ALTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Parish Council Meeting
Monday 2nd June 2014

Alton Village Hall commencing at 7pm

Present:
Councillor F Eyre
Councillor P Ballard
Councillor S Hollins
Councillor A Moult
Councillor I Cope
Councillor E Bailey
Councillor A Forrester
Councillor J Shepherd
Councillor E Brindley

In Attendance:
31 parishioners
Ms L Court, Clerk (outgoing)
Tom Wilkinson
2 members of the press

13/14 – Speaker regarding the current allotment site at The White Hart

Tom Wilkinson gave details of the purchase of The White Hart by Alton Castle. He explained that he was looking to register the site as an asset of community value and was looking for the support of the Parish Council and to make sure that villagers were aware of the situation. He informed the meeting that he had sought a meeting with the Archdiocese of Birmingham and that he was due to have a meeting with them in the next 10 days.

The Standing Orders were suspended by the Chair for a pre-set period to allow members of the Parish to speak and make points on this matter.

Points were made regarding change of use, the ability to apply for planning permission and implications regarding the footpath on the site. The right of way on the current car park for resident on The High Street was also noted and the boundary of the property clarified.

It was agreed that the Parish Council feel strongly about the allotments as an amenity for the village and that the PC would try to reflect the views of the wider community in any consultation. The Parish Council agreed that they oppose any change to the footpath but cannot comment at this stage regarding any change of use of the pub as there are no plans on which to comment. Mr Wilkinson informed the meeting that a viability test for the pub could be requested and carried out by SMDC.

There was also a discussion regarding the opportunity for coach drivers to park on the Lord Shrewsbury site instead of coming through the High Street and Castle Hill to the Castle.

It was agreed to invite representatives from Alton Castle to the next meeting. **Clerk to action**

14/14 Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare any interests they may have in any matter identified for discussion at the Meeting. Nothing was declared.

15/14 Minutes of the meeting held 12th May 2014

The minutes were signed as a true record.

Matters arising:

Councillor Forrester gave an update regarding the work to the rear of Dimblecroft. SMDC had apologised for not responding to the Chair's queries. The Enforcement Officer had spoken to those concerned and it had been clarified that the building can remain until the dwelling is complete. Should the owners wish to retain the building after that, they will need to apply for planning permission. The conservation officer had no objections to the work around the trees but has asked that protection be put around the remaining trees on the site.

Councillor Shepherd gave feedback regarding the Scout troop. He had spoken to the leaders regarding the complaints received.

16/14 Grant Application

It was agreed to apply for a flagpole (post meeting note – this has subsequently been decided against due to complaints from neighbouring properties).

Councillor Shepherd offered to look into the pricing for wrought iron railings for the playing field to Limekiln Lane steps and for kissing gates around the village - perhaps to be under the Community Footpaths Initiative Funding. It was noted that nicer lamp posts would be more attractive but that it was unlikely to be able to be funded.

17/14 Alton Towers

It was noted that the Lodges application had been granted. Conditions on the permission include an extended lighting plan with regard to the Conservation area and bats. Noise is not to be increased due to any machinery and there is to be no amplified sound outside the area as well as no amplified music outside the buildings.

18/14 Footpaths

Rotten fingerposts have been noted.

The footpath at Wheel Farm is blocked with gates and scrap metal. Councillor Shepherd requested some help in clearing this. Footpaths 15 and 37 signage is still not correct and these have been re-reported.

A rotten fingerpost at Footpath 37 I to be done as is the post at the north end of Footpath 39.

Footpath 19 – Fernlea to Gallows Green is impassable and the Lengthsman is to cut this back.

At the west end of Footpath 29, rubble is being dumped from the building work at The Lord Shrewsbury which is causing a mess and the remaining part of the field is now flooding rendering the footpath impassable. It was suggested that a waste disposal license must be required for this work and the Clerk was asked to contact SMDC Environmental Health to ask whether there is one and to request a site visit.

Footpath 19 is currently a grassed path and there is a rumour that this is to be resurfaced with tarmac. It was asked whether this could be prevented.

Councillor Shepherd noted that he would be looking for a quote for a kissing gate at the east end of Footpath 25 and request funding through the CPI.
Councillor Cope asked whether there had been any update regarding railings above The Ramblers Retreat – the Clerk was asked to contact the ranger and check this. **Clerk to action**
There was also a discussion regarding the gates on Saltersford Lane in Denstone Parish. It was suggested that wooden gates would be much nicer and the Clerk was asked to contact the Clerk of Denstone Parish Council to put forward this view. **Clerk to action**

19/14 Village Hall

A meeting of the committee had taken place two weeks previously. There were discussions regarding the Scout group and the regularity of windows being broken by children playing around the Village Hall. Councillor Forrester passed on information regarding grants available from both SMDC and the Community Council of Staffordshire. This information was passed to Councillor Hollins to pass on to the Village Hall Committee.
Councillor Bailey reported damage to the roundabout which could cause a nasty injury. He had taped it off to try to prevent children playing on it. Councillor Hollins offered to ring Alan Dingley to make sure that he is aware of this.

