Alton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 11th August 2021 at 7pm

Present: Councillor J. Shepherd (Chair), Councillor P. Gwinnett, Councillor R. Wood, Councillor P. Ballard, Councillor E. Brindley, Councillor N. Conway.
Mr S.J. Burton (Clerk)

Four members of the public.

Apologies: Councillor S. Hollins, Councillor H. Plimley (SMDC), Councillor M. Worthington (SCC).

The meeting was opened by Cllr Shepherd at 7pm.

120/21. Declarations of interest.

i. None.

121/21. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14th July 2021.

i. The minutes of the above meetings were declared a true record proposed by Cllr Shepherd and seconded by Cllr Gwinnett and agreed by all and were signed by the Chair and the clerk.

122/21. Matters arising.

i. There were no matters arising.

123/21. Coronavirus update regarding parish council business.

i. The clerk reported that as regards parish council meetings all restrictions have been lifted. Certain precautions such as social distancing during the meeting and ventilation are being adhered to. This item can be removed from the agenda unless further restrictions are reintroduced.

124/21. Lengthsman.

i. The clerk read out emails he had sent to the lengthsman requesting weed clearing in Shirley drive, Glen Drive and Castle Hill and weeding around the water pump in Dimble Lane.

ii. Cllr Wood mentioned the weeds at the edge of the footpath in St. Peter's Church Yard. **Action: Clerk to request the lengthsman attends to this.**

125/21. Alton Towers.

i. Cllr Conway reported that he has introduced himself to Janet Gurr at Alton Towers. He gave details of an email from Janet Gurr regarding planning application SMD/2021/0330 a temporary stage at Alton Towers. The council have already objected to the application in June 2021 so no further comments could be made and the period for public consultation has passed.

ii. Cllr Conway gave details of training being offered in the use of the community defibrillator, the council felt that in an emergency instructions for use of the defibrillator are clear it was not necessary for any training. **Action: Cllr Conway to thank Bernadette Jenkins for the offer.**

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126/21. Footpaths.

i. Cllr Shepherd reported that footpath 11 at the Ramblers retreat has an incorrect sign, i.e. footpath instead of a bridleway sign. **Action: Cllr Shepherd to arrange a replacement.**

ii. Cllr Shepherd reported footpath 34 is obstructed throughout most of its length and the footpath appears to have been diverted without permission. **Action: Clerk to report to SCC.**

iii. Cllr Wood reported that footpath 32 from Soli to St. Peters Church has had the surface washed away. **Action: Cllr Shepherd to visit and update the clerk.**

iv. Cllr Wood reported the footpath by Arrons Head is overgrown. **Action: Cllr Shepherd to speak to the owner of the land.**

127/21. Village Hall.

i. Cllr Ballard reported new windows are on order for the hall.

ii. Cllr Ballard reported that the village hall committee will shortly be making a decision on the maximum number of people allowed to use the village hall due to the ongoing Covid 19 infection rate.

128/21. Highways and Road Safety.

i. Cllr Wood gave an update on the new Alton village sign on the B5032, Denstone Road. The sign is under construction and when completed he will remove the old sign and Leander will fit the new sign.

ii. Cllr Ballard reported her concerns at the heavy traffic using the Bradley Lane and Alton Lane areas. This could be dangerous as the roads are too narrow to easily cope with the volume of traffic. Cllr Shepherd explained that he is pursuing a 'quiet lane' initiative to try to have traffic calming measures put into place. Cllr Ballard suggested that Alton Towers are requested to advise visitors and staff to use alternative routes. Cllr Wood mentioned that a lot of the traffic is caused by local people. A discussion took place which included the fact that as a public road at the moment anyone can lawfully use the road. Proposed by Cllr Shepherd and seconded by Cllr Ballard that the clerk and Cllr Conway liaise with SCC and Alton Towers to try to provide short and long term solutions to the issue, this was carried. **Actions: Clerk to liaison with Cllr Worthington to see if SCC will support the 'quiet lane' initiative. Cllr Conway to liaise with Alton Towers to see if they can assist with advice to staff and visitors.**

iii. Cllr Wood reported that the use of a combine harvester on Bradley Lane is causing drainage ditches to collapse as the vehicle is wider than the road in places. Following a discussion Cllr Wood volunteered to speak to the owner of the vehicle. **Action: Cllr Wood.**

iv. Cllr Wood reported that the blocked drains in Gladstone Terrace have been cleared by SCC and he thanked them for their work.

