology Management Plan of March 2026 (EMP)** submitted to the EHDC Planning Portal, for the background to my concerns and comments. I have included a link to it here for ease of reference. <https://bit.ly/AckenderHillEMP>. NB any bolding in the quotes from it below is mine.

At 2.2.2. it is stated that "The management of the Country Park, which comprises the majority of the ecological enhancement measures, **will be undertaken by an independent charitable trust, as described in the Section 106 agreement.** The charitable trust, who will possess the appropriate level of knowledge and expertise to manage such an area, will be established prior to the occupancy

of Phase 5 of the development. The Country Park will then be management [sic] in perpetuity by the established charitable trust in line with the following document and the Country Park LEMP. The management will be funded by the Country Park Contribution, as defined by the Section 106 agreement.”

So this statement is within the Ecology Management Plan which is on the EHDC Planning Portal, yet Hannah Robbins (ex Chair of our disbanded CN Liaison Committee) has informed us that: **“As far as Crest is aware, Alton Town Council will still take over management of the Country Park once it is handed over, and it will not be transferred to another charitable trust. They are unsure where this information originated.** The park will remain open to all and not solely for Ackender Hill residents.”

My comments

It is shocking that Crest have allowed an incorrect and misleading document to be submitted to the EHDC Planning Portal (if true). And they should be requested to resubmit a corrected document if that is the case. **It is vital that ATC find out the true future status of the Country Park intended by Crest.**

I have asked Hannah Robbins to speak to Richard Natt, the Planning Officer about the incorrect document and she has said she will do this.

It is also vital that we understand whether the Country Park they talk about above is the whole of the unbuilt area to the left (‘western’) and right (‘eastern’) of the ‘hedge’ (see graphic above). It is surely the whole of it but this needs to be clarified I think.

It is worrying that a Section 106 Agreement is referred to as I assume this Section 106 Agreement has been already ‘agreed’.....

2. CN Strategy for the calcareous grassland Country Park

The EMP states at 1.1.4 that it presents ‘an alternative strategy for the calcareous grassland areas within the Site’. They also say at 1.3.2 that an opportunity has arisen to ‘increase the amount of calcareous soil in the Country Park’.

At 1.3.3 they say they will “temporarily exclude reptiles from the area that will see the reprofiling works.”

At 3.4.2 they say “However, due to the proposed re-profiling and soil improvements works proposed within the western section for the Country Park (See section 8) there is a need to temporarily exclude reptiles from this area to prevent any harm or injury to individual reptiles. To this end, it is proposed to conduct a second capture and exclusion exercise in summer 2026 to temporarily remove reptiles form [sic] the proposed works area.”

At 3.8.4 they say “Incorporating this much new material will raise the existing ground level by approximately 400- 500mm. However, the soil will not be spread evenly over the existing contours. **Instead, a varied landscape will be created which will result in numerous different gradient and aspects;** these will provide a variety of niches that can be exploited by numerous different species (see David Jarvis Associates Drawing 2610-4-5-9 DR-003 S4-P1 for details).

Hannah Robbins at EHDC who chaired the Liaison Committee and has regular meetings with CN has told us:

Crest have explained one of the reasons for submitting the application is there is a **large excess of topsoil on site**. Removing it entirely would require approximately 300 lorry loads over a six-week period, which would likely cause significant disruption for residents. By redistributing some of the topsoil across the Country Park, the number of lorries can be reduced to around 50.

Crest has been consulting with an ecologist, as there are **newts present in the areas where the topsoil is to be redistributed**. These will be safely relocated to another part of the Country Park before works begin. Crest has confirmed that they will aim to retain as much natural wildlife as possible and minimise disturbance to wildflowers.

My Comments

Re-profiling

So Crest are trying to dress up the (probably) real reason for dumping spoil on the Country Park as an ‘opportunity to increase the calcareous soil’ there, to encourage different species, and to save disruption to the residents of their new development Ackender Hill. **What is probably really going on is that they want to save money.**

Section 8?

At 3.4.2 the EMP mentions a Section 8 regarding ‘re-profiling’ etc but there seems to be *no* Section 8 in this document. Maybe I’ve missed it.