20/14 Lengthsman

Councillor Forrester reported that work is due to be done by St Peters Church where the nettles in the stone walls need removing as well as other areas around the village.
It was noted that the Lychgate area is very neglected and the Lengthsman offered to tidy this up before the new War Memorial is unveiled.
A litter pick is due to take place on 28th June.
The stretch of wall from the Church gates up towards the school and up the Hurstons need to have the weeds and grass cleared.
The tubs outside The White Hart need clearing – the Lengthsman will tidy this area.
Plants have been received and distributed from Alton Towers and the Clerk was asked to send thanks to the Towers for these. **Clerk to action**
There was a discussion regarding the phone box opposite The Roundhouse. The general feeling was that it should be retained.

21/14 War Memorial

The Chair reported that all preparations are in place and the service details have been finalised. The children who will take part in the service have now been put forward by the school. A bugler has been secured for the service and 20 Royal British Legion members – including 5 standard bearers will also be attending.

22/14 Highways and Road Safety

- Letter from Simon Tagg re B5032 read to the meeting and noted
- Letter from JCB re B5032 read to the meeting and noted

Councillor Brindley reported that some potholes had been repaired on Battlestead and outside Prescot House. Highways workers are sorting and sealing the pavements on Limekiln Lane, Uttoxeter Road and Shirley Drive.

A member of the public had contacted the Chair from Threapwood regarding speeding traffic. It was agreed that the Parish Council should contact SCC to reques that this stretch be designated as a 40 mph area rather than 60 mph. The Clerk was asked to write to the new portfolio holder for Highways and to copy this to Checkley, Oakamoor and Cheadle Councils for their information. She was also asked to invite the post holder to the next Parish Council meeting. **Clerk to action**

23/14 Parish Cemetery and St Peter's Churchyard

Councillor Forrester reported that these were in good condition but that mowing is a little overdue. The Clerk was asked to write to the PCC regarding the need for the church yard hedge to be cut back where this is overgrowing up Town Head and to mention the extreme height of the conifers inside the church yard. **Clerk to action**

24/14 Planning and Licensing Applications
SMD/2014/0259, 12 Glen Drive, Increase existing hard standing area and replace with block paving and construction of a new curved retaining wall – **no objections**
SMD/2014/0320, Chelsea Cottage, Malthouse Road, Erection of a single storey side extension and porch canopy **no objections**

25/14 Planning Decisions

SMD/2014/0144 – Extension to the east of existing spa, including a reception area and spa garden with associated hard and soft landscaping works, Alton Towers **– granted**
DET/2014/0013 – Agricultural building to store fodder at The Withering Farm, Cheadle Road, Alton **– granted** – **both noted**

Councillor Eyre declared an open forum to allow parishioners present to ask questions/raise issues:

A Parishioner raised an issue with horses still using the path by The Lord Shrewsbury and the danger to pedestrians. It was noted that signage could be improved at either end of the path.

A Parishioner reported on a discussion that he had had with Alton Castle and their plans for The Lord Shrewsbury and The White Hart.

A Parishioner reported issing coping stones from the wall up the Hurstons. These will be replaced.

A Parishioner queried why no litter picking had taken place down Denstone Lane from Alton Towers over the last few weeks. Councillor Forrester offered to follow this up with Alton Towers.

The ownership of the well at the bottom of Horse Road was queried as was the potential to clear out the well. The ownership of the well will be investigated by Councillor Forrester. If it is found to be in public ownership Councillor Shepherd will arrange a working party to tidy up the area.

A Parishioner reported that the cemetery bin no longer has a working pedal to open it with. Councillor Forrester will request this.

26/14 Correspondence

1. **For information only**
    - The next SMPA on Thursday 26th June at 7.30pm was noted

27/14 Finance

Annual Audit for year ending 31st March 2014 was discussed. The Internal Audit has been completed and the paperwork was checked and ratified by the full Council with all forms signed by the Chair and the Clerk. This paperwork will be sent off to the external auditor. **Clerk to action**

Invoices to be authorised & to be paid

Jacksons invoice no 18608 **£664.86 plus £132.97 VAT totalling £797.83**
Clerks wages and expenses for March – June 2014 **1064.16 to be broken down as 1046.76 to the Clerk and PAYE of 17.40 to HMRC**
Lengthsmans Wages and Expenses **- £190 plus £54.43**

Payment was proposed by Councillor Shepperd, seconded by Councillor Forrester and all were in favour. **Clerk to action**

It was noted that this was the Clerk's last meeting and a presentation of flowers and a gift voucher was made to her. She was thanked for her work and in turn she thanked the Council for their support and help over the previous 7 years.

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed.
Signed……..Chairman, 2nd June 2014
Signed……..Clerk