Alton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 14th August 2019 at 7pm
At Alton Village Hall

Present:Councillor J. Shepherd, Councillor (Chair), Councillor A. Forrester, Councillor P Ballard, Councillor E Bailey, Councillor R. Wood, Councillor E. James, Councillor E.Brindley, Councillor M.Worthington (SCC), Councillor H. Plimley (SMDC), Councillor S. Hollins.

Guest: Councillor S. Ralphs (Leader SMDC).

Mr S.J. Burton (Clerk)

Apologies: Councillor P.Gwinnett.

In Attendance: 29 members of the public.

The meeting was opened by Cllr Shepherd at 7pm.

112/19. Declarations of Interest.

i. There were no declarations of interest.

113/19. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th July 2019.

i. The minutes of the last meeting were declared a true record proposed by Cllr Shepherd and seconded by Cllr Ballard and agreed by all and were signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

114/19. Matters arising.

i. There were no matters arising.

115/19. Bus service in Alton.

i. Cllr Shepherd the Chair thanked Cllr Sybil Ralphs, the Leader of SMDC for attending the meeting and invited her to address the meeting with her observations regarding restoring a bus service to Alton.

ii. Cllr Ralphs thanked the council for inviting her to the meeting and then gave an overview about why she was investigating the possibilities of restoring some kind of bus service to rural areas in the Moorlands, including Alton, stating she was being supported by Cllr Plimley. She wishes to present a format to bus companies which can be supported. She acknowledged that any service would be reduced from previous services and that she would be exploring funding streams, which have yet to be identified. Cllr Ralphs expressed concerns for the elderly, those who cannot get out because they cannot drive and those who are lonely. She stated she wants to get a service which is realistic but also meets the needs of the residents. Cllr Ralphs then invited questions.

iii. There followed numerous comments from the councillors and public present, these included asking the Swift bus company to make a short diversion from nearby Denstone through the village. It was suggested that a service twice during the week and on Saturday's would be acceptable, although

no specific times were mentioned. Also various routes to link Alton with nearby towns were discussed.

iv. Cllr Ralphs stated she has meetings arranged with JCB and a number of bus company proprietors are going to see her. She concluded by stating she had taken notes and together with findings from other meetings she would be working to restore a service in Alton and would see that the council were updated in due course. She thanked the council and the public for their questions and Cllr Shepherd thanked Cllr Ralphs again for taking time from her busy schedule to visit the parish council meeting.

116/19. Alton Towers.

i. Cllr James reported she has spoken to Alton Towers regarding the traffic issues caused by coaches leaving the resort after dropping off their passengers, causing congestion in the village due to the size of the vehicles driving against the traffic on narrow roads. Clearly some buses have other work during the day and have to leave, but free parking and food and other benefits are laid on for those drivers who do not have other work. Alton Towers will however look again at this problem next year. Cllr Woods felt that just a delay of half an hour would make a big difference with traffic reduced. There followed a short discussion, with Cllr Woods offering if desired to do a traffic survey himself.
Action: Cllr James to follow up with Alton Towers next year before the start of the season.

117/19. Footpaths.

i. Cllr Bailey reported that the defective stiles reported at the last meeting (minute 100/19 i.) had been repaired following a complaint to SCC from the clerk.

ii. Cllr Shepherd reported that he has removed the defective rail on footpath 20 and that he is arranging for the two remaining handrails to be painted. The council agreed to pay for the paint for this work.
Action: Cllr Shepherd to arrange.

118/19. Village Hall.

i. Cllr Ballard had nothing to report.

119/19. Lengthsman.

i. The Lengthsman Kate Woods was not present.

ii. Cllr Forrester reported that the bus shelter has a lot of weeds around it and needs attention. **Action: Clerk to notify the lengthsman.**

iii. Cllr Bailey reported the grass verges in the village need cutting particularly at Cedar Hill and Battlesteads. The clerk has already reported this to SCC and Cllr Woods reported that work had been completed nearby so it is likely Alton will be completed soon.

iv. Cllr Bailey also reported that Cheadle Road junction with Battlesteads also needs cutting back. **Action: Clerk to notify the lengthsman.**

120/19. Highways and Road Safety.

i. Cllr Plimley reported that the water that runs in Lime Kiln Lane after rainfall is a highways drains issue.

ii. Cllr Woods stated he has reported the faded white road centre line on Smithy Bank and he awaits SCC Highways to inspect and make good. He also reported the trees have been cut back on Gallows Green.

iii. The clerk stated he has also reported the overgrown trees on Dimble Lane adding to the complaint already made by Cllr Woods.

