



ALTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 8 July 2026 at 7:00pm

Present: Councillor J. Shepherd (Chair), Councillor R. Wood, Councillor P. Ballard, Councillor J. Wakefield, Councillor C. Nicholls, Councillor E Brindley, Councillor Dronzek Mrs A Barker (Clerk).
One member of the public.

Apologies: Councillors P Gwinnett, N Moulton (Staffordshire Moorlands District Council ("SMDC")) S Beardmore (Staffordshire County Council ("SCC")).

Cllr J. Shepherd (Chair) declared the meeting open at 7:00pm.

97/26. Declarations of Interest.

Cllr Brindley noted an interest in agenda point 13.1 – outcome of a planning decision.

98/26. Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10th June 2026.

- i. The minutes of the above meeting were declared a true record, proposed by Cllr Shepherd and seconded by Cllr Wakefield, agreed by all and were signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

99/26. Matters Arising/Action Updates.

- i. Cllr Shepherd reported that he had been unable to clear the brambles in the play area. (minute 51/26 iii), as they now contain a wasps nest. It may also not be possible to clear them until the fence is removed. Action to be held over.
- ii. Cllr Shepherd reported that the removal of the fence, and management of the hedge along the perimeter of the village hall car park had been carried out, and a very good job completed. The banks had also been cleared, in addition to the works quoted, at no extra cost. Cllr Shepherd advised (in response to a question from the Village Hall representative) that hedging whips would be planted in the gap where the bins had been located, although this may take some time to grow to the height of the existing hedge.
 - iii. Cllr Beardmore was not present to update on Highways matters discussed at the previous meeting. Cllr Beardmore had however reported to the Clerk, prior to the meeting, that she had had an on-site meeting, last week, with Cllr Moulton to discuss the Uttoxeter Road junction, and they were planning to move ahead with the report that will be needed to facilitate any changes. Cllr Moulton had noted that a previous report had been carried out and that a roundabout proposal had been put forward at that time. Consideration is to be given as to whether that work is still relevant, and whether any of the information can be utilised as part of the current process. It is however considered that Highways will be more likely to propose a revised layout of the junction rather than a more substantial scheme. Hopefully resurfacing work could also be considered at the same time. Cllr Beardmore also reported that she had been advised that resurfacing works are scheduled for this area later this year, along with Castle Hill Road, High Street and New Road.
 - iv. Cllrs Beardmore and Moulton also met with Cllr Nicholls to discuss the issues relating to Back Lane, and also the Malthouse signage. Cllr Beardmore hoped that progress can be



made on those matters shortly. Cllr Beardmore is still in negotiations with Alton Towers, and needs legal support to be completed by the Highways Department.

- v. The Clerk reported that Cllr Gwinnett had circulated “flyers” in the village to promote a potential community speedwatch campaign. The Clerk had received communications from two residents volunteering to be involved in the scheme. This was in addition to a volunteering offer from Cllr Wakefield, made at the last meeting, who now confirmed that her husband was also prepared to volunteer. The member of the public who had raised the speeding issue previously, had also volunteered, at the previous meeting. The Clerk had obtained access to the “Alton in the Staffordshire Moorlands Facebook page, in order to promote activities, as appropriate.
- vi. The draft Financial Regulations have been updated since the last meeting, and now signed, and will be uploaded to the website.

100/26. Alton Towers.

Cllr Wakefield reported that she had received complaints from 2 residents regarding litter. It was noted that Alton Towers, despite previous advice that they would arrange litter picking, did not appear to be carrying this out. There was significant debate regarding the litter, and traffic issues exacerbated by Alton Towers traffic, and the fact that Alton Towers appeared to now have less involvement in the community, since their management structure had changed. There was a suggestion to ask an Alton Towers representative(s) to come along to address a future council meeting. The outcome of the discussion, was a proposal to carry out a litter pick, by Cllr

Shepherd, and seconded by Cllr Wood and agreed. The date fixed for the litter pick was

Saturday 25 July 2026 at 10 am, at the Village Hall. Action: Cllr Shepherd to contact Cllr Moulton to arrange for bags. Cllrs to attend litter pick, as available. In addition, Cllr Nicholls proposed and Cllr Shepherd seconded, and it was agreed, that this matter be put back on the next agenda to determine an approach to Alton Towers, councillors having considered this matter in the meantime. **Action: Clerk to put consideration of interaction with Alton Towers onto next agenda.**

101/26. Footpaths.