v. Cllr Wood stated that he has reported 10 potholes and received 6 replies, he is about to report a further pothole on Dimble lane.

vi. Cllr Shepherd reported that houses at Battlesteads are having water running through gardens due to a blocked drain at the junction of Cheadle Road and Battlesteads (B5032). **Action: Cllr Shepherd visit the site and arrange to report to SCC via the clerk.**

129/21. Parish Cemetery and St. Peter's Church Yard.

i. Cllr Shepherd reported that the cemetery and Church yard are in good order.

ii. **Repair of the Church clock at St. Peters Church.** A request had been received for support from the council for the repair of the Church clock. Mr Alan Walters who was present was invited by the Chair to give an overview of the project. The total cost being £9,375. Money has been received from the parochial church council and other donations leaving a shortfall of £3,000. Cllr Shepherd outlined that it would be lawful to make a donation but expressed concern that it could set a precedent. A discussion took place with various options considered. The council was fully agreed that any donation must not be seen as setting a precedent and it would be for the visual appearance of the parish for the benefit of all residents and visitors. Mr Walters confirmed that fund raising events were unlikely to assist with the shortfall with people being asked to make donations instead to raise money. Cllr Ballard proposed and Cllr Wood seconded that on condition the work goes ahead the council support the project with a donation of £1,000, this was carried on a vote.

130/21. Councillor Shepherd declared an open forum to allow parishioners present to ask questions/raise issues.

i. Nothing was raised.

131/21. Planning and Licensing Applications.

i. None for this meeting.

132/21. Planning decisions.

i. SMD/2017/0444. Land At, Horse Road, Alton, Staffordshire, Erection of a detached cottage and formation of access. **Planning Permission – Refused.**

ii. SMD/2020/0532. Threapwood Farm, Alton Road, Threapwood, Staffordshire, ST10 4RB, Alterations and extensions to dwelling. **Planning Permission – Approved**.

iii. SMD/2021/0148. 20, High Street, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4AQ. Replacement of existing extensions with 2no. single storey rear extensions. **Planning Permission – Approved**.

iv. SMD/2021/0297. Chestnut Cottage, Horse Road, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4BS. Internal alterations to convert first floor room in to bathroom. Install connection to soil pipe and extractor pipe with grill. **Listed Building Consent – Approved.**

The planning decisions were read out by Cllr Shepherd to the meeting.

133/21. Parish Council Updates.

i. **Village Planters.** Cllr Gwinnett explained that she has received a lot of positive comments from people regarding the new planters. She further explained that an update on the proposed work at the war memorial would be given at the next meeting.

ii. **Council Lawnmower.** Cllr Wood asked if any member of the council had any views on the lawnmower owned by the council which was bought for use by the previous lengthsman and is now unused. After a discussion the clerk was asked to see if Taylormade the supplier of the lawnmower would like to buy it back. **Action: The clerk.**

134/21. Correspondence requiring response.

i. None for this meeting.

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135/21. Correspondence for Information.

i. Public participation planning SMD/2020/0656. Circulated.
ii. Advice to member of the public on speed restrictions and traffic law.
iii. Email confirming to Leander that the Alton sign on Denstone Road may go ahead.
iv. Resignation of Cllr James.
v. Emails to SMDC Planning Dept. Comments re July applications.
vi. Email from Ben Adams, Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime giving contact details for the council (circulated).
vii. Email to lengthsman regarding weeds Shirley Drive, Glen Drive and Castle Hill and response.
viii. SMDC letter permitting the council to co-opt a new member.

The correspondence was read out and explained by the clerk.

136/21. Finance.

i. Clerk salary £500.50. Expenses £25.98 (printer ink).
ii. Buxus Green, ground maintenance and lengthsman July invoice £689.79 (Paid)
iii. Keates funeral directors income £115.50
iv. Sigleys Funeral Directors income £63.50.
v. Nettlebank income £28.75.
vi. External audit completion notice (Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021). The accounts have passed external audit.
vii. Authorised payments for August 2021 were agreed and signed off by the council.
viii. Current bank balances were presented to the Council.

The finances were read out by the clerk to the meeting.

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

There being no other business the meeting was closed by The Chair, Councillor Shepherd at 8pm.

Signed..... Chairman Wednesday 8th September 2021

Signed..... Clerk