Alton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 7th July 2014 at 7pm
At Alton Village Hall

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

Apologies: Councillor A. Forrester
Councillor M. Worthington (County Council)

In Attendance: Mr S.J. Burton (Clerk)
Sandra Satchell (Youth Ministry)
Roger Maughan (Youth Ministry)
37 members of the public

The Chair opened the meeting at 7pm and welcomed Selwyn Burton as the new Parish Council Clerk.

28/14 Speakers from the Youth Ministry – Sandra Satchel and Roger Maughan re The White Hart and its proposed use.

The Chair read a letter from Mark Forrester regarding the White Hart Hotel, 18, High Street regarding the group asking for it to become an Asset of Community Value. A report has been written and a decision will be made by District Councillor Gill Burton. The letter explained how the property can qualify, after which 6 months must pass during which it cannot be sold. After this period the building can be sold in the normal manner with the group who applied for it to become an Asset being allowed to bid to buy along with any others.

Mr Maughan gave an explanation regarding the business plan to develop the Lord Shrewsbury (Phase 1) and then the White Hart, explaining that the White Hart would give an additional 24 beds for their students. He confirmed that a bid had been tendered for the White Hart. He went on to say that the current agreement regarding the allotments was between the people renting and the tenant of the White Hart (not the owners). He said that they would be amenable to working with the community regarding the allotments. Mr Maughan also said it was possible the White Hart could be used as a coffee location in the village.

Standing Orders were then suspended to allow members of the Parish to ask questions and make points through the Chair.

Points were made as follows:

1. The Lord Shrewsbury has issues with collapsing ground. Ms Satchell stated that it was not ground that could be developed yet due to cost.
2. Councillor Shepherd asked if it would be more costly to buy the White Hart than to develop that land. The answer was 'no'.
3. Would the White Hart still be bought if the Lord Shrewsbury project is a success? Mr. Maughan replied the White Hart could be a short or long term project.
4. A Parishioner asked why if the Trust already have accommodation, could further development not be on that land? Ms Satchell replied that some accommodation was being built for staff at St. John's.
5. A Parishioner wished to know how the development of the White Hart would increase traffic. Ms Satchell stated they did not anticipate any extra traffic and parking would be at the Lord Shrewsbury.
6. There was concern regarding footpaths which a Parishioner did not want altering. Ms Satchell replied the footpath at the back of the Lord Shrewsbury would not be changed, they may also add a footpath.
7. If the trust is successful with buying the White Hart would they abandon the extension at the Lord Shrewsbury? Mr. Maughan stated that ideally all students would be together.
8. The Chair of the group applying for the White Hart to become a Community Asset asked if the White Hart was viable for the use of the Trust as it is classified as A4 a public house and it needs to be C2 a dwelling. Mr. Maughan replied that advice from their solicitor was that there is no need for a change of use.
9. Other comments were made regarding use of the footpaths, Councillor Cope said it was terrible that the property was empty, Councillor Moult pointed out that there is legal access for the public at the rear of the property. Further comments were made regarding vehicle access to the rear of the property and one Parishioner felt it was like the Trust were buying up the village. The Chair confirmed that the project included the whole of the White Hart site.

The Chair then summed up the discussion by stating that it seems like the Trust want to work with the community and suggested that people speak with Sandra Satchell and Roger Maughan outside the meeting. Also that a decision was awaited from SMDC.

29/14 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.

30/14 Minutes of the meeting held Monday 2nd June 2014.

The minutes were signed as a true record.

31/14 Matters Arising.

Councillor Shepherd commented regarding the flagpole mentioned in the minutes, he suggested that the idea be abandoned, this was agreed. Following a short discussion the minutes were agreed and signed.

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32/14 Alton Towers
There were no issues regarding Alton Towers.

33/14 Footpaths
The Lengthsman has strimmed footpath number 19. Councillor Cope mentioned the footpath at Toothill is overgrown on the Battlesteads side. Lengthsman to look at this.

