



Alton Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 13th December 2023 at 7pm

Present: Councillor J. Shepherd (Chair), Councillor R. Wood, Councillor H. Kelsall, Councillor N. Moulton (SMDC).

Mr S.J. Burton (Clerk)

1 member of the public.

Apologies: Councillor P. Ballard, Councillor P. Gwinnett (Vice Chair), Councillor A. Dronzek, Councillor E. Brindley, Councillor N. Conway, Councillor M. Worthington (SCC).

Cllr Shepherd declared the meeting open at 7pm.

172/23 Declarations of interest.

- i. Councillor Kelsall declared an interest in planning application SMD/2023/0530 Royal Oak, Cheadle Road Alton. The applicant is her husband. Cllr Kelsall will not comment or vote on this item.

173/23. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8th November 2023.

- i. The minutes of the above meeting was 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.

174/23. Matters arising.

- i. The clerk reported that he had still not had a reply from Rural England regarding any information they may have on the ownership of the Round House (minute 158/23 iv). The clerk will write again. **Action: The clerk.**
- ii. The clerk reported the Cllr Dronzek had informed him that the repair to the central gates at the cemetery had not yet been completed but is on his 'to do' list (minute 164/23 ii). **Action: Cllr Dronzek.**
- iii. The clerk reported he had written to Croxden parish council regarding alleged speeding in the parish as requested explaining why Alton PC could offer no evidence to support the issue (minute 169/23 i).
- iv. The clerk reported he had written to Sharon Middling regarding contacts she could use for a Cheadle Clubs, Groups and Societies Directory (minute 169/23 ii).

175/23 Alton Towers.

- i. Cllr Kelsall wished to thank Alton Towers for the £100 donation to the baby group at the village hall and the donation of wine for the Christmas carol event.

176/23. Footpaths.

- i. The council has received notice of an upgrade application for footpath 45 to become a bridle path. The council were content with the application and had no further comments to make.



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177/23. Village Hall.

- i. The clerk reported that he had collected the 'no dogs on the playing fields' signs and has handed them over to the village hall committee.

178/23. Lengthsman.

- i. The clerk reported that the lengthsman has informed him that there will not be an increase in charges for the coming year 2024/25 and that the increase the following year 2025/26 is likely to be about 5%.

179/23. Highways and Road Safety.

- i. Cllr Wood reported that the potholes at Battlesteads, the flooding on Hurstons Lane outside the village hall and other works are on a list of a number of road works to be completed early in the new year, January and February. He will monitor and report back as necessary. (Minute 163/23 ii and iii).
- ii. Cllr Shepherd reported the footpath outside Londis is in need of repair it is cracked and damaged.
Action: Cllr Wood to report.

180/23. Parish Cemetery and St. Peter's Church Yard.

- i. Cllr Wood has reviewed the cemetery charges and compared them to several others in the area, his proposal is to increase the charges by 10% from 1st January 2024, this was seconded by Cllr Shepherd and carried. This is the first increase since 2021. The new charges will be posted onto the Alton parish council website. **Action: The clerk to implement.**

181/23. Councillor Shepherd declared an open forum to allow parishioners present to ask question/raise issues. The member of the public present asked about the regular flooding at Battlesteads. Cllr Wood explained the work that has been done to try to rectify the problem over a long time, but there is no simple action available to resolve the issue.

182/23 Planning and Licensing Applications.

- i. SMD/2023/0515. Mr David Taylor, Merlin Magic Making - Merlin Entertainments, Air Shop Alton Towers. The proposal is for the demolition of an existing poor-quality arcade offering and replacement with a purpose-built steel frame structure of the same function. **No objections.**
- ii. SMD/2023/0530. Mr Gary Kelsall, Royal Oak, Cheadle Road Alton. Proposed change of use from public house (Use Class A4) to offices. **Only three parish councillors were present at the meeting and Cllr Kelsall had declared an interest so could not take part in the discussion or vote. This left only two councillors which is below the minimum of three to be quorate. Therefore, no comment has been made on this application.**
- iii. **New road name, Ivy Cottage Tythe Barn development.** Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has received a Street Naming and Numbering application to register a residential development consisting of 11 dwellings and 1 road at Ivy Cottage, Tythe Barn, Alton. The council did not object to the name already put forward by the developer of 'Orchard Lane' and had no further comment.



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183/23. Planning decisions.

- i. SMD/2022/0409 Land at Cedarhill, Alton. Outline application with all matters reserved for the erection of up-to 4 dwellings. An appeal against refused planning permission was dismissed on 28/11/23. Appeal reference SMD/2022/0409A.

184/23. Parish Council Updates.

- i. Round House-update. See minute 174/23 i.

185/23. Correspondence requiring response.

- i. Request to Buxus Green to provide charges for 2024/25. See minute 178/23 i.

186/23. Correspondence for Information.

- i. Road closure notices-Nabb Lane, Horse Road, Hurstons Lane, Cedar Hill, High Street, Farley Lane. All circulated.
- ii. Reply to Sharon Middling re Clubs, Groups and Societies Directory (minute 169/23 ii)
- iii. Reply to Croxden PC re speed reduction proposal Hollington Lane (minute 169/23 i).
- iv. Request from Alton PC for revised electoral register from SMDC.
- v. Correspondence and visit to the cemetery to assist lady finding a grave including hard copy deeds document.
- vi. Insulation and heating info for householders to website.
- vii. Correspondence re national pay award and the council's accountant work calculating the clerk's salary (circulated).
- viii. Email to SMDC re November planning applications.
- ix. Letters from Karen Bradley MP and Helen Whately MP re ambulance response times.
- x. Survey on police and fire service costs. To be added to the website.

The clerk read out the correspondence.

187/23. Finance.

- i. Precept 2024/25. The clerk has still not received the precept requirement documents from SMDC so cannot inform the council of the tax base reported figure (number of houses). Following a discussion Cllr Shepherd proposed the precept remain the same as this year at £17,225 this was seconded by Cllr Wood and carried.
- ii. Clerk salary £833.85 (includes national pay award and net back pay to April of £246.59). Future net pay will be £587.26. The acceptance of the national pay award was proposed by Cllr Shepherd and seconded by Cllr Wood and carried.
- iii. HMRC £486.65
- iv. Buxus Green November invoice £689.79 (paid) December invoice £689.79 to be paid after the December council meeting.
- v. Interest from bank accounts to 30.11.23 £41.14
- vi. Income Nettlebank £37.50
- vii. VAT refund from HMRC £615.51
- viii. Authorised payments to be signed off by the Council.
- ix. Current bank balances to be presented to the Council.



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

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

There being no other business the meeting was closed by Councillor Shepherd at 7.20pm.

Signed..... Chairman Wednesday 10th January 2024

Signed..... Clerk