Alton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 10th March 2021 at 7pm
By Video Conference

Present:Councillor J. Shepherd, Councillor (Chair), Councillor P. Gwinnett, Councillor R. Wood, Councillor P. Ballard, Councillor E. Brindley, Councillor D. Gardner, Councillor M. Worthington (SCC). Mr S.J. Burton (Clerk)

Apologies: Councillor S. Hollins, Councillor E. James, Councillor H. Plimley (SMDC).

It should be noted that one parish councillor could not attend the meeting due to the technical issues related to video conferencing.
The lengthsman has resigned and was not present.
Due to the Coronavirus epidemic the meeting was held under the authority of 'The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England And Wales) Regulations 2020'. The meeting was therefore held by video conference.

The meeting was opened by Cllr Shepherd at 7pm.

35/21. Declarations of Interest.

i. There were no declarations of interest.

36/21. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th February 2021 by video conference.

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 (the clerk to sign at a future meeting).

37/21. Matters arising.

i. Cllr Shepherd reported that he has spoken to the farmer responsible for the drainage ditch at Town Head and he will clear the ditch.
ii. Cllr Shepherd reported the bridle gate on footpath 64 (Saltersford Lane) has been repaired.
iii. Cllr Shepherd reported the hedge on Dimble Lane at the top has now been cut back.

38/21. Coronavirus update regarding parish council business.

i. The clerk reported that unless the government changes its policy face to face meetings will resume after 8th May 2021. He awaits clarification on this point and the number of people who will be allowed to meet.

39/21. Lengthsman.

i. The Lengthsman has sent in a letter of resignation due to personal reasons. Cllr Shepherd proposed and Cllr Ballard seconded that the resignation be accepted with immediate effect (no requirement to work a months' notice), this was carried.
ii. The council discussed the appointment of a new lengthsman and agreed that Paul Goodall from Buxus Green the present ground maintenance company should be asked to submit a quote for the role. He is doing a very good job maintaining the St Peter's Church Yard and parish cemetery at the moment. Cllr Shepherd will make contact and explain the role. **Action: Cllr Shepherd.**

iii. The clerk was asked to draft a new contract for the lengthsman and he will consult with Cllr Wood who helped to draft the current lengthsman's contract. **Action: The clerk.**

iv. Parish council lawnmower. The parish council recently bought a new lawnmower for the use of the lengthsman. The council deferred a decision on its disposal until a new lengthsman has been appointed.

40/21. Highways and Road Safety.

i. Cllr Worthington asked the Chair if highways could be brought forward to this point of the meeting as he had to leave afterwards for another meeting. This was agreed.

ii. Cllr Wood reported that the pothole on Knights Lane has still not been repaired, he has made a further report as this pothole is potentially dangerous. Cllr Worthington has also reported the pothole to SCC Highways. Concern was expressed at the lack of response from SCC regarding the unrepaired potholes and no reply from Cllr David Williams to two emails asking for the policy on hedges growing into the highway. **Action: Clerk to write to SCC for clarity and an explanation.**

iii. Cllr Ballard reported a gully has been replaced in Hurstons Lane.

iv. Cllr Gardner reported a number of potholes at the junction of Denstone Lane/Uttoxeter Road and Saltersford Lane.

v. Cllr Wood reported that a number of kerbside gullies still need cleaning in the village and that a gully has been replaced in Shirley Drive.

vi. Cllr Wood reported that he has been in contact with Paula Lees (SCC Highways) and that the request for Hurstons Lane to be added to the gritting route was not possible unless another road was taken off the route. She had suggested the council may wish to purchase a grit bin which SCC would fill once. The council discussed this and decided not to pursue this course of action. Cllr Worthing stated he would email SCC about gritting Hurstons Lane. **Action: Cllr Worthington.**

41/21. Alton Towers.

i. There was nothing for this item of business except the resort is planning to re-open on 12th April 2021.

42/21. Footpaths.

i. Cllr Gardner had nothing for this item of business.

ii. Cllr Shepherd stated he has spoken to the owner of the land causing the flooding in Wheel Lane and the owner will address the issue.