Newts

So more disturbance for the poor newts and how many will die in the process of translocation/reptile fencing erection – all to save residents from 350 lorry journeys. And the current ‘eastern’ area of the Country Park (to the right of the ‘hedge’) is suffering from a lot of disturbance already – see photos here from local resident. **Does this look like a safe place to relocate newts? I don’t think so. Is there enough space for the newts to thrive anyway given that there must already *be* newts in that area?**





Flora Disturbance/Destruction

It seems to me that CN's plan is for all the orchids and wild flowers that have been growing in this chalk wildflower meadow to have a layer of 'top soil' chucked over already existing grassland and for it to be at different levels to produce a 'contoured' finish. We need to know if this is the actual process, and if so, what effect will it have on the flora already growing there. It could mean wholesale destruction of a beautiful area that was awash with flowers and insects including Marble White butterflies. The question is: how long would it take for the wildflower meadow(s) that have lain undisturbed for over 40 years to re-establish? This proposal sounds like taking advantage at the expense of our fast disappearing chalk wildflower meadows and associated flora/fauna.

A resident on our Treloars Estate has commented that:

"I am pretty sure Crest Nicholson have ruined the meadow already. Many hundreds of tons of spoil have been dumped and moved around the meadow (or our country park) for over a year with no thought of what damage it is doing and the disruption it has caused."

Confidence in Crest/Whips

We have absolutely NO confidence in any promises or commitments made by Crest given the above comment and the appalling negligence they displayed when they didn't water the whips and most of them died. They then replanted them and many died for the same reasons.

Hannah Robbins has told us: The WHIPS are currently located within Crest's compound areas. Once these compounds are removed, the WHIPS will be replanted and maintained.

My Comments

Presumably the 'whips' are the replacement ones for where they need to be replanted.

It has been hugely depressing monitoring things like the whips that were left to die. And now we have to continue to monitor what Crest are doing to ensure they don't destroy more of this beauty than is absolutely necessary.

Here are some legal references that could be relied (perhaps) on to stop Crest doing this:

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, section 13: it is an offence to intentionally pick, uproot, or destroy a wild plant listed in Schedule 8, and it is also an offence for unauthorised persons to uproot any wild plant. This is the clearest direct anti-destruction provision for sensitive meadow flora.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Schedule 8: this schedule lists specially protected plant species, many of which can occur in chalk grassland and other wildflower habitats. If a meadow contains any of these plants, destruction can trigger criminal liability. Please EHDC, check whether there are any Schedule 8 plant species in this area. Presumably this was information that was documented before work started?

National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 193: where significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, mitigated, or compensated for, planning permission should be refused. That is highly relevant where a chalk wildflower meadow is being removed for development. Planning permission should never have been granted of course but lets refuse this application. It's the least we can do.

NPPF paragraph 192: planning policies should safeguard local wildlife-rich habitats and promote conservation, restoration, and enhancement of priority habitats and ecological networks. Chalk grassland is commonly treated as a priority habitat in planning and conservation policy.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, section 40 biodiversity duty: public authorities must consider what they can do to conserve biodiversity. That duty supports arguments against publicly funded or publicly authorised destruction of valuable meadow habitat.

In conclusion my own objection on the EHDC Planning Portal has this final paragraph:

I object to the proposed destruction of this chalk wildflower meadow because it would cause unacceptable and potentially unlawful harm to a valuable biodiversity habitat. The proposal appears contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, including protections for any protected plants present, and would also run against the National Planning Policy Framework, which says significant harm to biodiversity should be refused where it cannot be avoided, mitigated, or compensated for. It is also inconsistent with the public biodiversity duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. The meadow should be retained and protected in situ, with any decision based on a proper ecological assessment and a presumption in favour of avoidance rather than loss.

ITEM 5. WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC – 3

From Dr Jannine Stoodley:

[Agenda item 3.1: Planning application EHDC-26-0331-CONVR]

I understand that the application has been submitted to re-landscape the area known as the 'Orchid Field'.

As a lay person it is by no means clear what is fully intended by the developers, Crest. However, I can see from the application that they wish to leave 'mounds of spoil to create visual interest'. They also wish to 'strip the top soil and then return it', planting many no native species in the wish to create a country park.

This incredibly special chalk downland meadow has been treasured by local people for many years. Treasured and respected. A couple of grass paths run up through the meadow and around the perimeter which are used by all who have, for so many years, enjoyed the beauty of this meadow through the seasons.

Why, in the destruction of the rest of Lord Mayor Treloar site, cannot this meadow be left alone from heavy human intervention?

This plea isn't based on hard scientific data, but a cry from a local family person to allow the meadow to be saved from destruction.

Is it not possible to create a community group who can manage and maintain the meadow for future generations to enjoy and treasure?

With best wishes and thanks for reading

Dr Jannine Stoodley