Alton Parish Council

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

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

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

It should be noted that three parish councillors could not attend the meeting due to the technical issues related to video conferencing.
The lengthsman was 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.

18/21. Declarations of Interest.

i. There were no declarations of interest.

19/21. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13th January 2021 by video conference.

i. The minutes of the last meeting were declared a true record proposed by Cllr Shepherd and seconded by Cllr Wood and agreed by all and were signed by the Chair (the clerk to sign at a future meeting).

20/21. Matters arising.

i. There were no matters arising.

21/21. 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.

22/21. Lengthsman.

i. The Lengthsman was present and gave an update on her work over the last month. Mrs Woods has completed all the tasks asked of her including clearing brambles in Lime Kiln Lane, clearing the memorial path and some gutters. She has spent time litter picking and removed the bag of vegetation from near the water pump in Dimble Lane. The drainage ditch at Town End will require a digger, so that work is in abeyance.

ii. The Chair thanked the Lengthsman for attending and stressed the importance of her attending every meeting. The Lengthsman also stated she was happy to carry on in the role for the forthcoming year.

iii. Cllr Wood asked the Lengthsman if she could clean the map which is situated by the Millennium Stone at the village hall. **Action: The Lengthsman.**

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23/21. Alton Towers.

i. Cllr James had nothing for this item of business. It was however noted that the resort is now advertising for staff for next season.

24/21. Footpaths.

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

ii. Cllr Shepherd stated that Wheel Lane is flooding and that he will speak to the owner of the land causing the flooding. **Action Cllr Shepherd.**

25/21. Village Hall.

i. The Chair welcomed Linda Goodwin and Alan Dingle from the Village Hall Committee who had been invited to discuss major repairs and upgrades required at the village hall. Mrs Goodwin and Mr Dingle supported by Cllr Ballard (village hall liaison for the parish council) gave a detailed overview of the issues facing the village hall.
   a. The boiler needs repairing or replacing possibly with two domestic boilers at a cost of up to £7,500.
   b. The lighting needs to be replaced (it is over 50 years old) and a grant of £1,000 has been applied for to help with this.
   c. The windows are rotten and need replacing at a cost of between £12-15,000.
   d. The total cost for all work is likely to be £20-22,000.

ii. A lengthy discussion took place which included possible grants, village hall funds available and how the village hall proposes to advertise and promote the village hall as a venue to make a profit once the current restrictions are lifted. Grants of over £17,000 have been received as a result of government policy during the Corona virus restrictions. It is estimated that the village hall after all other costs and keeping a reserve for emergencies will have about £10-11,000 available.

iii. Cllr Gwinnett proposed that before the council could consider supporting the village hall with public money, the council would need to see a documented tangible breakdown of the work required and a projection of how income will be generated and grow in the future. Before the proposition was seconded Cllr Wood asked it be recorded that there is no guarantee of financial support. Cllr Shepherd then seconded the proposition which was carried on a vote.

iv. Both Cllr Wood and Cllr Gwinnett gave their contact details to Linda Goodwin and offered to support the village hall committee in presenting the necessary documentation.

26/21. Highways and Road Safety.

i. The clerk summarised emails and a telephone conversation he has had with Mr Peter Westwood the Principal Engineering Manager with SCC, regarding the new road signage in the parish. Mr Westwood repeated the apology for SCC in not further consulting with the parish council after agreed signage was altered. He did however state he believes the signage has been correctly placed in accordance with current policy and regulations. Cllrs Wood and Shepherd agreed that there is little else the parish council can do and that the matter should now be accepted. Cllr Ballard expressed her opposition to the signage but also accepted there was nothing further that could be done. This was agreed by the council.

ii. Cllr Wood reported that he noticed Alton had been gritted during the recent cold weather and that some gullies had been cleaned.

iii. Dimble Lane-Cllr Wood noted that most houses had now made some effort to cut their hedges back from the road, except for the last house at the top of the lane near the junction with the

