ALTON
Town Council

3 September 2026

To Councillors:
Matthew Bayliss, Chris Botten, Mark Boyce-Churn, Ginny Boxall, Annette Eyre, Don Hammond, Graham Hill, Matthew Kellermann, Roger Lamb, Nick O'Brien, John Quincey, Barbara Tansey, Lorna Woodcroft

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of **ALTON TOWN COUNCIL** on **Wednesday 9 September 2026 at 7.00pm** at the Town Hall, Market Square, Alton GU34 1HD, when the under-mentioned business will be transacted.

Yours sincerely

Tom Horwood, Town Clerk

A G E N D A

1. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
To receive updates from the Town Mayor.

2. APOLOGIES
To receive apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations.
(Councillors are responsible for declaring any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached. Unless dispensation has been granted, they may not participate in any discussion of or vote on any matter in which they have a pecuniary interest.)

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

   Recommendation: To approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 8 July 2026.

5. WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
To receive written representations from the public under Standing Order 3(e).
(Authors of written representations are invited to ensure that they are with the Town Clerk by 12noon two days before the council meeting to enable them to be circulated in good time.)

   Recommendation: To note written representations from the public.

6. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC
To receive verbal representations from the public under Standing Order 3(e).
(In accordance with Standing Order 3(e), members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence. They may give notice in advance up until just before the start of the meeting. Verbal statements or questions may be up to 3 minutes long, within a total of 20 minutes allowed for public speaking which may be extended by the Chair.)

   Recommendation: To note the questions and statements by the public.

7. PLANNING APPLICATION EHDC-26-0744-OUT – *see attached report*
To consider the Council's response to the consultation on the planning application, "Land adjacent to Baycroft Cottages, Lower Neatham Mill Lane, Neatham, Alton, Hampshire".

Recommendation: To authorise the Clerk/Deputy Clerk to submit an appropriate response to application EHDC-26-0744-OUT, Land adjacent to Baycroft Cottages, Lower Neatham Mill Lane, Neatham, Alton, Hampshire, based on the points made by councillors.

8. CURTIS MUSEUM JOINT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – *see attached report*
To agree councillor representation on the Hampshire Cultural Trust's Joint Management Committee for the Curtis Museum.

Recommendations:
1) To appoint Cllr Barbara Tansey to the Curtis Museum Joint Management Committee; and
2) To appoint Cllr Ginny Boxall to the Curtis Museum Joint Management Committee.

9. GOVERNANCE: COMMITTEES AND CO-OPTION POLICY
To agree a change to the Planning Committee's terms of reference and to review the Co-option Policy.

Recommendations:
1) To change the quorum of the Planning Committee to 5 councillors;
2) To adopt the appended revised Co-option Policy.

10. MINUTES OF THE KING'S POND TASK AND FINISH GROUP – *see attached minutes*
To receive the minutes of the King's Pond Task and Finish Group of 23 June 2026 and 13 July 2026.

Recommendation: To note the minutes of the King's Pond Task and Finish Group of 23 June and 13 July 2026.

11. IMPLICATIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION ON THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY
To seek endorsement from councillors to write to district councils concerning the future of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Recommendation: To authorise the Town Clerk to write to the Chief Executives of the four district councils in the Mid Hampshire area to raise concerns about how the Community Infrastructure Levy will be applied in future to mitigate the local harm of future development.

12. ANSTEY PARK PLAYGROUND AND SKATEPARK – *see attached report*
To update councillors on the timetable and content of proposed public consultation.

Recommendation: To agree to commence consultation on the future of the Anstey Park playground and skatepark as outlined in the report.

13. ENERGY CONTRACTS – *see attached report*
To seek a decision on energy contract renewals.

Recommendations:
1) To approve contracting with EDF for a 3-year contract,
2) To renew the contracts now, rather than wait until each is due for renewal.

14. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE VEHICLES – *see attached report*
To update councillors on progress with procuring electric vehicles and seek approval to purchases within this financial year.

Recommendations:
1) To purchase a Ford Ranger XLT Hybrid;

2) To purchase an Etesia ET Lander EV UTV, if the total cost for the two vehicles (less part-exchange from redundant vehicles (Citroen Berlingo and Renault Kango) is within the budget of £50,000.

15. GRANT APPLICATIONS – *see attached report*
To consider two grant applications.

Proposed motions:
1) To award £250 to Carols Around the Tree for their event on 23 December 2026;
2) To award £600 to Eggars School to support termly student celebrations.

16. INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR 2026/27 Q1
To receive the Internal Auditor's report for quarter one of the financial year 2026/27.

Recommendation: To note the content of the Internal Auditor's report.

17. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC
To exclude the press and public from discussion on confidential items if required.

(If required) Recommendation: To exclude the press and members of the public in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1(2), and to be clear, as per subsection 3A, where the public are excluded from a meeting of a relevant local government body under Section 1(2), the body may also prevent any person from reporting on the meeting using methods (a) which can be used without that person's presence at the meeting and (b) which enable persons not present at the meeting to see or hear the proceedings at the meeting as it takes place or later.

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 JULY 2026 AT 7.00PM AT THE TOWN HALL

Present: **Councillor** **Barbara Tansey (Town Mayor)**
Chris Botten (Deputy Mayor)
Matthew Bayliss
Ginny Boxall
Annette Eyre
Don Hammond
Matthew Kellermann
Roger Lamb
Nick O'Brien
John Quincey
Lorna Woodcroft

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

13 members of the public and press

23 **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair reminded all in attendance of the Standing Orders relating to speaking and conduct

24 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mark Boyce-Churn and Graham Hill.

25 **Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensation**

No declarations of pecuniary interest were received. Councillor Boxall stated that she was on the Curtis Museum Community Partnership and would abstain from voting on that item. Cllr Kellermann stated that he knows the Chair of the Partnership personally and will abstain from voting on that item. Cllr Tansey stated that she had attended meetings of the CMCP and had no pecuniary interest.

26 **Minutes of Previous Meeting for Approval**

Councillor Tansey proposed that the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 10 June 2026 be approved. This was seconded by Councillor O'Brien, and it was

RESOLVED

To approve the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 10 June 2026.

In favour: Councillors Botten, Boxall, Eyre, Hammond, O'Brien, Quincey, Tansey, Woodcroft
Abstained: Councillors Bayliss, Kellermann, Lamb

27 **Written Representations from the Public**

Correspondence was received in advance of the meeting from St Michael's Hospice. It was circulated to councillors and published with the agenda of this meeting. Councillor Eyre noted that the online donations page is still live and donations may still be made.

On the proposal of Councillor Tansey, seconded by Councillor Eyre, it was

RESOLVED
To note the written representations from the public.

All councillors voted in favour.

28 **Questions and Statements by the Public**

Andrew Joy raised the issue of doorstep scamming and invited the Town Council to publicise the risk in the media and The Altonian newsletter, with advice on how to respond. This can include supposedly "urgent" home repairs and pressure selling techniques.

Melba Kellermann asked how soon the King's Pond costs will be known and whether they will be known for the consultation. Cllr Hammond confirmed that cost estimates are part of Stage One of the project.

On the proposal of Councillor Tansey, seconded by Councillor Bayliss, it was

RESOLVED
To note the questions and statements by the public.

All councillors voted in favour.

29 **Curtis Museum Request for Funding**

The Chair invited speakers on this agenda item.

Ian Holliday, Chair of the Curtis Museum Community Partnership (CMCP) and a museum volunteer, stated that the CMCP is a group of concerned individuals that

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aims to prevent the museum from closing and put it on a sustainable footing. There is a threat to the museum following grant reductions from Hampshire County Council from April 2027. Hampshire Cultural Trust (HCT) is faced with an imminent decision about the museum's future. If the museum were closed, the collection would be less accessible.

County and District Councillor Emily Young thanked Ian Holliday and Karen Murrell for their work on the Partnership. Cllr Young referred to the opportunity with the museum as a cultural asset, in an impressive building and at an excellent location. Every town deserves a space like this to reflect Alton's history. It has not been updated since the 1990s. Over 700 people have signed a petition to save it. There is the potential for other grants. Let's save the museum and work on the exciting opportunity that this presents for the future through working together.

Mark Brett, a trustee/director of Hampshire Cultural Trust, said that the heritage and history of the town's museum is important. The HCT board, its staff and volunteers support the bid from CMCP.

Rebekah Jeffery of Hampshire Cultural Trust said that this is both a funding request and a request for a good partnership to develop a long-term plan, with a joint management committee, including Alton Town Council. The committee would investigate funding opportunities, community engagement and the potential for a new vision. HCT works in this way in other places, such as in Gosport.

Councillor Botten proposed to approve the payment of £20,000 to the Hampshire Cultural Trust in the financial year 2027/28 for the provision of the Curtis Museum, subject to the Museum remaining open until 31 March 2028 or the payback of some of the grant determined according to the proportion of the year that it remains open. This was seconded by Councillor Quincey.

In debate, councillors appreciated the professional way that the information and application had been made both in this meeting and in a workshop on 1 July.

On the proposal of Councillor Botten, seconded by Councillor Quincey, it was

RESOLVED
To approve the payment of £20,000 to the Hampshire Cultural Trust in the financial year 2027/28 for the provision of the Curtis Museum, subject to the Museum remaining open until 31 March 2028 or the payback of some of the grant determined according to the proportion of the year that it remains open.

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Botten, Eyre, Hammond, Lamb, O'Brien, Quincey, Tansey, Woodcroft
Abstained: Councillors Boxall, Kellermann

30 **Proms in the Park**

The Chair invited Tony Willman, Chairman of Alton Concert Band to speak. He referred to the Alton Concert Band and the Alton Concert Orchestra, which previously hosted the event in Alton and currently host an event in Bordon. He noted that the Band was pleased to receive the idea from the Town Mayor that a Proms event be held in 2027 and had responded positively. He noted how important it is to liaise with the Orchestra, and it would be good to involve both the Band and the Orchestra in future events. In response to a question about the quality of amplification needed, Tony Willman gave reassurances as far as the Band is concerned.

Councillor Boxall proposed to support in principle a Proms in the Park event in July 2027 with the Alton Concert Band. This was seconded by Councillor Bayliss.

Councillor Tansey proposed an amendment to add the words, “and following a 2027 Proms in the Park, to invite proposals for a 2028 Proms event from the Alton Concert Orchestra and the Alton Concert Band.” This was seconded by Councillor Kellermann. Councillor Tansey updated on a conversation with the Orchestra, which is interested in being involved in future years. Councillor Bayliss thanked the Town Mayor for her role in these conversations. The amendment was **carried**.

All councillors voted in favour.

Thus, on the proposal of Councillor Boxall, seconded by Councillor Bayliss, it was

RESOLVED
1. To support in principle a Proms in the Park event in July 2027 with the Alton Concert Band, and
2. Following a 2027 Proms in the Park, to invite proposals for a 2028 Proms event from the Alton Concert Orchestra and the Alton Concert Band.

All councillors voted in favour.

31 **King’s Pond Consultation**

Councillor Bayliss proposed that the Council authorise the Town Clerk to continue preparations for a public consultation on King’s Pond, with up to £10,000 to be drawn from the King’s Pond earmarked reserve. This was seconded by Councillor O’Brien.

Councillors were keen for the consultation to be the best it can be and that this would require resources.

