Alton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 1st September 2014 at 7pm
At Alton Village Hall

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

Mr S.J. Burton (Clerk)

Apologies: Councillor M. Worthington (County Council)

In Attendance: 5 members of the public and 1 member of the press.

The meeting was opened at 7pm by Councillor F. Eyre the Chair. The Chair introduced County Coucillor (Highways) Mark Deaville and Roger Whittle, Safer Roads Partnership Manager for a discussion and presentation on road safety.

64/14. Cllr Deaville explained his role in County Council Highways and added that anyone with any issues regarding road safety should get in touch with him. He stated that he was striving to improve communication. Cllr Deaville reported that speeding vehicles was a 'massive' issue and he went on to explain areas where the speed limit was in his opinion too high. One of the areas was the Cheadle to Alton road through Threapwood which presently is 60mph and he wishes to reduce to 40mph. Cllr Eyre stated he felt 40mph was too low and that 50mph would be better, several Councillors agreed with this. Cllr Moult supported 40mph and gave personal reasons. He also spoke regarding large buses in the area which were half empty. Cllr Deaville said he would report this back to the bus company Arriva.
A discussion took place regarding coaches mounting the pavement in the village and could roads be widened, with Cllr Ballard reporting that 4 people had been hit by coach wing mirrors. Further discussion took place regarding the lack of money spent on roads in Alton, Cllr Deaville said he would check what had been spent, but agreed it was not a lot and that made him even more determined to get speed limits reduced. Further discussions included re-routing coaches away from the village, but it was generally felt this was just moving the problem to another area. The old railway line was mentioned for development to take the coaches. Cllr Deaville stated that 85% of visitors to Alton Towers were day visitors, they were hoping the reduce that to 65% with people making use of their hotels.

As a last point following a discussion Cllr Deaville offered to help to get the Parish Council a representative at the meeting held between Alton Towers and the County Council to discuss roads. Noting that to make things happen the right people needed to be in place. Cllr Deaville also gave all members a handout giving a Highways update.

Roger Whittle then gave a very informative Powerpoint presentation regarding the various methods and partnerships that are in place in Staffordshire. Councillors expressed the view that the speed detection van should attend and check speeds in Uttoxeter Road, Alton. The Chair thanked both men for their contribution.

65/14 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.

66/14. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 4th August 2014.
The minutes of the last meeting were declared a true record and were signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

67/14. Matters arising.
Cllr Bailey reported that the video of the dedication of the new War Memorial Stone had been uploaded onto Youtube and that it could be found by searching 'Alton new memorial stone'.

Cllr Forrester reported that item 55/14 the Yew trees in St. Peters Church Yard had been reported to Steve Massey at the District Council.

68/14. Code of Conduct for Councillors.
Cllr Eyre reported that it appeared that the Council had not yet adopted a new code of conduct as required under the Localism Act 2011. New codes were handed to members to read at their leisure. At the next meeting Councillors would be invited to sign the new codes which will then be brought into use. **Action: Agenda item next month.**

69/14. History of Alton document.
Cllr Brindley showed the meeting an old document about the history of Alton written by a police chief inspector in the 1950s. Another police officer Michael Lea had later declared that if there was no police station in the village then the document should be handed to the Parish Council. A discussion took place regarding other historical documents and whether they could all be kept together for future generations. **Action: Agenda item next month.**

70/14. Alton Towers.
The Council wishes Cllr Worthington to be updated with the details of the discussion with Cllr Deaville.
Action: Clerk to email Cllr Worthington.

71/14. Application for the upgrading of Public Footpath 13 and part of Public Footpath 16 Alton Parish to Bridleway.

The Clerk gave a brief overview of a very large document he had received regarding the above footpaths, which finished with the recommendation that the footpaths remain as such and not a Bridleway. Cllr Shepherd believes it should be a Bridleway but Cllr Cope disagreed. Cllr Shepherd gave a brief overview of the history of the footpaths and the reasons why he believed it should be a Bridleway. The Council agreed that they had nothing else to add to the report. Cllr shepherd will contact the author of the report with his own views as a private individual.
Action: The Clerk to update the author of the report.

72/14. Village Hall.
Payments to the village hall for use by the Council was discussed. It was agreed to offer the Village Hall Committee £240 per year for the use of the hall, which is £20 per meeting. The committee will discuss this and if acceptable will invoice the Council for the charges.
Cllr Hollins also mentioned that there had been a small fire allegedly caused by children in the play area at the village hall last Thursday evening. The play area is now closed. A discussion took place regarding the CCTV at the hall and updating it. Cllr Brindley will speak to Cllr Worthington and the Chair of the Village Hall. It is possible an application to the Police and Crime Commissioners fund will be considered.

73/14. Lengthsman.
No issues.