43/21. Village Hall.

i. Following on from last months discussion regarding repairs and maintenance at the village hall the council discussed various ways the council could assist. A breakdown of repairs and maintenance and current funds for the village hall had been forwarded to the council by Alan Dingley from the village hall committee. The council resolved to support the village hall whenever possible on a case-by-case basis. **Action: Agenda item April.**

ii. The council also discussed supporting the village hall in the running of the playground and sports field. Cllr Gwinnett proposed and Cllr Shepherd seconded offering this support, this was carried. Cllr Gwinnett stated she was happy to assist in this area. **Action: Clerk to make inquiries and report back. Agenda item April.**

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44/21. Parish Cemetery and St. Peter's Church Yard.

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

ii. Cllr Shepherd reported that he has received three quotes to repair the collapsed wall in St. Peter's Church Yard, the first two were expensive at £2,600 and £2,100. He has now received a quote for £400 from Steve Mason from Ashbourne, to re-build the wall if someone else removes the tree roots preventing the work. Cllr Shepherd will remove the roots at no charge except expenses. Cllr Wood proposed and Cllr Brindley seconded the £400 quote be accepted and that Cllr Shepherd removes the roots, this was carried.

iii. Buxus Green ground maintenance contract review. The council consider the work to be very good. Cllr Shepherd proposed and Cllr Ballard seconded the contract be renewed and this was carried.

45/21. Planning and Licensing Applications.

i. DET/2021/0005. Adam Ball, Spond Farm, Greatgate Lane, Alton. Proposed portal frame agricultural building. **No objections.**

46/21. Planning decisions.

i. SMD/2020/0708. Rose Cottage, Bradley Lane, Bradley In The Moors, Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4DF. Installation of a Package Treatment Plant. **Approved.**

47/21. Parish Council Updates.

i. The Millennium Stone project – Cllr Shepherd reported that the clerk had collected the mural from Phoenix Tiles in Newcastle and delivered them to him. They had now been collected by the tiler Martin McDonald who will complete the project next Tuesday at a cost of £75. This was agreed. **Action: Clerk to check regarding insurance.**

ii. Cllr Hollins has been unable to attend council meetings since they had to be held remotely due to not having access to a computer. Therefore, the council had to decide if this is a valid reason for her to remain a councillor, this was last considered 6 months ago. Cllr Shepherd proposed and Cllr Ballard seconded that Cllr Hollins should remain on the council. This was carried by the council.

48/21. Correspondence requiring response.

i. Letter to Cllr Williams (SCC) regarding hedgerow growing into highway Dimble Lane, Alton.

ii. Request from a business called 'Mr Sharpy' to sharpen knives and tools for residents from a mobile van.

iii. Email from Joe Porter SMDC re climate change activity.

49/21. Correspondence for Information.

i. Alton Towers opening dates.

ii. Resignation of the Lengthsman.

iii. Comments on planning applications considered at the February meeting.

iv. Letter of objection to planning application SMD/2021/0062 to SMDC.

v. Emails from and replies to Mr Jeffcoat on a planning application in another parish council's area for consideration.
vi. Notice for casual vacancy for a councillor Alton parish council.
vii. Email from Mr Elliott re planning application SMD/2017/0444 and response.
viii. Letter to retiring Councillor Eddie Bailey thanking him for his service.

The correspondence was read out by the Clerk.

50/21. Finance.

i. Clerk salary £486.16. Expenses £149.99 for law book, Local Council Administration. Invoice from LexisNexis refers. £40.79 printer ink (Amazon invoice refers) Total expenses £190.78.
ii. Lengthsman wages £396.00
iii. Buxus Green. February invoice£495.00 (Paid).
iv. Staffordshire Parish Councils Assoc. SPCA subs £255.00. NALC affiliation £78.00 (Total £333.00)
v. Millennium Stone Mural. Phoenix Tile Studio. Final payment Net £1,146.87 VAT £229.37 (Gross payment £1,376.24) Paid-Minute 132/20 iii refers.
vi. Income-Nettlebank £69.00
vii. Authorised payments for February 2021 were agreed and will be signed off by the council at a future meeting.
viii. Current bank balances were presented to the Council.

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

There being no other business the meeting was closed by The Chair, Councillor Shepherd at 8.35pm.

Signed..... Chairman Thursday 22nd April 2021

Signed..... Clerk