Councillor Kellermann proposed an amendment to add the words, “and to make publicly available the full costs of both options (‘dredging plus’ and ‘pond and river’) in advance and during any consultation so that the public can make a fully informed decision”. This was seconded by Councillor Bayliss. Councillor Kellermann stated the importance of the public being fully informed; hence, the amendment. In the debate, councillors noted that: the Five Rivers report and estimates will require scrutiny; the Task and Finish Group should get into the detail; there was a desire that the estimates be publicly available in good time.

Councillor Kellermann moved under Standing Order 10(a)(xiv) to suspend Standing Order 1(g) for this agenda item to enable a further amendment. This was seconded by Councillor Bayliss.

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Kellermann, Quincey
Against: Councillors Botten, Boxall, Eyre, Hammond, Lamb, O’Brien, Tansey, Woodcroft

The motion was **not carried**.

The debate returned to the amendment. In debate, it was suggested that the amendment was not necessary and that the cost estimates should be made available with the other information, rather than in advance of the other information. It was noted that there has already been a commitment as part of the plan for Stage One to publish cost estimates as part of the consultation. There was a concern among some that, if only the findings of Five Rivers were published, it would be an incomplete picture. As chair of the Task and Finish Group, Councillor Hammond agreed that the cost information should be included regardless of the amendment.

Councillor Kellermann, as the Proposer, suggested the minor removal of the words “in advance and” from the amendment. This was supported by the Seconder, Councillor Bayliss.

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Kellermann, Quincey
Against: Councillors Botten, Boxall, Eyre, Lamb, O’Brien, Tansey, Woodcroft
Abstained: Councillor Hammond

The amendment was **not carried**.

Thus, on the proposal of Councillor Bayliss, seconded by Councillor O’Brien, it was

RESOLVED:
To authorise the Town Clerk to continue preparations for a public consultation on King’s Pond, with up to £10,000 to be drawn from the King’s Pond earmarked reserve.

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Botten, Boxall, Eyre, Hammond, Lamb, O’Brien, Tansey, Woodcroft
Against: Councillor Kellermann, Quincey

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32 **<u>Minutes of the King’s Pond Task & Finish Group</u>**

Councillor Quincey proposed that the minutes of the King’s Pond Task & Finish Group meeting held on 1 June 2026 be noted. This was seconded by Councillor Eyre, and it was

RESOLVED
To note the minutes of the King’s Pond Task and Finish Group of 1 June 2026.

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Botten, Boxall, Eyre, Hammond, Lamb, O’Brien, Quincey, Tansey, Woodcroft
Abstained: Councillor Kellermann

33 **<u>Landscape Value Statement Request</u>**

Councillor Boxall proposed that the Council note the advice of the Local Planning Authority on the suggestion of a landscape value statement for Windmill Hill. This was seconded by Councillor Bayliss. Councillor Kellermann wished to state for the record that he supported landscape value statements for many sites in and around the parish. It was

RESOLVED
To note the advice of the Local Planning Authority on the suggestion of a landscape value statement for Windmill Hill.

All councillors voted in favour.

34 **<u>Strategic Transport Plan</u>**

Councillor Boxall proposed that the Council endorse the request for an Area Transport Strategy for Alton and Holybourne. Councillor Boxall wished to record thanks for County Councillor Emily Young for pursuing this matter with Hampshire County Council and securing a commitment from officers that it is on their work plan. The motion was seconded by Councillor Hammond, and it was

RESOLVED
To endorse the request for an Area Transport Strategy for Alton and Holybourne.

All councillors voted in favour.

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35 **Statement of Accounts Q1 2026/27**

Councillor Tansey proposed that the Council approve the accounts statements. This was seconded by Councillor Eyre. Councillor Botten wished it to be noted that by approving the accounts, councillors are taking collectively responsibility for their accuracy. Councillor Kellermann wished it to be noted that this is why he would abstain as he had not been into the detail of the account beyond the published papers. It was

RESOLVED
To approve:
1. The Balance Sheet to 30 June 2026;
2. The Income and Expenditure Report for the period to 30 June 2026;
3. Bank reconciliations to 30 June 2026;
4. Property fund statement to 31 May 2026; and
5. Payments over £500, issued between 1 April and 30 June 2026.

In favour: Councillors Bayliss, Botten, Boxall, Eyre, Hammond, Lamb, O'Brien, Quincey, Tansey, Woodcroft
Abstained: Councillor Kellermann

The meeting closed at 8.27pm.

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Item 7

Subject: **Planning application EHDC-26-0744-OUT**

Report to: Full Council, 9 September 2026

Report of: Town Clerk

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1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To determine the Council's responses as statutory consultee on the planning application, "Land adjacent to Baycroft Cottages, Lower Neatham Mill Lane, Neatham, Alton, Hampshire".

2. Main considerations

2.1 The application documents can be found at https://publicaccess.easthants.gov.uk/planning/index.html?fa=getApplication&id=204350. This outline application is for 6 dwellings. It is situated in the parish of Binsted, immediately touching Alton parish all along its north-west and south-west boundaries (the three upper straight lines and all along Lower Neatham Mill Lane in the map below).

3. Recommendation

3.1 The Council is recommended:

To authorise the Clerk/Deputy Clerk to submit an appropriate response to application EHDC-26-0744-OUT, Land adjacent to Baycroft Cottages, Lower Neatham Mill Lane, Neatham, Alton, Hampshire, based on the points made by councillors.

Item 8

Subject: **Curtis Museum Joint Management Committee**

Report to: Full Council, 9 September 2026

Report of: Town Clerk

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1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To agree councillor representation on the Hampshire Cultural Trust's Joint Management Committee for the Curtis Museum.

2. Background

2.1 The Curtis Museum in Alton is owned by Hampshire County Council and run under a contract with the Hampshire Cultural Trust.

2.2 Alton Town Council agreed at the 8 July 2026 meeting to grant fund £20,000 to the Trust as a lifeline for the financial year 2027/28 to enable the Trust and the community to develop a vision and a more sustainable future for the museum. The background is set out in the report to that meeting.

2.3 The Trust has developed terms of reference for a Joint Management Committee to advise it on options for the Museum during this critical period of potential transition.

3. Main considerations

3.1 The Trust's terms of reference for the Joint Management Committee are attached. Alton Town Council is invited to appoint two of its councillors to sit on this committee. Nominations have been received from Cllr Botten that Cllrs Boxall and Tansey are the council's nominees, and this is therefore reflected in the resolution below. If there are any further nominations received by the Clerk by 7pm on Monday, 7 September, the number will exceed the two places being offered and the Council will have to elect the two appointees.

4. Recommendation

4.1 The Council is recommended:

1) To appoint Cllr Barbara Tansey to the Curtis Museum Joint Management Committee; and

2) To appoint Cllr Ginny Boxall to the Curtis Museum Joint Management Committee.

HAMPSHIRE CULTURAL TRUST

Curtis Museum Joint Management Committee
Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Curtis Museum Joint Management Committee (JMC) is established as a local advisory forum to support the ongoing sustainability and financial resilience of the Curtis Museum in Alton. Its purpose is to provide operator, Hampshire Cultural Trust (HCT), an avenue for structured consultation with key local partners and to provide transparency of decision making to invested partners.

Through to March 2028, the JMC will inform the development and delivery of a viable business plan for the Curtis Museum, including addressing the operating deficit, strengthening the Museum's local role, and developing a long-term vision for the Museum as part of the cultural fabric of Alton.

2. Principles

- **Advisory status:** The JMC is advisory, making recommendations through HCT's existing governance framework
- **Local partnership:** The JMC represents a local partnership, with membership given to parties actively invested collaboratively working to inform and support the Museum's future
- **No transfer of liability:** Participation in the JMC does not transfer responsibility or liability for the museum, its collection, staff, volunteers, premises or operations to any partner organisation.

3. Governance structure

The JMC will operate within the following three-tier structure:

Tier	Role	Responsibilities
Tier 1: HCT governance and operations	Decision-making and delivery accountability	HCT retains operational responsibility for the Museum under its agreement with HCC. HCT will determine and approve operational plans, budgets, staffing, collections matters, compliance requirements, risk management and any recommendations requiring formal approval.
Tier 2: Curtis Museum JMC	Advisory oversight and partnership forum	The JMC will monitor progress, review information, test assumptions, develop recommendations, coordinate partner input, advocate for the Museum and oversee the work of task-and-finish groups.
Tier 3: Task-and-finish groups	Focused practical delivery support	Time-limited groups may be established by the JMC to progress specific areas of work such as consultation, fundraising, redevelopment planning, audience development, volunteer engagement, quick-win improvements or other agreed priorities.

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5. Remit of the JMC

The JMC will support the sustainable future of Curtis Museum by:

1. Supporting the development of a shared long-term vision for the Museum
2. Identifying opportunities for consideration around partnership working, external funding, fundraising, sponsorship, in-kind support and community-led activity
3. Supporting stakeholder and community consultation and communication, ensuring that local insight informs recommendations and future planning and the local community is updated on decisions
4. Supporting the promotion of Curtis Museum as a local destination, community resource and cultural venue.
5. Monitoring progress against the agreed business and sustainability plan for Curtis Museum.
6. Reviewing progress and outputs from any task-and-finish groups established under these Terms of Reference.
7. Making recommendations to HCT, and where relevant to partner organisations, for consideration through their respective governance arrangements.

Membership

The standing membership of the JMC will be:

Organisation/group	Member allocation	Member/s name	Reserve/Observer
Hampshire Cultural Trust	Two representatives	Paul Sapwell, Chief Executive Ian Grierson, Community Manager Curtis Museum	Reserve: Rebekah Jeffery, Director of Strategy and Partnerships
East Hampshire District Council	Two representatives (member and officer)	Member: Cllr Emily Young, Alton Westbrooke Officer: Hannah Robbins, Community Development and Engagement Officer	Observer: TBC Reserve: TBC
Alton Town Council	Two representatives (2x members)	TBC	Observer: Tom Horwood, Town Clerk (Chief Executive) Reserve: TBC

HAMPSHIRE CULTURAL TRUST

Organisation/group	Member allocation	Member/s name	Reserve/Observer
Curtis Museum Community Partnership	One representative	TBC	Reserve: TBC
Hampshire County Council	One representative	Marco Dias, Strategic Manager (Policy, Programmes & Assurance)	Reserve: TBC
Curtis Museum volunteers	One representative	TBC	Reserve: TBC

The composition of the JMC may be reviewed at any time to ensure that its membership remains appropriate and effective. Any changes to membership will be discussed and agreed by the JMC.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Chair –** the JMC will be chaired by EDHC Ward Councillor for Alton Westbrooke
- **Secretariat –** support will be provided by East Hants District Council
- **Members** - are expected to attend regularly, prepare for meetings, contribute constructively, share relevant insight from their organisation or community role, and provide feedback to their appointing organisation or stakeholder group. Substitutes may attend by prior agreement with the Chair where a standing member is unavailable.
- **Observers and contributors** – the Chair may invite additional parties to attend for specific agenda items where their input would assist the JMC.