74/14. Highways and Road Safety.
Cllr Brindley reported that Rob Steele from the County Council had overseen a good job by Highways who had completed or had in hand all the work requested of them.

The bus shelter in Uttoxeter Road which is in a dilapidated state does not belong to SMDC the Clerk reported. The Clerk has emailed Cllr Worthington re ownership, but has not yet had a reply.
Action: Clerk to check with County Highways to see if they own it.

The hedge in Hurstons Lane has now been cut.

75/14. OWL update.
The Clerk stated that if anyone had emails of people interested in OWL could they let him have details. He has the paperwork and is ready to register if there is enough interest.

76/14. Replacement mannequin figures for the Christmas Nativity.
Cllr Shepherd gave an update followed by a brief discussion and it was agreed that the Council would consider making up any shortfall of the costs of replacing the mannequin figures. **Action: Clerk to contact Mr Ken Mainey to discuss the costs.**

77/14. Staffordshire County Council-Amey Infrastructure (Highway and Infrastructure services).
Cllr Eyre read out a letter regarding the new partnership between the County Council and Amey inviting a member of the Council to a meeting to discuss the subject. Cllr Eyre volunteered to attend on 25th September at County Buildings. **Action: Clerk to accept the invite for Cllr Eyre.**

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78/14. New Council Financial Regs-Internet Banking and Financial Control System.
The Chair asked the Clerk to briefly explain that the Council could now move to internet banking which would simplify banking and allow speedier payments for council invoices. He stated that to provide proper safeguards the Council could vote as usual to authorise payments, the Clerk would then make the payments and bring the bank statement to the next meeting to be shown to all Councillors and signed by 2 authorised signatories. A second method could be the Clerk sets up authorised payments and a Councillor then goes onto internet banking to make the payment. The first option was agreed. **Action: Clerk to progress.**

79/14. Transparency Code for Councils with a turnover of less than £25,000.
Cllr Eyre briefly explained the proposed transparency code which will allow those Councils with a turnover of less than £25,000, if they wish, to only have an internal audit with the accounts made more public to show transparency. The code will become mandatory later this year. The Council will then need to vote on whether to keep the external audit.

80/14._Planning and Licensing Applications.

i. New application SMD/2014/0383 Mr Joseph Heathcote, 12, Tythe Barn, Alton. Erection of single storey garage. **No objections.**
ii. New application SMD/2014/0468 Mr Gerald Willard, Land Adjacent to Sycamores Hurstons Lane, Alton. Erection of a dwelling. **Objection as below.**
iii. New application SMD/2014/0467 Mr Gavin Oliver, Land adjacent to Sycamores Hurstons Lane, Alton. Erection of a dwelling. **Objection as below.**

Councillors decided to object to ii and iii above in the same way as they had last November when a similar application was submitted. Also the Council felt that the village needs affordable housing and not luxury housing, plus the Council recently gave its opinion as to the areas it felt to be acceptable for development in the Parish (Town and Parish Council Consultation on site options and development boundaries), this site was not included. **Action: Clerk to write to Planning with the objections and include the previous email sent last November.**

81/14. Planning decisions.

i. Full permission for development-Mr Mason, 1, The Dale, Alton. A garage.
ii. Full permission for development-Mr Briggs, 12, Glen Drive, Alton. Increase existing hard standing area and replace with block paving and construction of a new curved retaining wall.
iii. Grant of listed building consent, full permission for development-Mr E. Harris, 27, Malthouse Road, Alton. Demolish unused toilet/outhouse building, replace roof to kitchen/bathroom extension and construct a single storey extension on west side of the property.

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82/14. Correspondence.

Requiring response-None

For information only.

The Chair mentioned the below correspondence which had been received.

i. Internal and external audit letters and documents.
ii. Supporting People Review letter-Staffs County Council.
iii. Letters of thanks-Royal British Legion and Alton WI.
iv. Data Protection Act and freedom of Information Act –One day courses.
v. Supporting People Review letter.
vi. Youth Group Flyer.

83/14. Councillor Eyre declared an open forum to allow parishioners present to ask questions/raise issues: No issues of note were raised.

84/14. Finance.

i. Clerks salary and expenses £360.30 plus £6.80 expenses
ii. Lengthsmans wages £160.00
iii. Jacksons Nurseries Net £997.29 VAT £199.46 Gross £1196.75
iv. Grant Thornton (external audit) Net £100.00 VAT £20.00 Gross £120.00
v. Richard Newton (Internal audit) £165.00

Cllr Forrester proposed and Cllr Cope seconded the finances were accepted. This was agreed by all.

There being no other business the meeting was closed by The Chair, Councillor F. Eyre at 9.15pm.

Signed..... Chairman 6th October 2014

Signed..... Clerk