34/14 Village Hall
Councillor Hollins mentioned that she had attended a meeting 2 weeks ago where the windows at the village hall were discussed.

35/14 Lengthsman
Councillor Bailey reported the roundabout had been repaired. Councillor Bailey reported dog fouling and that whilst at the War Memorial two Alsations without their owner appeared and fouled nearby. Councillor Shepherd knows the owner and will speak to him, he explained the owner does normally keep the dogs in but occasionally they get out. This action was agreed and that if there is any repeat the Council will write to the owner.
There followed a discussion about dog fouling with the Chair pointing out that proof was required regarding ownership of dogs before action could be taken.
Councillor Moult asked if the Lengthsman could cut the hedge in Lime Kiln Lane, it was noted the owner should cut this. Agreed to write to the owner Mr Challinor, Pearis, Uttoxeter Road, Alton ST10 4AT.
Clerk to Action.
Councillor Cope wondered if the footpaths on the narrow part could be joined up in Hurstons Lane. The Chair will mention this to Councillor Worthington and asked the Clerk to include on the agenda for the next meeting. **Clerk to action.**
The Chair read an email from Councillor Forrester regarding the hedge being cut in the Church Yard and litter picking in Denstone Lane, the Chair noted only two people turned up for the last litter pick and that he would ring round before the next one to remind people. Regarding the well at the bottom of Horse Road, before any work can be done the advice from SMDC is to get permission from the owner, a Martin Gee. Councillor Shepherd volunteered to speak to Mr. Gee.

36/14 War Memorial
The Chair informed the meeting that the new stone for the Memorial will be delivered on Tuesday 8th July in preparation for the dedication ceremony on Sunday 27th July. There is and has been a lot of publicity in the form of flyers delivered to homes. A discussion took place regarding the delivery of more flyers and areas to be covered. The press are aware. A road closure has been applied for and Alton Towers have offered to provide road closed signs. The Clerk has requested a police presence on the day. Catering is in hand with £300 from Andrew Burton a valuable donation. There will also be an exhibition in the village hall on the day. Councillor Bailey has obtained flags and the village hall is booked from 3pm Saturday 26th July and all day on Sunday 27th July. The Chair requested helpers to set up the hall on the Saturday.

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37/14 Highways and Road Safety
Councillor Brindley explained that most of the work regarding the Denstone junction improvement is taking place at night. He also explained that the potholes at the Tythe Barn/Shirley Drive area had been repaired, although nothing yet done at Station Bank, Councillor Brindley will pursue this.
Councillor Brindley also mentioned concern about the crossroads at Threapwood, The Chair said this could be discussed with Councillor Mark Deaville who will be at the September meeting, he also asked that Councillors consider any questions they may have for Councillor Deaville.

38/14 Parish Cemetery and St. Peter's Churchyard
The Chair again referred to the email from Councillor Forrester and stated that bins with pedals are not available for the cemetery.
Councillor Brindley asked about the wreaths already at the War Memorial for the dedication. The Chair informed him that all were to be removed. One wreath had been ordered for the dedication which will be laid by two children from the school who will also say a few chosen words.

39/14 Village Website and link to Alton Parish Council
At the request of the Chair the Clerk explained that this was an idea to link any comments for the Parish Council on the website to the email he uses for the Council. This would allow Parishioners easy access to him so that he could bring issues to the notice of the Council. This was agreed by all. Councillor Shepherd stated the website had been promoted at a stall at the village fete recently.

40/14 Online Watch Link
At the request of the Chair the Clerk explained that Online Watch Link (OWL) complements Neighbourhood Watch and allows the police to contact a nominated person if there is crime in the area or suspicious behaviour so that people can be reassured and if necessary be aware that for example bogus officials are in the area. The Council agreed that the Clerk should make further enquiries regarding joining this scheme. **Clerk to action.**