Conduct

- Members may receive information that is commercially sensitive, confidential, personal or not yet approved for public release. Such information must not be shared outside the JMC unless the Chair or relevant originating organisation has agreed that it may be shared, or there are obligations under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000
- Formal public statements, press activity, external briefings and social media content relating specifically and exclusively to JMC business must be agreed in advance with HCT and any other organisation referred to or affected. Any public statements or comments made on JMC activity as part of comment on broader topics should be in keeping with agreed positions of the JMC, and be made in the spirit of supporting the JMC to work effectively.
- Members must act constructively and in the shared interests of securing a sustainable future for Curtis Museum.
- The JMC will seek to work by consensus. Where consensus cannot be reached, the minutes should record the range of views and any recommendation agreed by the Chair for escalation.

HAMPSHIRE CULTURAL TRUST

Meetings

- The JMC will meet on a monthly basis through to January 2028
- Additional meetings may be convened by the Chair where urgent or substantial matters require discussion.
- Meetings may be held in person, online or hybrid, as agreed by the Chair and secretariat.
- Agenda and papers should normally be circulated at least three working days before each meeting.
- Minutes and an action log should be circulated following each meeting and approved at the next meeting.
- A meeting may proceed where HCT, at least one local authority partner and at least one community representative are present. If this attendance is not achieved, the Chair may proceed with discussion but defer any formal recommendation.

Adoption

These Terms of Reference take effect once approved by HCT and noted by the JMC. They do not replace any funding agreement, lease, collections agreement, service agreement, grant agreement or formal governance document of HCT or any partner organisation. Terms to be reviewed by 31 March 2027.

Item 9

Subject: **Governance: Committees and Co-option Policy**

Report to: Full Council, 9 September 2026

Report of: Town Clerk

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1. <u>Purpose of the report</u>

1.1 To agree a change to the Planning Committee's terms of reference and to review the Co-option Policy.

2. <u>Main considerations</u>

2.1 The Planning Committee's terms of reference indicate that the committee will be called as required in response to planning consultations issued by the local planning authority, East Hampshire District Council. All town councillors are members of the committee and the quorum is 7. Full Council meetings can also consider planning applications, and often have done, but the quorum is 5. It is proposed to change the committee's quorum to 5 to match the quorum of the Full Council.

2.2 At the 20 May 2026 Council meeting, a proposal to approve the creation of an Open Spaces Committee was deferred. As the proposer has sent apologies for this meeting, his proposal with draft terms of reference will be considered at the next Council meeting.

2.3 Parish and town councils have the power to co-opt a new councillor to a vacancy if a by-election is not called by residents with the statutory timescale. The council's Co-option Policy is due for reconsideration and, having consulted with councillors, a draft amended policy is appended for approval.

3. <u>Recommendations</u>

3.1 The Council is recommended:

1) To change the quorum of the Planning Committee to 5 councillors;

2) To adopt the appended revised Co-option Policy.

Alton Town Council Procedure for the Co-option of a Councillor

1. Introduction

1.1 This procedure is based on the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Legal Briefing L15-08 – Good practice for selection of candidates for co-option to local Councils.

1.2 Parish Councils are permitted to exercise the power to co-opt a person on to the Council to fill a casual vacancy when the requirements to hold an election have not been met (i.e. the vacancy was the subject of a public notice and less than 10 registered electors requested a by-election by the published deadline). The elections process is the responsibility of the Returning Officer appointed by East Hampshire District Council.

2. Advertisements

2.1 NALC recommends that Councils always give public notice of vacancies because this makes the process of co-option open and transparent and should attract more potential candidates.

2.2 Once the Returning Officer has advised that there will be no by-election, Alton Town Council will advertise a vacancy for four weeks on its noticeboards, on its website (www.alton.gov.uk), through social media and in the *Alton Herald*, with an application form and closing date for applications.

3. Application Process

3.1 All potential candidates should put their application in writing (an application form is published on the website or available by other means on request) and provide the following information to assist Council in making its decision:

i. Name, address and contact details;
ii. Reason for wishing to be co-opted as a Councillor;
iii. Confirmation of eligibility to become a Councillor.

~~3.2 Prior to the next available Full Council meeting: i) The Town Clerk will check that each candidate is qualified to become a Councillor and is not disqualified from being a Councillor as set out in the Local Government Act 1972 s79 and s80;~~

3.2 It is the candidate's responsibility in law to check that they are qualified to hold the public office of councillor and to make a declaration. It is a criminal offence to make a fraudulent declaration (Representation of the People Act 1983 and other legislation). While the Town Clerk may not vet applications, the Clerk will review each application and check that each candidate is aware of their legal responsibility.

3.3~~2~~ ~~ii)~~ Prior to the next available Full Council meeting, t~~T~~he completed application forms will be circulated to Councillors with the agenda ~~for the meeting~~. All such documents will be treated by the Clerk and Councillors as strictly private and confidential apart from the name of the candidate and the accompanying reason for wishing to be co-opted.

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3.~~3~~4 At the next Full Council meeting:

i. The election of the councillor will be an agenda item on the public part of the agenda. Candidates will be invited to speak for up to three minutes (or communicate in another way as appropriate) in support of their statement of why they would like to be co-opted. Councillors may ask questions of each candidate for up to a further three minutes.

ii. If a Councillor is a relative of or has business connections with any candidate which may be perceived as prejudicial, that Councillor should declare an interest and withdraw from the meeting and will not be allowed to vote.

iii. Voting is in accordance with Standing Orders and will be in public. A voting form may be produced depending on the number of candidates, but the voting choices will still be published.

iv. The successful candidate should receive an absolute majority vote of those present and voting. If there are more than two candidates for the vacancy and none of them at the first count has an overall majority, the candidate with the fewest votes should be eliminated and the remainder put to the vote again. The process should be repeated as necessary until one candidate has an overall majority. The Mayor has a second and casting vote in the event of a tie.

v. The successfully co-opted candidate will become a Councillor in ~~his/her~~their own right, with immediate effect once the Declaration of Acceptance of Office has been signed. The successful candidate will also need confirm that they will comply with and abide by the Town Council's Code of Conduct. The Registration of Interests Form must be completed within 28 calendar days of appointment.

vi. The co-opted Councillor is no different in law to any other Councillor and will serve until the next normal election.

4. Dates of adoption and review

~~4.1 This Procedure for the Co-option of a Councillor was adopted by Council on 9th July 2025.~~

4.1~~2~~ Reviewed and adopted: 9 September 2026. Next review date: September 2028.

MINUTES OF THE KING'S POND TASK & FINISH GROUP
Tuesday 23 June 2026

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

1. **Apologies**

Councillor Chris Botten (CB)

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 1 June 2026 were proposed by JQ and EP seconded, with voting in favour (PE abstained due to absence).

3. **Update on Stage One Design**

HC, DH and TH have had two Teams meetings with Five Rivers so far. They have mainly been reviewing everything and just getting started. Currently on target for the end of August as planned. They will keep us updated throughout.

4. **Review of Actions from last meeting**

- Silt sampling – Five Rivers said that it would be more useful for Stage Two. Not really needed at this stage. It has therefore not been booked in.
- DH to contact EA fisheries man. Have so far only exchanged some text messages.
- Signage about feeding – some have been put up but more need doing. Ecology Partnership said they had some samples they could send over. TP also had some examples he will send to HC.
- No further response received yet from EA.

- Hampshire Legal Services sent a response regarding the advice sought on the dam which was discussed.
- **ACTION – Follow the legal advice received – TH to draft and send letters as appropriate.**
- **ACTION – Get advice from appropriate engineer yet to be done.** TP had sent list of engineers to TH. TH to select three and send enquiry to them.
- Date now set to meet with HCC re drains (7/7/26). Date not yet requested with TW.
- **ACTION – TH to chase TW regarding date to discuss drain from Racecourse estate.**
- DH has added this drain to the engineering sub projects list but has not yet circulated the updated list **ACTION – DH to circulate updated list.**
- NB has circulated draft consultation proposal.
- TH has made some initial enquiries about survey companies.

5. **Angling Suggestion**

It was generally agreed that angling is not a good idea on a public open space such as this. Conflicts arise between anglers and members of the public, particularly when bait adds to pollution and hooks get left lying around that can be a problem for dogs. Members felt they would not want to make a decision on this until they knew which option would be going forward for the pond.

ACTION – TH to draft response and run it by TP.

6. **Village Green Status**

ATC has never entertained the idea of building houses on King's Pond. While it is difficult to stop rumours circulating, it must be clear that there is absolutely no basis in fact.

TH had thoroughly researched the idea of applying for Village Green Status and his report was as follows:

Legal ownership is the first and best protection. The owner of King's Pond is ATC, which does not wish to develop the site. Therefore, the question is academic.

If, in theory, the town council wanted the site to be developed, ATC would have to sell it, as the council does not have the powers to build houses. ATC has a "statutory trust" obligation under the Open Spaces Act 1906 to hold and manage land for the public's enjoyment. The law sets out a very strict and onerous legal procedure to dispose of such land, including public notification and the formal consideration of objections. To proceed, ATC would need to demonstrate that the site is surplus to the requirements of public amenity and undertake an open consultation. Given that King's Pond is maintained as a "public open space", is very popular and is unique in the local area, it is hard to conceive of how it could be considered surplus. The Local Government Act 1972 indicates that ministerial consent is likely be required. The law on this is complex and there are legal cases and judgments that discuss it. I expect that an attempted disposal of King's Pond would be rapidly challenged in the courts and would be very expensive to pursue, as well as find against disposal.

If the site were sold, a new owner is still subject to the site's protections in Planning law. They would need to secure planning permission from the Local Planning Authority. The National Planning Policy Framework requires the benefits of losing public open space to be greater than the harm, which would be exceptionally difficult to argue for King's Pond. East Hampshire's Local Plan prioritises creating more public open space, so removing a large popular area of public open space would be very difficult. King's Pond is designated as "local green space" in the Neighbourhood Plan under the Localism Act (CH5). The Plan supports "retention of existing public open spaces and the provision of new ones" (p.61) where development will only happen in "very special circumstances" (p.63). A planning application would require the usual statutory public consultation. An application to build houses at King's Pond would be fiercely and rightly resisted on many planning grounds. All of this presents a massive hurdle to anyone trying to secure planning permission. Local green space status is recommended as the strongest protection for most public open space.

It has been suggested that "town and village green" status (under the Commons Act 2006, the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013, the Inclosure Act 1857 and the Commons Act 1876) might provide even stronger protection as it would provide a permanent right for residents to use the land for recreation. To qualify normally, evidence must be provided to prove that the community has used the land for "lawful sports and pastimes" for at least twenty years "as of right" (i.e. without permission), which is the opposite of "by right" (i.e. with permission). It is arguable as to whether the public's legal access to King's Pond is "is of right" or "by right". To resolve this would require specialist legal advice and the "commons registration authority" would ultimately make the decision. An application does not have to be made by the landowner; private individuals can apply. However, a landowner's application can waive the requirement to prove community use. Hampshire County Council is the commons registration authority. The process can take some time, including potentially a public enquiry (less likely if the landowner is supportive). This is an option for ATC, but it is not necessary to incur these costs because ATC has no wish to sell the site and there are substantial legal protections already in place.