iv. Cllr Brindley mentioned the surface water at Battlesteads following heavy rain. Cllr Plimley was asked to see if she could assist in reporting. **Action: Cllr Plimley.**

121/19. Parish Cemetery and St. Peter's Church Yard.

i. Cllr Forrester reported a new section for cremated remains has been started on the right hand side of the cemetery as you enter through the central gates.

ii. Cllr Forrester reported the shed in the cemetery needs attention and that on the left side by the top gate there is a large fallen tree trunk, which is not dangerous but blocks the way. **Action: Cllr Forrester and Cllr Shepherd will both visit and decide what action to take.**

122/19. Councillor Shepherd declared an open forum to allow parishioners present to ask questions/raise issues.

i. A member of the public stated that some of the grass apparently strimmed by the Lengthsman had shredded litter which had been left together with discarded strimmer wire. He asked if the Lengthsman was briefed as to duties and knows where to work. The Chair explained that the Lengthsman has a contract and certain restrictions placed on the council regarding what work can be done, particularly regarding private overgrown hedges such as those in Dimble Lane.

123/19. Planning and Licensing Applications.

i. SMD/2019/0459. Mr Finney, The Caravan, Cheadle Road, Alton. Change of use of land to provide for 14 touring caravans, separate camping, facilities and reception and associated works. **Following a discussion on a vote of 7-1 there will be no objection.**

ii. SMD/2019/0450. Mr Hartshorn and Dr Carter, Rock House, Smithy Bank, Alton. Replacement windows and new internal door opening. **No objections.**

iii. SMD/2019/0461. Alton Towers. Variation condition 2 of application SMD/2013/1047. **No objections.**

iv. SMD/2017/0444. Mr Prince Land at Horse Road, Alton. Erection of a detached cottage and formation of access. This application was discussed in September 2017 when the council objected to the application. The council object again on exactly the same grounds, **a) Inappropriate development in a conservation area. b) The development is above a sewage system which could cause problems. c) The council had concerns over the dangerous access to the proposed property.**

v. SMD/2019/0486. Mrs Mellor, Walton Homes, adj to 17, Saltersford Lane, Alton. Reserved matters for 22, residential dwellings. The council decided this is such a big issue for the parish that an extraordinary meeting will be called at 7pm on Wednesday 28th August for this one issue. In the meantime Cllr Shepherd gave an overview of the application and the issues as he see's them, which result in an overall objection to the proposals. **Action: Clerk to arrange the meeting.**

124/19. Planning decisions.

i. SMD/2019/0267. Mrs S. Williamson, Alton Bridge Hotel, Station Road, Alton. Application to remove condition 5 in respect to SMD/2016/0550. **Approved.**

The planning decisions were read out by Cllr Shepherd.

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125/19. Correspondence requiring response.

i. Email from Mazars (external auditor) regarding the level of reserves. The clerk explained that the external auditor had commented on the high level of reserves the council holds and that he had explained the extra money (around £15,000) was due to the sale of land some years ago. The external auditor had now returned the completed audit which would be for public display shortly.

126/19. Correspondence for Information.

i. July planning application recommendations to SMDC.
ii. Email to lengthsman request for work in Post Office Alley.
iii. Email to Kate Woods regarding defibrillator maintenance.
iv. Print out re Dimble Lane overgrown from SCC website.
v. Print out report of overgrown hedging in Dimble Lane to SCC.
vi. Fault report re grass verge cutting to SCC.
vii. Stile fault report to SCC. Footpath 44/27 and 43.
viii. Stile fault report to SCC. Footpath 43/28.
ix. Letter from internal auditor.
x. Email to SMDC planning requesting extra time, if needed, to consider SMD/2019/0486.
xi. Completed external auditors report.

The correspondence was read out by the Clerk.

127/19. Finance.

i. Clerk salary £459.60. Expenses £16.50 (printer ink).
ii. Lengthsman wages £140.00.
iii. Invoice from Richard Newton (internal auditor) £165.00
iv. Mazars (external auditors) invoice. £200.00 net VAT £40.00 Gross £240.00
v. Buxus Green £495.00 **Paid**
vi. Income from SMDC for Lengthsman £400.00
vii. Income from Keates funeral directors £63.50
viii. Authorised payments for July 2019 were signed off by the Council.
ix. Current bank balances were presented to the Council.

The finances were proposed by Cllr Shepherd and seconded by Cllr Forrester and carried.

There being no other business the meeting was closed by The Chair, Councillor Shepherd at 8.50pm.

Signed..... Chairman 11th September 2019

Signed..... Clerk