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**MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2026 AT 7.00PM AT THE TOWN HALL**

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

**In attendance:**                    **Tom Horwood (Town Clerk)**  
                                 **Hayley Carter (Deputy Clerk)**  
                                 **Nic Budd (Project Manager)**  
  
                                 **1 member of the public and press**

**52      Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She said that we are on the cusp of some momentous events for the town and so she would like to mention them here briefly.

Very soon the flyers with dates of briefings and drop-in sessions will go through everyone's doors. The long-anticipated King's Pond public consultation will open on 2 November and go through to 4 January.

She said she would like to thank all councillors for sticking with what has been a long journey to get to this point, and particularly Councillor Hammond for his immense efforts in spearheading this for over three years. Also, thanks to Councillors Botten and Quincey for joining him on the Task & Finish Group, to the residents on the T&FG for their dedication and detailed knowledge, and not least thanks for all the work that our Council staff have put in and will continue to put in over the coming months. She added that just to get to the position where we consult with our whole town seems like an amazing achievement and she wanted to take a moment and thank everyone.

She went on to say that the announced closure of M&S is devastating news for many Altonians. Apparently, the closure is due to the lease expiring in January and M&S changing their model to growth, larger stores and a weekly shopping destination for families. She said a planning application had been submitted by the landlord, and added that Councillor Rob Moccatta, EHDC Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Prosperity, had issued a statement to the effect that EHDC will be following up with

M&S to understand the implications of the decision and the reasons behind it, saying “As the local planning authority we will work closely with Damian Hinds MP, Alton Town Council, other local authorities and the landlord to find the best possible solution for the site for the future.”

She added that, on a happier note, she would like to remind everyone of the achievements which have been possible from working together as a council this year, including reinstating the highly valued Proms on the Park in July 2027 and the reprieve of the beloved Curtis Museum whilst funding solutions are found.

She said that she was also happy to announce that she would be hosting a second Civic Event on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm in the Assembly Rooms. This event is a reception with drinks and a buffet for public service workers in the town, so councillors at all tiers, all council staff and many other public service workers would be invited. She is hoping to get the invitations out next week and has invited a few local musical groups to provide some festive acoustic entertainment.

She finished by telling councillors that she would like to give each of them the opportunity to speak once before others came back with further comments and asked them to indicate to her that they wish to speak by raising their hand, then wait to be called to speak. She said that she may pause to see if other hands go up when asking for proposers and seconders to give everyone an equal opportunity and so it may not be the first hand raised that she takes.

Councillor Hill pointed out that the planning application submitted for the M&S building is for a part of the building that has been empty for several years, not part that is occupied by M&S, and that it would be on the agenda for the extraordinary planning committee meeting on 21 October.

53 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Ginny Boxall and Mark Boyce-Churn.

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

No declarations of pecuniary interest were received.

55 **Minutes of Previous Meeting for Approval**

Councillor Tansey proposed that the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 9 September be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Woodcroft, and it was

**RESOLVED**

**To approve the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 9 September 2026.**

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

56 **Written Representations from the Public**

One written representation was received from Cllr Matthew Kellermann an hour before the meeting pertaining to Item 9. Copies were supplied to town councillors and it is on the council's website under Additional Documents for this meeting.

Councillor Eyre announced that she would be withdrawing her motion which was on the agenda as Item 9. Councillor Kellermann withdrew from the meeting with apologies, saying he was unwell and had attended specifically for Item 9.

The member of the public also left the meeting.

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

**RESOLVED**  
**To note the written representation received.**

All councillors voted in favour.

57 **Questions and Statements by the Public**

There were no members of the public present.

58 **District Councillor's Report**

Councillor Hill added a few extra comments to his written report, including that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) had cost East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) £300,000 and this has been raised with central government. EHDC awaits a response.

On the proposal of Councillor Tansey, seconded by Councillor Hammond, and with all councillors voting in favour, Councillor Hill's report was **noted**.

59 **Minutes of the King's Pond Task & Finish Group**

Councillor Hammond proposed that the minutes of the King's Pond Task and Finish Group meetings of 11 August, 9 September, 16 September, 23 September and 30 September 2026 be noted. This was seconded by Councillor Quincey.

Councillor Hammond pointed out that there were lots of minutes because the T&FG is now meeting weekly in the run up to the consultation. He said that the T&FG has been pulling together to get the material ready for consultation and is on track for the program of briefings.

He added that all councillors are invited to the first briefing on 2 November which is for the Community and Stakeholder Focus Group, councillors and invitees from various bodies.

Councillor Quincey added that, but for Councillor Hammond, we would not be where we are.

Councillors thanked the T&FG for all their work and the officers for their minutes, which they said had really helped them to understand the huge amount of work that had been going on and where the project is at.

Councillor Hammond added that an independent consultant had been engaged to run the consultation and would be preparing a report for Full Council by the end of January.

Thus, on the proposal of Councillor Hammond, seconded by Councillor Quincey, it was

**RESOLVED**

**To note the minutes of the King's Pond Task and Finish Group meetings of 11 August, 9 September, 16 September, 23 September and 30 September 2026.**

All councillors voted in favour.

60 **Conclusion of External Audit**

Councillor Hill proposed that Council:

1. note the conclusion of the Audit for financial year 2025-26
2. receive and accept the External Auditor's report
3. note the successful publication of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit.

This was seconded by Councillor Botten, and it was

**RESOLVED to:**

- 1. note the conclusion of the Audit for financial year 2025-26**
- 2. receive and accept the External Auditor's report**
- 3. note the successful publication of the Notice of Conclusion of Audit.**

All councillors voted in favour.

**61 Financial Reports for 2026/27 Quarter 2**

Councillor Woodcroft proposed that the Council approve the accounts statements. This was seconded by Councillor Eyre. Councillors noted their satisfaction with the written summary that accompanied the financial statements and thanked officers for these and for their work in ensuring that the council's financial affairs are robust and easily-understood by councillors. It was

**RESOLVED****To approve:**

- 1. The Balance Sheet to 30 September 2026**
- 2. The Income and Expenditure Report for the period 1 July to 30 September 2026**
- 3. Bank reconciliations as at 30 September 2026**
- 4. Payments over £500, issued between 1 July and 30 September 2026**

All councillors voted in favour.

**62 Councillor Financial and Health & Safety Checks**

Councillor Botten proposed that Council note that he and Councillor Eyre had carried out the checks on financial and health & safety matters on 29<sup>th</sup> September. This was seconded by Councillor Eyre.

Councillor Botten reported that he and Councillor Eyre had spent an enjoyable three hours going through everything with officers and were extremely impressed with the rigorous checks and balances that are in place for both the finances and the health and safety matters. He said Council should commend the finance officer and the Clerk and Deputy Clerk for the dedication they show to making sure everything is managed so well. Councillor Eyre added her thanks, saying that she had every confidence that the finances and health and safety were secure and in good hands.

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

**RESOLVED**

**To note that Councillors Botten and Eyre had carried out the checks on financial and health & safety matters on 29th September 2026.**

All councillors voted in favour.

**63     Invitation to Tender for Tree Works**

Councillor Hammond proposed that the Council appoint Contactor F (H W Tree Works) to undertake the tree works identified in the latest tree surveys at a cost of £18,400. This was seconded by Councillor Eyre, and it was

**RESOLVED**

**To appoint Contactor F (H W Tree Works) to undertake the tree works identified in the latest tree surveys at a cost of £18,400**

All councillors voted in favour.

The meeting closed at 7.44pm.

DRAFT