Another route, that can be pursued by a community group of at least 21 people, is to apply to East Hampshire District Council to register the site as an asset of community value for five years, under the Localism Act 2011. If successful, this does not prevent a sale, but it does force the selling landowner to pause for six months to allow a community group to bid to own it. At the end of the six months, the landowner must consider any bid from the community. Inclusion on the district's register is sometimes cited in planning decisions as it demonstrates the land's positive contribution to local social wellbeing, but it normally has limited weight unless there are also other complementary reasons. There is no fee for applying. In practice, the protections for King's Pond that are already in place are stronger than those that would exist for an asset of community value.

King's Pond is part of the River Wey. Aside from the practical difficulties of building houses on a river and pond, it would be astonishing if any housebuilder thought that it could be at all viable commercially.

King's Pond benefits from substantial legal protections, in addition to any practical and financial viability factors, that prevent redevelopment. Seeking additional protections is not necessary.

The T&FG agreed that it was not necessary to pursue this further and noted that this discussion will be reported to Full Council for noting and would be published.

7. **Draft Consultation Plan**

Documents reviewed:

1. Planning document
2. Draft proposed leaflet to be send out to 16,000+ homes
3. Draft questionnaire

Dates are provisionally booked for the briefings. HC / NB to arrange pop-up sessions at Alton Sports Centre, Train Station, Treloars, Alton College, King's Pond, events.

JQ suggested role playing done before the public sessions.

Make clear statement that the consultation will include designs, costs, etc and the financial burden on ATC / the taxpayer.

TP said he still thinks there should be a 'do nothing' option in the consultation in case the funding cannot be found. There was discussion around this as there was terrible backlash when we tried to add in other options last year. TH said it can certainly go in the report to Full Council.

Presentations need to say why ATC has chosen to do the consultation in the way it has.

JQ said that an independent survey company needs to be appointed to run the actual survey. TH said that NB has put together a good survey but agreed that we could explore whether there are companies who could run it and evaluate the response for us. TP said it is about the perception of impartiality, nothing to do with competence.

The presentation also needs to make it clear that the consultation will inform the council who have to ultimately make the decision.

ACTION – updated documents to be circulated to the group for further discussion

ACTION – plan to be taken to Full Council in July

8. **Date of next meetings**

T&FG meeting – Monday 13 July, 11am – 12.30pm, Alton Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, GU34 1HD

C&SFG meeting - Wednesday 15 July 6.30pm – for members of the group and T&FG to go through plans for the consultation - Alton Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, GU34 1HD

T&FG meeting – Tuesday 11th August, 9.30 – 11am, Alton Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, GU34 1HD

MINUTES OF THE KING'S POND TASK & FINISH GROUP
Monday 13 July 2026

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

1. **Apologies**

Tom Horwood – Town Clerk (TH)

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 23 June 2026 were approved with two amendments.

3. **Consultation Plan**

A workshop was held for councillors on 1st July, with some of the same concerns being raised as were raised by this group.

Dates have been changed as councillors were concerned about the timing with everything having to be prepared very quickly once the work by Five Rivers is completed, and therefore wanted it to go to Full Council in February rather than December. They also wanted to see an 8-week consultation rather than a 6-week. HC and NB pointed out that the feedback from previous consultations had been against holding consultations over the winter, and particularly over Christmas, and so that was the reason for aiming for September / October. However, an additional week has been added to the consultation period in order to attempt to address this, so it will be 9 weeks, running from 2nd November to 4th January. The plus side is that there is more time to pull all the information together and get the wording correct.

The Council approved the budget for the consultation at the Full Council meeting on 8th July. TH has asked for recommendations of companies to carry out the survey and the analysis but has yet to approach them.

ACTION – TH to approach survey companies as soon as possible.

The flyer being posted out to all households will contain information about the consultation, including dates and locations where people can find out all the information and how they can complete the survey.

It was noted that it is important to keep everything sent out neutral so as not to prejudice what people think. They need to be allowed to form their own opinion once they have all the facts.

Members asked that we get all the consultation dates in the Herald if possible.

It was noted that DH, TH and HC are having fortnightly catch-ups with Five Rivers to keep the communication flowing both ways and ensure the project is on track.

4. **Stage One Design Progress**

There was discussion of the initial drawings with lots of notes made to feed back to Five Rivers.

CA pointed out that it is important that Five Rivers are aware of some of the concerns that have already been raised by residents, for example the reduction of the size of the pond in the P&R option and wanting to maintain the largest body of water possible.

5. **Engineering Sub-projects Update**

A meeting with HCC Highways engineers last week was interesting and productive. There were some surprises, such as HCC's drawings show the gullies draining into soakaways but they actually drain into one big drain that then empties into King's Pond. HCC will flush through and survey the drains and update their plans. There are also a few other actions that they can hopefully take to reduce the flooding on Ashdell Road but we need as much evidence of the situation as possible to prove the need for improvements.

ACTION – Ensure the consultation makes clear that we are trying to get something done about the run-off from drains into KP.

6. **Review of Outstanding Actions from last meeting**

- HC met with Simon Bizley regarding placing bat boxes at King's Pond and Flood Meadows and several locations have been identified. It was agreed that ATC should go ahead with this.
- HCC Legal is drafting letters for Waterside Ct ManCo and the freeholder. They expect to send them to TH on 17/7.
- Civil engineers. Requests sent to 3 on the approved list. The independent one bounced back, and TH cannot find him online. He substituted with a different engineer.
- One reply has been received stating they do not have capacity for this work. No response from others yet. TH will chase those who have not replied and send to others on the govt list when he is back. They will be gradually further afield.
- Survey companies. TH has sought some recommendations for companies and will send out requests for quotes when he is back.
- Angling. TH has sent a draft of a response as agreed and will send when he returns.

7. **Date of next meetings**

C&SFG meeting - Wednesday 15 July 6.30pm – for members of the group and T&FG to go through plans for the consultation - Alton Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, GU34 1HD

T&FG meeting – Tuesday 11th August, 9.30 – 11am, Alton Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, GU34 1HD

Item 11

Subject: **Implications of Local Government Reorganisation on the Community Infrastructure Levy**

Report to: Full Council, 9 September 2026

Report of: Town Clerk

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1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To seek endorsement from councillors to write to district councils concerning the future of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

2. Background

2.1 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is the Government's project to replace district and county councils with unitary councils. Town and parish councils are not directly affected. LGR will take place in Hampshire in April 2028. Our parish will sit within a new "Mid Hampshire" Council covering the almost all of the current districts of East Hampshire, New Forest, Test Valley and Winchester.[1]

2.2 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which can be levied by the local planning authority (currently East Hampshire District Council [EHDC]) on new development in the area.[2] EHDC retains 75% of CIL and passes 25% to Alton Town Council; both then award the funds in response to applications. ATC's total CIL expenditure in the financial year 2025/26 was £177,690. £205,373 has been allocated in this financial year, which has exhausted the council's CIL reserve for now.

3. Main considerations

3.1 The indicative housing figure for Alton and Holybourne is 3,413 between now and 2040, a growth of around 40%. In addition, several hundred are allocated for surrounding parishes that rely to a great extent on Alton as a hub for services.

3.2 An immediate consequence of LGR is that the "local planning authority" will be "Mid Hampshire Council", covering 960 square miles and serving a population of 485,000. The "CIL Charging Authority" will be the new unitary council, which – aside from the minority statutory allocation passed to parish councils[3] - is not constrained by law to apply receipts from development in the local area and may prioritise need elsewhere.

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-reorganisation-decision-letter-to-hampshire-isle-of-wight-portsmouth-and-southampton-council-leaders

[2] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy

[3] 15% for a parish with no Neighbourhood Development Plan; 25% if there is a Plan.

3.3 It is in the interests of all localities for this issue to be raised with the current Charging Authorities[4] and a consensus sought on how CIL could operate in the future, recognising that the new unitary council will be sovereign and may change the policy decisions of its predecessors. To this end, the following draft letter is suggested to be sent to the Chief Executives of the district councils who are preparing for the new Mid Hampshire unitary council.

"Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) adds pressure on Hampshire's public services. Implications are coming into stark relief as it draws near. I write to raise one specific concern about the combination of reorganisation and the housing crisis that are relevant to all the towns and villages in Hampshire.

"For context, local communities do not usually oppose housing per se. *They recognise that there is a shortage of homes, particularly those that are genuinely affordable, because they have direct experience of it. But communities are concerned about sustainability, environmental impact and the consequences for established settlements. Where there is new housing, communities and parish councils want them to be successful.*

"Secondly, Hampshire's district and county councils will cease to exist in 2028. The new unitaries – such as Mid Hampshire Council – will be new and sovereign. While respecting that the new council will take its own policy decisions, the current district councils have the opportunity to set the scene, shape the direction of travel and pass on a legacy.

"Where major development occurs, the Planning system recognises that investment is required to build infrastructure and mitigate the pressures on existing local services and facilities. In the new Mid Hampshire Council area, three of the four districts are not able to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and have suspended the development of their new Local Plans.

"The Planning process provides developers with added strength when (a) a 5-year supply has not been met, and (b) the Local Plan policies are aging and – so they argue – become 'out of date'. Every application now coming through makes these arguments, and developments are approved that otherwise would have been refused, whether by the Local Planning Authority or at appeal. Consequently, Planning decisions may be more tolerant of harm than they otherwise would have been.

"Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is one of the main tools for mitigating harm. Current district councils allocate substantial CIL funds that they collect from developers based on the scale of the new development. Where there are parishes (e.g. most of Mid Hampshire), the local parish council can allocate 15% of the CIL from developments in their areas or 25% if a neighbourhood development plan is in place. In

[4] East Hampshire District Council, New Forest District Council, Test Valley Borough Council and Winchester City Council will pass their authority to a new unitary council. The New Forest and South Downs National Park Authorities will retain their current authority.

this way, parish councils have a critical tool to alleviate the local harms of large-scale house building for existing and new residents.

"Mid Hampshire Council will take on the CIL allocation from the district councils. It will allocate based on the needs of the whole vast area covering nearly ½ million people and 960 square miles, from New Milton to Grayshott. For a large development in a village or town anywhere in Hampshire, the local parish council could allocate just 15% of the levy for local mitigation and have to compete for the remaining 85% with settlements as diverse and distant as Alton, Andover, Lymington and Winchester, leaving the local pressures caused by development unmitigated and reducing public trust in the fairness of council decision-making.

"Do the current Local Planning Authorities support the principle that the payments from large local developments that were designed to provide local infrastructure and relieve the pressures caused by them, should be retained locally in a meaningful way? If they do, what can be done about it?"

3.4 There are many other Planning matters that could be raised with the Local Planning Authorities. It is proposed that this letter be focused on the single critical issue of CIL to provide the best chance of a focused and supportive response. Other matters can be raised separately at the appropriate times.

4. Recommendation

4.1 The Council is recommended:

To authorise the Town Clerk to write to the Chief Executives of the four district councils in the Mid Hampshire area to raise concerns about how the Community Infrastructure Levy will be applied in future to mitigate the local harm of future development.

Item 12

Subject: **Anstey Park playground and skatepark**

Report to: Full Council, 9 September 2026

Report of: Town Clerk

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1. <u>Purpose of the report</u>

1.1 To update councillors on the timetable and content of proposed public consultation.

2. <u>Background</u>

2.1 Anstey Park playground is tired and in need of refurbishment. Before commencing a procurement process, a public consultation to inform the content of the playground would be helpful.

