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Alton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 10th December 2025 at 7pm

Present: Councillor J. Shepherd (Chair), Councillor R. Wood, Councillor N. Conway, Councillor P. Ballard, Councillor J. Wakefield, Councillor N. Moulton (SMDC).

Mr S.J. Burton (Clerk).

Two members of the public.

Apologies: Councillor P. Gwinnett (Vice Chair), Councillor E. Brindley, Councillor A. Dronzek, Councillor S. Beardmore (SCC).

Cllr J. Shepherd (Chair) declared the meeting open at 7pm and welcomed Councillor Wakefield to her first meeting.

184/25. Declarations of Interest.

- i. None.

185/25. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12th November 2025.

- i. The minutes of the above 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 and the clerk.

186/25. Action Updates.

- i. Cllr Moulton reported that there is no update regarding a meeting with Alton Towers (minute 170/25 i).
- ii. Cllr Shepherd stated that he has reported footpath 61 with water damage (minute 171/25 i).
- iii. Cllr Wood stated he has reported the blocked gully in Hurstons Lane, which should be cleared by SCC on 9th January 2026 (minute 174/25 iv).
- iv. Cllr Shepherd reported that there is no news regarding the tree work at St. Peter's Church (minute 175/25 i).
- v. Cllr Beardmore was not present so the action regarding original reports from the clerk and Cllr Wood regarding why a broken stile were not showing on the SCC system is carried forward. (Minute 86/25 ii). **Action: Cllr Beardmore.**

187/25. Alton Towers.

- i. Cllr Conway had no update for this item but will follow up the proposed meeting with Alton Towers in the new year. **Action: Cllr Conway.**

188/25. Footpaths.

- i. Cllr Shepherd stated that someone had informed him that footpath 29 is flooded. Town Head heading east. He will check and if necessary, report. **Action: Cllr Shepherd.**
- ii. Cllr Wood stated that the issue regarding footpath 38, Wood Farm have now been resolved and the crop is now cut back correctly.

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189/25. Village Hall. Cllr Ballard had nothing for this item of business but she was asked to check if the village hall own the fencing around the playing field perimeter which is falling into disrepair.
Action: Cllr Ballard.

190/25. Lengthsman.

- i. Cllr Wood commented that the tender document has not yet been completed, this will need attention in the near future.

191/25. Highways and Road Safety.

- i. Cllr Wood reported that the roads around Alton should be repaired on 19th and 20th January 2026.
- ii. Cllr Wood has followed up the pothole on the High Street, but it is not deep enough to require a repair (less than a tennis ball or 4cm).

192/25. Parish Cemetery and St. Peter's Church Yard.

- i. The clerk reported he has received an email thanking whoever has tidied up the old cemetery from a person who visits a relative's grave there. This was done by local people and not the council.
- ii. Cllr Wood explained he has reviewed the cemetery charges with a 15% increase for a headstone and 5% for other items. The full list has been circulated to the council. Cllr Wood proposed these changes and Cllr Shepherd seconded, the proposal was carried. **Action: The clerk to arrange.**

193/25. Councillor Shepherd declared an open forum to allow parishioners present to ask questions/raise issues.

- i. A member of the public thanked the council for the recent donation of £75 to the local Royal British Legion.

194/25. Planning and Licensing Applications.

- i. SMD/2025/0488. Jack Hicton, 24, Glen Drive, Alton. Variation of condition 2 relating to SMD/2025/0356. There were no objections.

195/25. Planning decisions.

- i. None for this meeting.

196/25. Section 106 funds for playing field and play area update.

- i. The clerk reported that he has submitted the quotes/tenders approved at last months meeting. He has received a reply from SMDC, Angela Dale requesting a meeting with the clerk to discuss the long term plans for the project as SMDC require more than just notification of the work and costs, the project must comply with the Section 106 rules. **Action: The clerk to follow this up and report back.**

197/25. Parish Council Updates.

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- i. Round House maintenance: Cllr Shepherd reported he has weeded some of the weeds from the roof but will have to wait for dry weather to complete the task safely. The damaged stones near to the door will be replaced in due course. No other work is required at present. **Action: Cllr Shepherd.**
- ii. The clerk reported that he has arranged for a new email which is more professional and transferable. It is **not in use** yet but will be clerk@altonstaffs.org.uk The clerk enquired if any councillor would like to use the domain. Cllr Shepherd requested an email address. **Action: The clerk to arrange.**
- iii. **New clerk update.** As the clerk is retiring and advert for the position will need to be placed on the notice board, social media and website. **Action: The clerk to work with Cllr Wood to produce an advert.**
- iv. There is one vacancy for a councillor following from the co-option of Cllr Wakefield. One gentleman, Christopher Nicholls, who wished to be considered as a co-opted member of the council was present. He had already forwarded an overview of his background much of it in teaching (nearly 40 years), including as assistant headteacher. He was asked to leave the room whilst the councillors considered his application. Cllr Shepherd proposed and Cllr Conway seconded that Mr Nicholls be accepted as a member of the council. This was carried. Mr Nicholls returned to the meeting and was informed of the decision. The necessary paperwork will be completed and he will join the council at the next meeting.

198/25. Correspondence requiring response.

- i. None for this meeting.

199/25. Correspondence for Information.

- i. Proposal on Local Government Reorganisation from SMDC (circulated).
- ii. Councillor Introduction Course (circulated).
- iii. Defibrillator consumables renewed (circulated).
- iv. Thank you email from RBL for donation (circulated).
- v. Email from the clerk re intention to retire (circulated).

The clerk read out the correspondence.

200/25. Finance.

- i. Precept 2026/27. The precept was discussed and must be submitted no later than the end of January. The clerk had forwarded some figures to consider but as there are a number of changes/unknown figures e.g. the new clerks salary, who will be successful in the tender for the Lengthsman/ground work and those costs, it was decided to leave the decision until the next meeting.
- ii. Clerk salary £467.48
- iii. Buxus Green invoice November £724.27 (invoice received late and paid in December).
- iv. Interest income November £37.04

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- v. Nettlebank income £45.00
- vi. Received from SMDC £28,034 re S106 funding.
- vii. Royal British Legion donation £75.00
- viii. Authorised payments were signed off by the Council.
- ix. Current bank balances were signed off by the Council.

The finances were read out by the clerk. There were no items to vote on.

There being no other business the meeting was closed by Councillor Shepherd at 7.35pm.

Signed..... Chairman Wednesday 14th January 2026

Signed..... Clerk