B5032. Cllr Shepherd stated he would have a gentle word with the householder. **Action: Cllr Shepherd.**

iv. Cllr Wood stated that the large pothole on Knight Lane has been prepared for repair, but it still poses a risk. Cllr Wood will follow this up with SCC Highways. **Action: Cllr Wood.**

27/21. Parish Cemetery and St. Peter's Church Yard.

i. Cllr Shepherd reported that the cemetery and Church yard are in good order. The tree work in the Church yard has been completed as permitted by SMDC.

ii. The collapsed wall in the Church yard has not yet been re-built and Cllr Shepherd is waiting for the person who said they would repair it for free to get back in touch. If the work is not carried out Cllr Shepherd will get quotes for the work. **Action: Cllr Shepherd to report back at the next meeting.**

28/21. Future Financial projects.

i. Cllr Shepherd reported that he has made enquiries and the Victorian sewer vent pipes in Alton (minute 11/21) will be far too expensive to paint, so he withdraws his suggestion for this as a future project.

ii. Cllr Shepherd reported that the ACE group in the village are planning a community orchard behind the old Alton railway station.

29/21. Planning and Licensing Applications.

i. SMD/2020/0714 and 0715. Communications Station Flag, Alton Towers. EE Ltd. **No objections.**

ii. SMD/2021/0062. Mr &Mrs Barks, Land at Hurstons Lane Alton. Renewal of Extant Permission for Erection of Detached Dwelling Approved under Application Reference SMD/2018/0245. **The council objects to this application as it did to the previous application SMD/2018/0245. Previous objections were on the grounds that the dwelling will be too large and inappropriate for the area, obstructing historical views across the village, these are still the councils views together with lack of infrastructure and the fact the village has already meet its quota for new houses. Cllr Shepherd will prepare a letter of objection.**

30/21. Planning decisions.

i. SMD/2020/0627. The Hutch, Tythe Barn, Alton. A two-storey extension and a small single storey flat roof extension. **Approved.**

31/21. Parish Council Updates.

i. The Millennium Stone project – The clerk reported that there had been a slight delay with the delivery of materials for the restoration of the stone but that things appeared to be back on track. He showed the council a short video of the work being undertaken and two photographs.

ii. The Yew trees in St. Peters Church Yard to be cut back or felled (Minute 142/20)-Cllr Shepherd-**Complete**.

32/21. Correspondence requiring response.

i. Letter to Cllr Williams (SCC) regarding hedgerow growing into highway Dimble Lane, Alton. **The clerk is still awaiting a response to this letter.**

ii. Letter of resignation from Cllr Eddie Bailey from the council. The clerk read out a letter of resignation from Cllr Eddie Bailey who has resigned after sterling service to the parish council for over 30 years. The council were unanimous in thanking Cllr Bailey for his work both as a councillor and 20 years as the village Lengthsman. A copy of the letter will be filed with the minutes. **Action: Clerk to write and thank Cllr Bailey.**

33/21. Correspondence for Information.

i. Routine correspondence form SMDC, SPCA and NALC. All dealt with.
ii. Emails to and from Mr Westwood regarding the new road signage.
iii. Email to SMDC planning re parish council comments on planning applications.
iv. Letter to SMDC regarding objection planning application SMD/2021/0003.
v. Email to Lengthsman regarding work to be completed from January 2021 meeting.
vi. Email from Mr Robinson (SMDC) confirming the precept requirement as £16,290. Band 'D' charge confirmed as £30.97.
vii. Letter from the Vice Lord-Lieutenant regarding nominating people for national recognition who have gone above and beyond during the Covid epidemic. There are no nominations from the council.

The correspondence was read out by the Clerk.

34/20. Finance.

i. Clerk salary £486.16
ii. Lengthsman wages. No invoice submitted for technical reasons. To be included next meeting.
iii. Buxus Green £495.00 January (paid).
iv. JK Arboriculture (work in Church Yard minute 142/20) £1,350.00. Paid.
v. Authorised payments for January 2021 were agreed and will be signed off by the council at a future meeting.
vi. Current bank balances were presented to the Council.

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 8.40pm.

Signed..... Chairman Wednesday 10th March 2021

Signed..... Clerk