2.2 In January 2026, Alton Town Council resolved to extend the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) in the park, which would entail removal of the skatepark. There has been no decision as to whether to reinstate a skatepark on the site or whether – in the light of the larger and popular skatepark at Jubilee Park – a skatepark at Anstey Park is warranted. As one idea could be for a fenced area to be created within the current footprint of the playground adjacent to the pump track, the consultation could explore the future of the skatepark.

3. <u>Main considerations</u>

3.1 Our current indicative timetable is as follows, but will be revised following this meeting, particularly if further formal Council discussions are required.

- Sep/Oct 2026: public consultation
- Oct-Dec: procurement
- 10 Dec: Council meeting to award contract
- Apr-Jul 2027: works on site
- Jul: re-open playground

3.2 A draft consultation questionnaire is attached. The questions are deliberately open so as not to constrain ideas from users of Anstey Park. Laminated posters will be displayed at the facilities with a QR code to the questionnaire online. We will also contact schools and publicise the consultation on social media, our website and in *The Altonian*.

3.3 Facilities on the south-west side of Anstey Park have been under discussion for some years, including the Multi-Use Games Area, basketball hoop, skatepark, pump track and playground. The 28 January 2026 Council meeting agreed to extend the MUGA, which would entail the removal of the skatepark. This consultation is an opportunity to gather public views on whether the public would like a new skate park and possible locations, in addition to gathering opinions on the play equipment to be included in the refurbished play area, inclusion of shade, seating, etc.

4. Recommendation

4.1 The Council is recommended:

To agree to commence consultation on the future of the Anstey Park playground and skatepark as outlined in the report.

APPENDIX: Anstey Park playground and skate park – Draft Questionnaire

Alton Town Council would like to refresh the playground at Anstey Park and would like to hear the views of those who use it. The council is also considering the future of the skate park next to the courts on Anstey Road. A few ideas have been raised, and nothing has been decided yet. Please answer these questions to help inform the council at this early stage. Thank you.

Play equipment The play equipment in the playground needs refreshing. What equipment do you like? Are there any that you would like more or less of? For example, swings, roundabouts, climbing, money bars, balance beams, a playhouse, game boards, zip line.

Materials We will be thinking about material that is hard-wearing, environmentally sustainable and affordable. What would you like the play equipment to be made of? For example, softwood, hardwood, steel, recycled robust plastic.

Surfaces under play equipment Floor surfacing should be safe, hard-wearing, easy to keep in good condition, affordable and as environmentally sustainable as possible. What do you think would be the best surface? For example, bright colours, rubber, artificial grass, grass or other natural surfaces.

Surfaces surrounding play equipment What surfaces between the play equipment would work best? For example, grass, tarmac paths, something else.

Seating What kind of seating should be included and roughly how many? For example, benches, picnic tables, specific seating for children or adults, shading.

Access Do you have any comments about current access to the playground? What access issues should we consider in designing a new playground?

Skate park Following consultation with users of the site, the council resolved to extend the multi-use games courts by Anstey Road, which means that the skate park will need to be removed. There is a large skate park at Jubilee Playing Fields. Should there continue to be a small skate park in Anstey Park? Could it be a fenced off area between the pump track and the existing playground area, or should it be somewhere else in Anstey Park?

About you This is optional but the information would be helpful	
Age: Under 11 ☐ 12-15 ☐ 16-19 ☐ Over 19 ☐	I live in Alton town ☐ Holybourne village ☐ Somewhere else ☐
If you would like to be kept informed, please add your email address here:	

Item 13

Subject: **Energy contract renewals**

Report to: Full Council, 9 September 2026

Report of: Assistant to the Town Clerk

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1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To seek a decision on energy contract renewals. Councillors are to be aware that energy costs change daily so all the costs provided were sourced on Wednesday 2 September 2026 to ensure data is comparable.

2. Background

2.1 In the past, the Town Council has signed up for 3-year contracts and have remained with EON on a direct contract as opposed to using a broker or changing to another supplier.

2.2 Currently, the energy contracts for the Assembly Rooms, Edgar Hall and Foodbank are through the Town Council and then charged to the tenant, this was due to tenants not being in place when the contracts were last negotiated. It is proposed that these tenants take responsibility for the utilities when the current contracts come to an end and officers will commence discussions with them. The renewal dates for these contracts are:

- Edgar Hall (Gas) – 25/4/27
- Edgar Hall (Electricity) – 25/4/27
- Foodbank (Electricity) – 28/7/27
- Assembly Rooms (Gas) – 12/3/28
- Assembly Rooms (Electricity) – 10/4/28

2.3 The Government Climate Change Levy is currently charged at £0.00801/kWh and is incorporated into the costs presented in this report. The Climate Change Levy ensures that the energy is sourced through renewable methods and so reduces the carbon emissions for the Council.

3. Main considerations

3.1 The cost of some of the energy use in the Town Council-owned and managed properties is high and so officers are looking to provide the best value for the contracts. Solar panels are being investigated for the Finnimore Pavilion, Compound at the Public Gardens, along with the two pavilions at Jubilee Park as part of renovation work.

3.2 The brokers which have provided quotes for the renewal have confirmed that the Town Council are within the renewal window and could lock in the current rates. The unit costs often increase in the winter months so there is likely to be a benefit to renewing in September as opposed to waiting until the contract end dates.

Utility	Location	Contract end date
Gas	Finnimore Pavilion	28/05/2027
Gas	Town Hall	09/03/2027
Electricity	Finnimore Pavilion	20/07/2027
Electricity	Town Hall	14/02/2027
Electricity	Charles Read Pavilion	05/02/2027
Electricity	Harry Baker Pavilion	14/02/2027
Electricity	MUGA	14/02/2027
Electricity	Compound, Public Gardens	21/11/2026
Electricity	Workshop, Anstey Park	14/02/2027

3.3 Current costs from various providers are below:

Supplier	Contract duration (yrs)	Annual cost
NY Energy	1	£27,775.78
EON	1	£28,921.91
British Gas	1	£25,885.65
NY Energy	2	£27,328.33
EON	2	£28,425.30
British Gas	2	£29,121.11
NY Energy	3	£27,479.94
EON	3	£28,624.76
British Gas	3	£25,252.90
EDF	3	£24,728.59

4. <u>Recommendation</u>

4.1 The Council is recommended:

1) To approve contracting with EDF for a 3-year contract,

2) To renew the contracts now, rather than wait until each is due for renewal.

Item 14

Subject: **Grounds maintenance vehicles**

Report to: Full Council, 9 September 2026

Report of: Assistant to Town Clerk

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1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To update councillors on progress with procuring electric vehicles and seek approval to purchases within this financial year.

2. Background

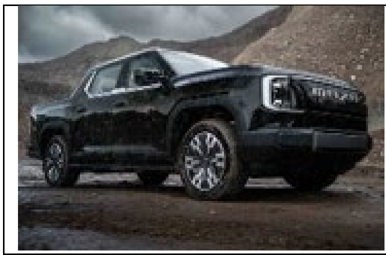
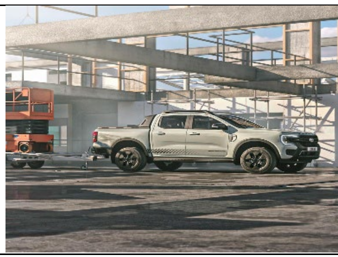
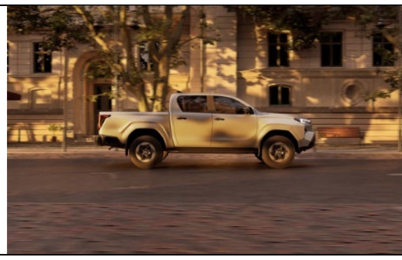
2.1 At the budget workshop in November 2025, the council agreed a budget of £50,000 per year for the next three years to facilitate changing the three diesel grounds vehicles to electric or hybrid.

2.2 Currently, the Grounds Team has two vans, Citroen Berlingo and a Renault Kango, and one pickup, a Toyota Hilux, all of which have diesel engines. Annually the Town Council buys an average of 3,500 litres of diesel a year with a carbon footprint of 9,644kgCO2e and a cost of £5,200. A third of the diesel is for the two tractors for which the Town Council does not currently have a viable electric option for. Changing the three diesel vehicles may reduce the cost to the Council by £3,467 per year and 6,430 kgCO2e.

3. Options

3.1 There are very few all-electric pickup vehicles on the market, so the search has been extended to include hybrid. The vehicles identified were

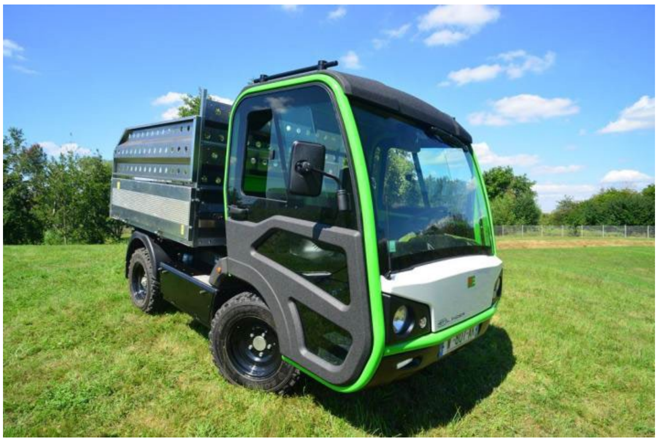
- the Maxus eTerron 9,
- the Ford Ranger XLT (hybrid),
- the Toyota Hilux Electric.

		
Maxus eTerron 9	Ford Ranger XLT	Toyota Hilux
£45,250 (excluding VAT)	£31,879 (excluding VAT)	£39,106 (excluding VAT)

3.2 Test drives were arranged for two of the three vehicles, with the Ford and the Maxus having an extended test drive of three days, allowing the grounds team to put them both through their paces. The electric Toyota Hilux is very new, and demonstrator models have been hard to source.

3.2 The Grounds Team requires a larger vehicle to move machinery (e.g. mowers) between open spaces. The Ford and the Maxus both have a towing capacity of 6.5 tonnes and a load capacity in the back of 620kg for the Maxus and 700kg for the Ford. The Toyota has a towing capacity of 1.6 to 2.0 tonnes and a payload capacity of 715kg.

3.3 In addition to the larger pick-up vehicle, the Grounds Team has suggested that a smaller utility vehicle would be suitable for emptying bins and maintenance task which require smaller tools. The Etesia ET Lander is all-electric and is limited to 30mph so would be ideal for around Alton. The configuration can be changed to suit how the vehicles will be used; this can include lockable storage, water tank, and the tipper bay. The maximum payload is 1 tonne. The cost for an ex-demonstrator model is £27,495 from TH Whites.



3.4 *Feedback from Grounds Team on vehicles following test drives*

The Ford Ranger met all the needs of the Grounds Team, and the petrol engine gave confidence that if the vehicle was needed for a longer journey that it would not run out of charge. The basic model includes plastic moulded floor pads and wipe-down upholstery which would allow the interior to be kept clean. The addition of the cover for the back would provide secure storage for equipment when working at any of the open spaces across the town. The double cab with seating for 5 people will enable the team to all travel in the same vehicles if required at a location. Ford will also provide the infrastructure to charge the vehicle.