41/14 Planning and Licensing Applications

i. SMD/2014/0348, Mrs M Purton, 1 the Hurstones, Hurstons Lane, Alton – erection of white UVPC conservatory at rear of property, existing rear windows replaced with white UVPC bi-fold doors. **No objections.**
ii. SMD/2014/0397, Mr and Mrs P Tideswell, Ashlea Farm, Bradley Lane, Threapwood, Alton – erection of replacement dwelling, conversion of domestic outbuilding to single dwelling and erection of a single garage. **Following a discussion it was decided to support the replacement of the bungalow with another dwelling but the conversion of a domestic outbuilding to a single dwelling was considered overdevelopment.**

42/14 Planning Decisions

i. SMD/2012/0157, Royal Oak Cheadle Road, Alton – provision of external seating area – **granted. This was supported and noted.**

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

A comment was made regarding the Gallows Green steps which have disappeared due to the trees needing cutting. Councillor Shepherd and the Lengthsman will cut this back.
A Parishioner mentioned the drain at the Bottom of Dimble Lane which is badly blocked. Councillor Brindley will take forward and the Lengthsman will have a look at it and report back to the next meeting.

A discussion then took place regarding the White Hart again, with one member of the public wanting the Council to support the group wishing to make the White Hart an Asset of Community Value, The Chair advised that it was not the Councils place to become involved in the matter and that once the application is made to make the premises an Asset of Community Value, SMDC would make a decision. Councillor Brindley stated that it was not up to the Council to get involved in the purchase of property. Councillor Ballard stated that a large amount of people want to keep the White Hart and were worried just how big the Castle was going to get.
The Chair then closed the discussion on the White Hart.

A Parishioner Mr Stanley Ede reported a stop tap had been covered with tar during recent resurfacing in Lime Kiln Lane opposite Dimble Croft. **Action: Clerk to contact Highways.**

43/14 Correspondence
Requiring response: None
For information only:

i. Letter and flyers from Matthew Ellis Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Chair explained that a letter and flyers had been received from the office of Matthew Ellis regarding a public fund from £100-£3000 for crime prevention equipment. He asked for any ideas to be brought to the next meeting. **Clerk to put on the next Agenda.**

ii. A cheque has been received from SMDC for £127.37 for recycling material collected.

44/14 Finance

Invoices to be authorised & to be paid

i. Clerks salary £360.30 and expenses £35 (printer ink) **Total £395.30**
ii. The outgoing Clerk had been underpaid for the last year she was in office and the back pay amounted to **£772.00**
iii. Jacksons Nurseries Ltd. Invoice 18648 Total excluding VAT £664.86 + VAT £132.97 **Total £797.83**
iv. Gifts from Marks & Spencer for retiring clerk and Tony Heritage (for designing the new village crest) **Total £55.99** to Councillor F. Eyre.
v. Betty Easthill W.I. Plants for war memorial tubs **£7.98**
vi. Zurich Insurance **£430.47** (first cheque not received, letter to bank to stop same)

vii. New Councillor/Clerk training course 10.9.14. Cost £20 for first delegate, £15 for second and £10 for subsequent delegates. **Approved for Clerk to attend.**

viii. Lengthsman wages £461.20.

All invoices and payments were authorised by all members present.

45/14 Closed item – public excluded. Site options and development

Councillor Eyre asked the public to leave whilst the next confidential item was discussed.

The Council then discussed the Town and Parish Council Consultation on Site Options and Development Boundaries. All Councillors studied plans provided by SMDC outlining possible sites within the Parish where extra dwellings could be built. (Alton is expected to have 25 new houses).

Following a detailed discussion regarding the number of sites and in which areas Councillors would prefer the houses to be built it was agreed that sites numbered AL025, AL012, AL024 and AL026 would be acceptable to the Council, with the preference that all the houses go on one site rather than a few on each site. The reasons for support being the continuation of existing development and good access.

The eastern side of Alton village was not supported with strong objections to sites AL022 and AL023, on the grounds of road safety, lack of access, the buildings running towards Denstone and altering the character of Alton Village.

There being no other business the meeting was closed by The Chair, Councillor F. Eyre at 9.20pm.

Signed..... Chairman 4th August 2014

Signed..... Clerk