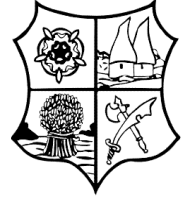


ALTON Town Council



15 June 2026

PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING Wednesday 17 June 2026 at 7.00pm

AGENDA – SUPPLEMENT

4. WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS

1) From Town and District Councillor Ginny Boxall, who may not be able to attend

Councillors, Re EHDC -25-0748-OUT Holybourne

I would like to draw your attention to the serious concerns recently raised by Defra, the Environment Agency and Ofwat regarding South East Water's ability to maintain a secure water supply.

In their 2025 review of South East Water's Water Resources Management Plan, the regulators identified significant failings, including a worsening supply-demand balance, leakage levels far higher than forecast, and concerns about the company's resilience during periods of dry weather. The regulators considered these issues serious enough to warn that continued non-delivery could lead to investigations and enforcement action.

This is directly relevant to the application before us on Wednesday.

This proposal would bring forward approximately 150 additional homes through speculative development. Before deciding on our response the Committee should be satisfied that the necessary water infrastructure and resources are available to support this growth without placing further pressure on an already stressed system.

The regulators' findings raise a fundamental question: if South East Water is already struggling to meet its own water resource targets and maintain resilience for existing customers, what assurance is there that additional development can be accommodated without increasing those risks?

I am not suggesting that this development alone creates the problem. However, planning decisions must consider cumulative impacts. Alton and the surrounding area continue to experience development pressure, and every additional scheme increases demand on infrastructure that is already under strain.

Given the concerns expressed by Defra, the Environment Agency and Ofwat, I ask the Committee to consider whether sufficient, current and robust evidence has been provided to demonstrate that a secure and resilient water supply exists for this development throughout its lifetime.

Until that assurance is clearly established, I believe there is a strong case for exercising caution and refusing this speculative application.

2) From Holybourne Village Association

HOLYBOURNE VILLAGE MEETING
Proposed Housing Development (Land North of London Road)

THE KEY POINTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. The Council already rejected this site for large development

- EHDC's own evidence (2019 and 2021) found extensive flood risk, serious heritage impacts, landscape sensitivity.
- Their conclusion was clear: The site was "unsuitable" and should not be put forward for large-scale development.
- Nothing fundamental has changed since then.

2. Similar developments in villages have already been refused

- EHDC fought and won a very similar case in Bentley (2024)
- The Planning Inspector agreed villages like Holybourne are only for small-scale development. Large estates damage character and identity. District wide housing need does not override this.
- The same planning rules apply here.

3. This is the wrong development in the wrong place

- Holybourne is officially a small village (Level 4 settlement) meant for limited, local growth, NOT large housing estates... and existing planning policy protects this role.
- This proposal is over 20 times larger than what was planned for villages like ours. It would fundamentally change the size and nature of the village.
- It's not gradual growth - it's a step-change.

4. Flooding concerns remain unresolved

- The developer now accepts the site floods. But they have not proven it can be made safe.
- Their own reports admit more monitoring is needed to understand the full problem. What this means:
 - They don't yet know how bad flooding can get
 - The drainage system is not fully designed
 - Key decisions are being pushed into the future
- Permission is being sought before the problem is understood or solved. The applicant has not shown the site can be built on without increasing flood risk - to new homes or existing residents.

5. Loss of the village green space (LGS)

- The current Holybourne play area is a protected Local Green Space. It is open, central and used by the whole village. It is valued for its outstanding views and community role.

- The proposal would remove it and replace it with a different type of open space within the new estate. This is transforming the space:
 - from a village asset → to an estate facility
 - From an open landscape → to a built-up environment
- It is not a like-for-like replacement.

6. Lasting damage to the character of the village

- This development would:
 - Build over open countryside
 - Remove key views into and out of the village
 - Extend housing into a sensitive rural landscape
- This type of harm is permanent and cannot be hidden or mitigated. Once it's gone, it's gone for good.

7. Impact on our historic village

- The site sits next to:
 - A Scheduled Ancient Monument
 - A Grade II* listed Church of the Holy Rood and other listed buildings
 - A Conservation Area
- The development would:
 - Change their rural setting forever
 - Urbanise their surroundings
 - Reduce openness and historic context
- Planning rules require great weight to protecting these assets

8. The Highways “solution” changes the village itself

- To make the development acceptable, a major highway scheme is proposed:
 - Road narrowing, traffic build-outs, crossings
 - Large-scale parking restrictions
 - Significant redesign of London Road
- This would:
 - Change the character of the village
 - Remove a large amount of existing parking, displacing it to neighbouring streets
 - Affect access to local facilities
- If it only works by redesigning the whole village... it's the wrong site in the first place.

THE BIG PICTURE

- **This is not just about one housing scheme. It is about whether the Council follows its own planning rules.**
- **Under the adopted plan, Holybourne is a small rural village, only suitable for limited growth - not a large estate.**
- **Yet this proposal would bring major urban expansion into a village setting, cause clear harm to heritage, landscape, and green space, and leave flooding risks unresolved.**
- **Planning rules are clear - Development must be the right size, in the right place - and proven to work. This proposal is none of these.**