The Maxus also met all the needs of the Grounds Team. The addition of charging sockets allowed electric tools to be recharged while away from the compounds is a very useful feature. The basic model has faux leather interior and the moulded floor pans to allow the interior to be kept clean, but it was felt that the seat covers would not be as hard wearing as the Ford option. The Team were very impressed by all the technology included with the Maxus but felt that most of would not be used by the team.

A test drive could not be arranged at this time for the Toyota Hilux. However, the Head Groundsperson and an Officer had a video call with the dealership and talked through the specification of the vehicle. The towing capacity of the vehicle is lower than the other two options and it was agreed that this would not be sufficient to tow the trailer and ride on mower. The Dealership also explained that supply is limited and there will be substantial wait on delivery. It was agreed that the Hilux be included in the options for the next review.

The Etesia ET Lander is a left-hand drive as the vehicle is made in France. The Grounds Team explained that it took a while to get used to being on the wrong side of the cab but once settled in the visibility was great and it was very easy to handle. The open back worked well for emptying bins, as the full bags could be put into the open tipper area and the tipped straight into the waste containers, meaning minimal handing of the waste. The model provided for the test drive had a lockable storage box behind the cab meaning the tipper capacity was less, however it was sufficient to empty all the bins during the busy July period. The lockable storage provided the facility to transport tools to different locations across the town. The vehicle comfortably seats two members of the Grounds Team.

3.5 *Charging facilities*

To support the recharging of the electric vehicles, officers are investigating installing solar panels and battery backup at Jubilee Playing Fields and the Public Gardens. If this is deemed viable, a further report will be brought forward for decision.

4. <u>Recommendation</u>

4.1 The Council is recommended:

1) To purchase a Ford Ranger XLT Hybrid.

2) To purchase an Etesia ET Lander EV UTV, if the total cost for the two vehicles less part-exchange from redundant vehicles (Citroen Berlingo and Renault Kango) is within the budget of £50,000.

Item 14

Subject: **Grant applications**

Report to: Full Council, 9 September 2026

Report of: Town Clerk

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1. <u>Purpose of the report</u>

1.1 To consider two grant applications.

2. <u>Background</u>

2.1 The Council has received two grant applications under our grants scheme.

3. <u>Main considerations</u>

3.1 Carols Around the Tree requests £250 for providing and running the sound system for the event on 23 December 2026. Alton Town Council has supported this in the past.

3.2 Eggar's School requests £600 to support its termly student celebrations for attendance.

3.3 Alton Town Council's grants policy states that project grants "are awarded throughout the year and are to assist organisations or clubs with special projects or one off costs which cannot be met by their normal income."

3.4 The Council has a budget of £4,000 for project and event grants in the financial year 2026/27, all of which has been committed. The remaining budget is, therefore, zero. The Town Clerk, as the statutory Responsible Financial Officer (Local Government Act s.151), advises that – regardless of the merits of the applications – the Council does not award funding due to the lack of available budget and that councillors vote against the proposed motion below. The Full Council has the authority to use its reserves if it wishes to fund these projects and councillors are free to do so if they believe that the application merits such a draw from reserves.

4. <u>Proposed motion</u>

4.1 There are two motions below:

1) To award £250 to Carols Around the Tree for their event on 23 December 2026;

2) To award £600 to Eggars School to support termly student celebrations.

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL GRANT APPLICATION

JUN 2025

PART 1 – YOUR ORGANISATION

NAME OF ORGANISATION

Carols Around the Tree

NAME OF CONTACT

STEPHEN SMILEY

ADDRESS OF CONTACT

[redacted]

TELEPHONE NO: DAYTIME [redacted]

EVENING [redacted]

EMAIL ADDRESS: [redacted]

PLEASE OUTLINE BRIEFLY THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANISATION

I organise the Carols Around the Tree event just before Christmas every year in Market Square, Alton. It is a free event for the Community to turn up and enjoy about an hour of singing Christmas Carols.

PLEASE GIVE NUMBERS IN THE ORGANISATION WHO ARE		
	A) PAID	0
	B) VOLUNTEERS	10

HOW MANY MEMBERS/BENEFICIARIES LIVE WITHIN ALTON	250

PART 2 – GRANT REQUEST

AMOUNT OF GRANT APPLIED FOR	£ 250
WHAT IS THE TOTAL COST OF THE PROJECT/ITEM/SERVICE?	£ 200 - 250
HAS MATCHED FUNDING ALREADY BEEN SECURED? IF SO, PLEASE STATE VALUE	£ N/A

WHAT IS THE GRANT TO BE USED FOR?

Providing and running the Sound System for the event on 23rd December 2026

HAS YOUR ORGANISATION APPLIED FOR A GRANT ELSEWHERE TOWARDS THIS PROJECT?	~~YES~~/NO

IF YES, PLEASE GIVE DETAILS	SECURED / PENDING

WHAT OTHER FUNDRAISING HAS BEEN DONE TOWARDS THIS ITEM/PROJECT?
EG CAKE STALL, COFFEE MORNING

N/A

YOU ARE INVITED TO GIVE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT ASSIST THE COUNCIL IN CONSIDERING YOUR APPLICATION

This is a community event where everything is done by volunteers and it has been running since December 2010. The Alton Community Band plays the music, the Gazebo for the Band is loaned by Alton Lions and we have a large attendance of community members and their children every year, weather permitting. Because of advancing years and poor health we have to source the sound system from a commercial source.

PART 3 – TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL APPLICANTS

PLEASE STATE BALANCES IN HAND AT THE END OF LAST FINANCIAL YEAR	£0
LEVEL OF UNALLOCATED RESERVES	£0
HOW MUCH DID THE GROUP RAISE LAST YEAR (EG FUNDRAISING BY THE GROUP OTHER THAN BY GRANT APPLICATION)?	£0

PLEASE ENSURE ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION IS ENCLOSED WITH THIS APPLICATION

CHECKLIST

- [x] **All relevant parts of the form completed**
- [x] **Form signed**
- [ ] **Most recent accounts (Audited or draft)**
- [ ] **Constitution/Rules**
- [ ] **Child Protection Policy (if applicable)**

Copies of this completed form and any supporting papers will appear on a Town Council Committee Agenda and will be discussed by the Committee in the presence of the Press and Public.

I DECLARE THAT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF THAT THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS CORRECT. I ALSO DECLARE THAT ANY GRANT AWARDED WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSES OUTLINED IN THIS APPLICATION AND I WILL COMPLETE A GRANT EVALUATION FORM WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF THE AWARD OF GRAT. I UNDERSTAND THAT ALTON TOWN COUNCIL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO RECLAIM THE GRANT IN THE EVENT OF IT NOT BEING USED FOR THE PURPOSE SPECIFIED.

NAME STEPHEN SMILEY

SIGNATURE [redacted]

POSITION ORGANISER DATE 12/06/2026

Completed applications should be sent to: Alton Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1HD

Applications are also available from our web site www.alton.gov.uk

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL GRANT APPLICATION

PART 1 – YOUR ORGANISATION

NAME OF ORGANISATION

Eggar's School

NAME OF CONTACT

Sophie Figg- Business Operations Manger

ADDRESS OF CONTACT

Eggar's School
London Road
Holybourne
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 4EQ

TELEPHONE NO: DAYTIME 01420 541194

EVENING 01420 541194

EMAIL ADDRESS: [redacted]

PLEASE OUTLINE BRIEFLY THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANISATION

Secondary School- main activities are educating students, assessing their progress, supporting their development, organizing extracurricular activities, and managing the school effectively.

PLEASE GIVE NUMBERS IN THE ORGANISATION WHO ARE

A) PAID- 110	
B) VOLUNTEERS- 0	

HOW MANY MEMBERS/BENEFICIARIES LIVE WITHIN ALTON

49

PART 2 – GRANT REQUEST

AMOUNT OF GRANT APPLIED FOR

£600

WHAT IS THE TOTAL COST OF THE PROJECT/ITEM/SERVICE?

£1000

HAS MATCHED FUNDING ALREADY BEEN SECURED? IF SO, PLEASE STATE VALUE

£0

WHAT IS THE GRANT TO BE USED FOR?

We would be delighted to apply in support of our termly student celebration events. These events, Autumn Achievers, Spring Standouts, and Summer Superstars, are designed to encourage excellent student attendance as they battle to achieve the most amount of house points, recognise and celebrate the exceptional efforts and accomplishments of our students. This includes acknowledging those who consistently demonstrate a strong commitment to their education, contribute positively to the school community, achieve outstanding attendance, and attain high academic standards.

Should we be successful in securing funding, the grant would be used to further enhance these events, especially in light of the increased focus needed on engaging attendance and supporting disadvantaged students. This may include the provision of meaningful prizes, as well as the development of engaging activities that enrich the overall experience and ensure that students feel valued and motivated to continue striving for excellence.

Thank you very much for considering our application. Should you require any additional information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

HAS YOUR ORGANISATION APPLIED FOR A GRANT ELSEWHERE TOWARDS THIS PROJECT?

YES/NO

IF YES, PLEASE GIVE DETAILS

SECURED / PENDING

WHAT OTHER FUNDRAISING HAS BEEN DONE TOWARDS THIS ITEM/PROJECT? EG CAKE STALL, COFFEE MORNING

Our dedicated PTA committee, Eggar's Together, host fundraising activities throughout the year such as bake sales and fun runs.

YOU ARE INVITED TO GIVE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT ASSIST THE COUNCIL IN CONSIDERING YOUR APPLICATION

These celebration events are a highlight of the school calendar and are eagerly anticipated by our students each term. They create a positive atmosphere across the school, encouraging healthy competition, strong attendance, and a culture of achievement. Students work hard throughout the term in the hope of being recognised for their efforts, attendance, academic progress, and contribution to school life.

The events provide an important opportunity to celebrate success and ensure that all students, particularly those who may face additional challenges, feel valued and motivated. Feedback from students is consistently positive, with many describing these celebrations as one of the most enjoyable and rewarding parts of the school year. Additional funding would allow us to further enhance the experience, making the events even more memorable and impactful for our young people.

PART 3 – TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL APPLICANTS

PLEASE STATE BALANCES IN HAND AT THE END OF LAST FINANCIAL YEAR	£168,697
LEVEL OF UNALLOCATED RESERVES	NIL
HOW MUCH DID THE GROUP RAISE LAST YEAR (EG FUNDRAISING BY THE GROUP OTHER THAN BY GRANT APPLICATION)?	

PLEASE ENSURE ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION IS ENCLOSED WITH THIS APPLICATION

CHECKLIST

- ☐ **All relevant parts of the form completed**
- ☐ **Form signed**
- ☐ **Most recent accounts (Audited or draft)**
- ☐ **Constitution/Rules**
- ☐ **Child Protection Policy (if applicable)**

Copies of this completed form and any supporting papers will appear on a Town Council Committee Agenda and will be discussed by the Committee in the presence of the Press and Public.

I DECLARE THAT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF THAT THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS CORRECT. I ALSO DECLARE THAT ANY GRANT AWARDED WILL BE USED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSES OUTLINED IN THIS APPLICATION AND I WILL COMPLETE A GRANT EVALUATION FORM WITHIN 6 MONTHS OF THE AWARD OF GRAT. I UNDERSTAND THAT ALTON TOWN COUNCIL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO RECLAIM THE GRANT IN THE EVENT OF IT NOT BEING USED FOR THE PURPOSE SPECIFIED.

NAME: Sophie Figg

SIGNATURE: …[redacted]………………………………….

POSITION: Business Operations Manager

DATE: 26/06/2026

Completed applications should be sent to: Alton Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1HD

Applications are also available from our web site www.alton.gov.uk

Item 16

Subject: **Internal Auditor's Report for 2026/27 Q1**

Report to: Full Council, 9 September 2026

Report of: Town Clerk

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1. <u>Purpose of the report</u>

1.1 To receive the Internal Auditor's report for quarter one of the financial year 2026/27.

2. <u>Background</u>

2.1 The Internal Auditor appointed by the Town Council, Mark Mulberry of Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd., attended the Town Hall on 15 July 2026 to undertake the quarterly check of the council's finances.

3. <u>Main considerations</u>

3.1 The report concludes: *"It is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures seriously and I am pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose. ... It is therefore our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Alton Town Council are a model of good practice."*

3.2 Some report formatting suggestions have been made, which we shall incorporate in future quarterly financial reports.

4. <u>Recommendation</u>

4.1 The Council is recommended:

To note the content of the Internal Auditor report.

MULBERRY
LOCAL AUTHORITY SERVICES LTD
Eastgate House
Dogflud Way, Farnham
Surrey, GU9 7UD
t 01252 929 590
e office@mulberrylas.co.uk
w www.mulberrylas.co.uk

The Clerk to the Council
Alton Town Council
Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HD

15th July 2026

Dear Tom,

Re: Alton Town Council
Internal Audit Year Ended 31 March 2027 – Interim Audit report

Executive summary
Following completion of our interim internal audit on 15th July 2026 we enclose our report for your kind attention and presentation to the council. The audit was conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines and testing was risk based. Whilst we have not tested all transactions, our samples have where appropriate covered the entire year to date.

Our report is presented in the same order as the assertions on the internal auditor report within the published Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). The start of each section details the nature of the assertion to be verified. Testing requirements follow those detailed in the audit plan previously sent to the council, a copy of which is available on request. The report concludes with an opinion as to whether each assertion has been met or not at this point in the year. Some assertions are tested only at the final internal audit, and this is reflected where appropriate in the report. **Recommendations for action are shown in bold text and are summarised in the table at the end of the report.**

Our sample testing did not uncover any errors or misstatements that require reporting to the external auditor at this time, nor did we identify any significant weaknesses in the internal controls such that public money would be put at risk.

It is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures seriously and I am pleased to report that overall, the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose and whilst my report may contain recommendations to change these are not indicative of any significant failings, but rather are pointers to improving upon an already well-ordered system.

It is therefore our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Alton Town Council are a model of good practice.

Regulation
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts. In addition to this, a smaller authority is required by Regulation 5(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to "undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk

management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance."

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance activity designed to improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

The primary purpose of internal audit is to assess and report to the authority on the effectiveness of its financial systems and other internal controls, including the operational procedures that support its activities.

The internal audit function involves testing and evaluating whether the authority's internal control framework is both adequate and functioning effectively. Internal audit reports should be made available to all Members, providing a basis for informed decision making when considering the authority's approval of the Annual Governance Statement.

Independence and competence
Your audit was conducted by Mark Mulberry of Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd, who has over 20 years' experience in finance and governance related roles with the last 15 years specialising in local government.

Your auditor is independent from the management of the financial controls and procedures of the council and has no conflicts of interest with the audit client, nor do they provide any management or financial assistance to the client.

Engagement Letter and inherent risk assessment
An engagement letter was previously issued to the council covering the 2025/26 internal audit assignment, which includes the scope and plan of works and fee structure. Copies of this document are available on request from anna@mulberrylas.co.uk

In summary, our work will address each of the internal control objectives as stated on the Annual Internal Audit Report of the AGAR.

It is our opinion that the inherent risk of error or misstatement within the council's financial systems is low. The internal control environment is considered reliable, and as such, substantive testing of individual transactions is not deemed necessary at this stage.

Audit testing will therefore consist of walk-through testing on a selection of sample data, covering the period under review within the current council year. This approach is designed to confirm that key controls are operating effectively throughout the financial period.

Table of contents

		TEST AT INTERIM	TEST AT INTERIM	TEST AT INTERIM	TEST AT FINAL
A	BOOKS OF ACCOUNT	✓			
B	FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS	✓		✓	
C	RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE		✓		
D	BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES		✓		✓
E	INCOME		✓		
F	CASH	✓	✓	✓	✓
G	PAYROLL		✓		✓
H	ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS			✓	✓
I	BANK AND CASH	✓	✓	✓	✓
J	YEAR END ACCOUNTS	✓			✓
K	LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW	✓			
L	PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION	✓			
M	EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS – INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS	✓			✓
N	PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS	✓			
O	DIGITAL AND DATA COMPLIANCE	✓			
P	TRUSTEESHIP	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A
	ACHIEVEMENT OF CONTROL ASSERTIONS AT INTERIM AUDIT DATE				
	INTERIM AUDIT POINTS CARRIED FORWARD				

INTRODUCTION

The audit was conducted on site with the Deputy Clerk and the Assistant to the Clerk. The requested information as advised in advance of the visit was in many respected pre-prepared and overall, I have the impression that accounting records are neatly maintained and easily accessible.

Other information was reviewed through discussion with other staff members and a review of the council website https://www.alton.gov.uk/

A. BOOKS OF ACCOUNT

Internal audit requirement

Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.

The council uses the Rialtas Business Solutions (RBS) accounting package for recording the council's finances. This is an industry specific accounting package, and I make no recommendation to change. The system encompasses a cashbook, purchase ledger, sales ledger and fixed asset register and it provides for reconciliation of key control accounts and regular reporting against budget.

A review of the nominal ledger shows there to be no netting off of income and expenditure and items are posted to the heading to which they relate. There is no evidence of excess journal corrections to the accounts.

The system is used to produce management information reports for review at council meetings and is updated regularly with financial information. A review of the cashbook shows that the system is being populated with relevant data, such that a casual reader can understand the nature and scope of the transactions. A simple walk through of a receipt and payment chosen at random, proved the underlying documentation could be easily located.

The council has segregation off duties within the finance team, with clear evidence of hierarchical review.

The bank is reconciled monthly by the assistant to the clerk. The bank reconciliations, income and expenditure reports, payment summaries and other financial reports are produced for council to review and are documented in the minutes.

I tested opening balances as at 1/4/26 showing £167,820.65 for cashbook 1 on the financial reporting package, this was agreed back to the published 2025/26 AGAR.

The council is VAT registered. The June 2026 quarter was completed and submitted on the 1st July. This indicates the council is sufficiently up to date with its financial postings. The refund of £14,546.25 was received on the 7th July 2026.

Overall, I have the impression that the accounting systems are well ordered and routinely maintained and as such I make no recommendation to change. I am of the opinion that the council keeps appropriate records and uses the systems for the purpose for which they are intended.

CONCLUSION: I am satisfied this control objective has been met.

B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE AND PAYMENTS

Internal audit requirement

This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

Confirm by sample testing that councillors sign statutory office forms

I confirmed by sample testing that councillors sign "Acceptance of Office", "Declarations of Interest" and "Notices to receive information by electronic means" forms.

Confirm that the council meets regularly throughout the year

In addition to full council, the council has a committee structure in place. Terms of reference for each committee are in place and were last reviewed and adopted on the 20th May 2026.

A diary of future meeting dates is published on the council website, along with historic agendas and minutes for council and committee meetings.

Check that agendas for meetings are published giving 3 clear days' notice

I was able to confirm that at least 3 clear days' notice is given on agendas. Whilst we have not tested every single committee and council meeting there was no evidence of non-compliance in giving three clear days' notice of the meeting.

I note that the non-confidential supporting papers are published alongside the agendas in accordance with the requirements of the Information Commissioner's Office.

Check the draft minutes of the last meeting(s) are on the council's website

Minutes are uploaded to the council website within timescales

Confirm that the Parish Council's Standing Orders have been reviewed within the last 12 months

The Standing Orders are based on the current NALC model and were most recently reviewed and adopted by council at the April 2026 council meeting.

Confirm that the Parish Council has adopted and recently reviewed Financial Regulations

The Financial Regulations published on the council website are based on the previous NALC model. The regulations contain provisions for the approval of spending, setting of budgets, reconciliation of the bank and reporting to council. These were last reviewed and adopted in January 2026.

Check that the council's Financial Regulations are being routinely followed

Observation — Purchase of goods and services / compliance with Financial Regulations

The random sample tested was correct in all respects, and the process operated in accordance with the council's adopted Financial Regulations.

Documented process (summary). The council operates the following routine:

1. Approval thresholds are documented within the Financial Regulations. The assistant to the clerk confirms budget availability on the financial reporting package before an order is raised.

2. A purchase order is raised on the package and, where the value exceeds the relevant threshold, authorised by the deputy clerk. The supplier invoice is matched to the PO and signed off by the deputy clerk; the assistant to the clerk codes, annotates and posts the invoice.

3. Twice monthly, working from the unpaid-invoice folder and invoice due dates, the assistant to the clerk sets up payments on the online banking system. The corresponding invoices are scanned and emailed to the signatories for review.

4. Two signatories log in and authorise release. Two authorisations are required, and the banking system prevents the originator of a transaction from authorising it.

5. On preparation of the bank reconciliation, each invoice is further annotated with the payment date and filed in the paid folder.

6. A list of payments over £500, together with income and expenditure, is reported to the council quarterly; the payment list is approved at each council meeting.

Testing performed. This process accords with Financial Regulation 5.2. I examined the PO folder for items requiring additional authorisation and traced these through to the minutes and secondary authorisations, confirming compliance. The council holds an approved direct debit list. A review of the minutes confirms that the council authorises payments in accordance with the adopted Financial Regulations and that the payment list is approved at each meeting. No errors were identified, and I am satisfied this control objective has been met.

Confirm all section 137 expenditure meets the guidelines and does not exceed the annual per elector limit of £11.10 (2024/25 £10.81) per elector.

The council does not have the GPC. Section 137 expenditure is within thresholds.

Confirm that checks of the accounts are made by a councillor

Councillors undertake periodic reviews of the systems of that of the council, the assistant to the Clerk has a schedule of works, that the councillors must follow each quarter. This is a robust process that ensures third part scrutiny.

CONCLUSION: I am satisfied this control objective has been met.

C. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

Internal audit requirement

This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

To be tested at a later visit

D. BUDGET, PRECEPT AND RESERVES

Internal audit requirement

The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

To be tested at a later visit

E. INCOME

Internal audit requirement

Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

In testing the books of account section A, we noted that on a couple of sales items the VAT code selected was that of “SOR” instead of “S”, this is easily done as the system drop down menu has these codes adjacent to one another. SOR denotes a VAT charge of 17.5%.

Recommendation: It will be necessary for a review of the system to identify the SOR items and correct as necessary.

F. CASH

Internal audit requirement

Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for.

Audit findings

The council maintains a minimal petty cash float and records the entries in a separate cashbook. A review of the entries shows that the petty cash is used appropriately for incidental expenditure, and the amounts are inconsequential to the overall finances of the council.

I tested the petty cash and agreed it back to the cashbook and the cash analysis VAT was appropriately reclaimed.

Other cash receipts.

In a given a year the council may receive up to £500-£600 in cash receipts of which the majority is allotment rentals. I traced a sample of cash receipts through to the cashbook and allotments package. There were no errors. The allotments package is regularly reviewed for outstanding debtors and non-payers are removed and the plot put up for rental again. At the date of the audit £37 was outstanding.

There was no indication that cash received is not dealt with appropriately. Segregation of duties withies within the finance function is limited; however, the controls in place a sufficiently robust to ensure proper accounting.

CONCLUSION: I am satisfied this control objective has been met.

G. PAYROLL

Internal audit requirement

Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

To be tested at a later visit

H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS

Internal audit requirement

Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

To be tested at a later interim visit

I. BANK AND CASH

Internal audit requirement

Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.

Audit findings

Financial regulation 2.2 states 'At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a member other than the Council Chairman or a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The member shall sign and date the reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar document) as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the full council.

Bank reconciliations are completed monthly using the financial reporting package and presented to council on a quarterly basis for review. I reviewed the reconciliations presented for the interim audit (April, to June 2026) and was able to confirm the balances to the bank statements and found no errors. I also noted that the reconciliations have been signed in accordance with the Financial Regulations.

The council has an investment strategy in place dated 2025. Microsoft Word - ITEM 10 Investment Strategy 2025

I attended the July meeting as a member of the public and observed the finance item, which set out a brief background, considerations and recommendations. The item fell towards the lower end of the agenda and so was reached in the latter part of the meeting. It was briefly introduced, a member was invited to sign off the reports, the meeting was then closed, and I observed the signing process.

The mechanics were consistent with good practice. However, the item was not presented in a way that conveyed the council's financial position, and the supporting brief contained no executive summary of that position. In consequence, any member who had not read the underlying statements in advance would have received no information — written or spoken — about the council's finances at the meeting itself.

Responsibility for reviewing and commenting on the reports rests with members, and the opportunity to do so was provided. None raised a question. That silence cannot, however, be taken as evidence of scrutiny: it is equally consistent with the reports not having been read. The Practitioners' Guide is clear that members must understand how the budget is constructed and used, and that progress against budget should be reviewed — at least quarterly — with a clear commentary on significant variances. Where the finance item carries no summary of position, the entire weight of that assurance rests on members' unsupported private reading, which the meeting is not structured to test.

Recommendation: the finance item would be strengthened by a short executive summary — no more than a single page — setting out the financial position in plain terms for members who do not work through the full statements. A suggested format follows.

Position as at: [date] · **Overall status:** [Green / Amber / Red]

1. **Funds held.** Total cash and bank balances of £[ ] at [date], reconciled to the accounting records. Bank reconciliation [attached / available].
2. **Budget position.** Income of £[ ] against a budget of £[ ] ([ ]%); expenditure of £[ ] against £[ ] ([ ]%). Projected outturn: [surplus / deficit] of £[ ].
3. **Significant variances.** [Line — £ — one-line explanation; or "none exceeding [threshold]".]
4. **Reserves.** General reserve of £[ ], equivalent to [ ] months' expenditure and [within / outside] the council's reserves policy. Earmarked reserves total £[ ]; material movements: [ ].
5. **Liquidity.** Funds are [sufficient / insufficient] to meet known commitments to the year end.
6. **Matters for members' attention.** [Debtors/creditors of note; grant/s.137 headroom; any decision required — or "none".]
7. **Recommendation to members.** That the council [notes the position / approves … / resolves …].

CONCLUSION: I am satisfied this control objective has been met.

J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS

Internal audit requirement

Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

Audit findings

The council, at its meeting to sign off the year-end accounts, correctly discussed section 1 and 2 of the AGAR (Annual Governance Statement) and recorded this activity in the minutes of the meeting.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement

Based on the internal audit findings, I recommend using the table below as the basis for that discussion.

	Annual Governance Statement	*'Yes', means that this authority*	Suggested response based on evidence
1	We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*	**YES** – accounts follow latest Accounts and Audit Regulations and practitioners guide recommendations.
2	We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*	**YES** – there is regular reporting of financial transactions and accounting summaries, offering the opportunity for scrutiny.
3	We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*	**YES** – the Clerk advises the council in respect of its legal powers.
4	We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*	**YES** – the requirements and timescales for 2024/25 year-end were followed.
5	We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*	**YES** – the council has a risk management scheme and appropriate external insurance.
6	We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*	**YES** – the council has appointed an independent and competent internal auditor.

7	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*	**YES** – matters raised in internal and external audit reports have been addressed.
8	We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and. Where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*	**YES** – no matters were raised during the internal audit visits.
9	Trust funds including charitable – In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/asset(s), including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	*has met all its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*	**N/A** – the council has no trusts

<u>Section 2 – Accounting Statements</u>

AGAR box number		2024/25	2025/26	Internal Auditor notes
1	Balances brought forward	1,587,852	1,793,864	Agrees to carry forward (box 7)
2	Precept or rates and levies	851,976	890,180	Figure confirmed to central precept record
3	Total other receipts	726,160	600,286	Agrees to underlying accounting records
4	Staff costs	513,500	533,806	Agrees to underlying accounting records. Includes only expenditure allowed as staff costs (see section G)
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	9,411	9,411	Agrees to underlying accounting records
6	All other payments	849,213	733,703	Agrees to underlying accounting records
7	Balances carried forward	1,793,864	2,007,410	Casts correctly and agrees to balance sheet

8	Total value of cash and short- term investments	1,906,735	2,042,008	Agrees to bank reconciliation for all accounts
9	Total fixed assets plus long-term investments and assets	Restated 3,082,953	3,161,685	Matches asset register total and changes from previous year have been traced
10	Total borrowings	176,904	171,407	Agrees to underlying accounting records

For Local Councils Only		Yes	No	
11a	Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable)	✅		*The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.*

Audit findings

The year-end accounts have been correctly prepared on an income & expenditure basis with the box 7 and 8 reconciliation properly prepared.

The AGAR correctly casts and cross casts and last year's comparatives match the figures submitted for2024/25 and published on the council website.

The variance analysis has been completed and, in my opinion, provides sufficient financial and narrative information to explain the variances to the External Auditor.

CONCLUSION: I am satisfied this control objective has been met.

K. LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW

Internal audit requirement

IF the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2025/26, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2025/26 AGAR tick "not covered")

Audit findings

CONCLUSION: The council did not class itself as exempt therefore the testing for this internal control objective is not applicable.

L: PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION

Internal audit requirement

The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation

Audit findings

For councils with a turnover above £250,000, it is a statutory requirement to follow the Transparency Code, which can be found here Local government transparency code 2015 - GOV.UK.

I was able to locate the required information on the council's website which was up to date at the time of the audit. Accounts and Budget – Alton Town Council

All councils are required to follow The Accounts and Audit Regulations which include the following requirements:

13(1) An authority must publish (which must include publication on that authority's website)

(a) the Statement of Accounts together with any certificate or opinion entered by the local auditor in accordance with section 20(2) of the Act; and
(b) the Annual Governance Statement approved in accordance with regulation 6(3)

13(2) Where documents are published under paragraph (1), the authority must

(a) keep copies of those documents for purchase by any person on payment of a reasonable sum; and
(b) ensure that those documents remain available for public access for a period of not less than five years beginning with the date on which those documents were first published in accordance with that paragraph.

I was able to confirm that pages 4 (Annual Governance Statement) and 5 (Accounting Statements) of the AGARs are available for review on the council website.

The council has robust procedures to ensure deadlines are met and the required information is published. I make no recommendation to change in these processes.

CONCLUSION: I am satisfied this control objective has been met.

M: EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS

Internal audit requirement

The authority, during the previous year, correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Audit findings

Inspection – key dates	2025/26
Date AGAR signed by council	06/05/2026 minute ref 178
Date inspection notice issued	2nd June 2026
Inspection period begins	3rd June 2026
Inspection period ends	14th July 2026
Correct length (30 working days)	Yes
Common period included (first 10 working days of July)	Yes

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2025/26, and assertion 4 on the Annual Governance Statement can therefore be signed yes by the council.

CONCLUSION: I am satisfied this control objective has been met.

N: PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Internal audit requirement

The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2025/26. Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website / webpage.

Before 1 July 2026 authorities must publish:

- *Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited*
- *Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2025/26, approved and signed, page 4*
- *Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26, approved and signed, page 5*

Not later than 30 September 2026 authorities must publish:

- *Notice of conclusion of audit*
- *Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate*
- *Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.*

  It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

Audit findings

I was able to confirm that the Notice of the Period of Public Rights and Section 1 (Annual Governance Statement) and Section 2 (Accounting Statement) were published on the council's website before 1 July 2026.

CONCLUSION: I am satisfied this control objective has been met.

O. DIGITAL AND DATA COMPLIANCE

Internal audit requirement

The authority has complied with laws, regulations and proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.

Audit findings

The Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) Practitioner's Guide (March 2025) contains guidance on the new Governance Assertion included on the 2025/26 AGAR which relates to this internal control objective.

Website

I was able to confirm that the council website contains a Privacy Notice and accessibility statement which are up to date at the time of the audit. The website is partially compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.2 AA standard.

Email management and GDPR

It was noted the council has a generic email address on a domain owned by the council.

The council has an up-to-date IT policy dated March 2026, which meets the required standard. Council Documents, Policies and Terms of Reference – Alton Town Council

The council has a valid ICO Data Protection registration valid to June 2027. Reg number Z8017170

The council has completed a data audit and reported this to council on the 4th March 2026 minute ref 140. The tabular format is easy to read and logically presented. I tested an item drawn at random and was able to confirm that the data was secure on the council server and could not be accessed by unauthorised staff members.

It is clear the council is taking digital data seriously and is following regulation and proper practices.

CONCLUSION: I am t satisfied this control object has been met.

P. TRUSTEESHIP

Internal audit requirement

Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

CONCLUSION: The council has no trusts and the testing for this internal control objective is not applicable.

Achievement of control assertions at interim audit date

Based on the tests conducted during the interim audit, our conclusions on the achievement of the internal control objectives are summarised in the table below. A further review and update of this opinion will be conducted at the final audit.

	INTERNAL CONTROL OBJECTIVE	**YES**	**NO**	**NOT COVERED**
A	Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year	✅		
B	This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved, and VAT was appropriately accounted for	✅		
C	This authority assesses the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these			
D	The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.			
E	Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for			
F	Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved, and VAT appropriately accounted for	✅		
G	Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.			
H	Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.			
I	Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.			
J	Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✅		
K	If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✅ N/A
L	The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation	✅		
M	The authority, during the previous year (2024-25) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations *(evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).*	✅		
N	The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR.	✅		
O	The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.	✅		
P	Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✅ N/A

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

<u>**Mark Mulberry**</u>

Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd

<u>Interim Audit 2025/26 - Points Carried Forward</u>

Audit Point	Audit Findings	Council comments
I. BANK AND CASH	The presentation of the finance information would be enhanced with the inclusion of an executive summary – see I for details.	
E. INCOME	In testing the books of account section A, we noted that on a couple of sales items the VAT code selected was that of “SOR” instead of “S”, this is easily done as the system drop down menu has these codes adjacent to one another. SOR denotes a VAT charge of 17.5%. **Recommendation:** It will be necessary for a review of the system to identify the SOR items and correct as necessary.	