- i. Cllr Nicholls reported that he had met with Cllrs Beardmore and Moulton to consider Footpath 29 and the issues on the road at Town Head and Back Lane. Cllr Nicholls reported that all work which the landowner had agreed to carry out to improve the condition of Footpath 29. i.e. levelling and clearing, had all been completed, and the footpath was fully accessible.
- ii. Cllr Nicholls confirmed that the landowner had previously offered to put down hard core in the passing places on Back Lane and install harder surfaces on the bends at Town Head. Cllr Nicholls advised that the landowner is liaising with Cllr Beardmore to determine what he could and could not do, in this regard.
- iii. Cllr Wood reported that Footpath 35 was overgrown as a result of a maize crop, and no path had been cleared. **Action: Cllr Wood to draft a letter to the landowner.**
- iv. Cllr Wood noted that the council had written the landowner on 20 September last year regarding crops not cleared at Footpath Alton 38. Cllr Wood noted that this year there were no such problems and the footpath was cleared, and Cllr Wood proposed, Cllr Shepherd seconded and it was agreed that a letter should be sent to the landowner thanking him for his co-operation. **Action: Clerk to issue letter to landowner.**



102/26. Village Hall.

- i. It was reported that there was still a lot of positivity amongst the Village Hall Committee, and they were carrying out fundraising and applying for grants. Cllr Ballard advised that the “no overnight camping” sign had disappeared, and this was becoming a problem, as sometimes there was insufficient space to park, for hirers at the Village Hall. Cllr Ballard proposed and Cllr Shepherd seconded, that a sign should be acquired, and it was agreed that Cllr Ballard would obtain details of a sign and its cost, and bring this information to the next meeting. **Action: Cllr Ballard to obtain details for new sign and bring to next meeting.**
- ii. Cllr Ballard also raised concerns that there some overhanging trees at the front of the Village Hall. Cllr Shepherd proposed, Cllr Dronzek seconded, and it was agreed, that Cllr Shepherd would trim back the overhanging trees. **Action: Cllr Shepherd to trim back trees at the front of the Village Hall**
- iii. Cllr Wood queried whether there had been any progress in determining the nature/tenure of the landholding at the Village Hall, as regards the Council and the Village Hall. The Clerk confirmed that she had inspected the land title deeds, noting ownership by the Council, but with a restriction requiring certain notices under the Charities Act to be completed, if the land was sold. The Clerk had also inspected details of the Village Hall Charity on the Charities Commission website, and then wrote to the Charities Commission asking for clarification as to the Charity’s interest in the land and the nature of any restrictions. The Charities Commission has replied providing copies of various documents which it holds, which the Clerk intended to circulate once these had been read through. Cllr Brindley also advised that he had given the previous clerk a large folder containing documentation relating to the land. **Action: Clerk to circulate information relating to the ownership of the land at the Village hall site.**

103/26. Groundsman/Lengthsman.

- i. Cllr Dronzek again provided positive feedback regarding the grounds maintenance work in the cemetery. Likewise, there were very positive comments regarding the lengthsman’s work. It was however, noted, that there appeared to be an area in St Peter’s Churchyard, above the allotments, which was not being maintained by the grounds maintenance contractor. It appeared that this had been overlooked. Cllr Shepherd proposed and Cllr Dronzek seconded and it was agreed, that the ground maintenance contractor should be contacted to ask them to ensure that this area is maintained, going forward. **Action: Cllr Dronzek to provide photograph to confirm which area requires attention, and Clerk to contact Key Maintenance Group**

104/26. Highways and Road Safety.

- i. Cllr Wood reported that Bradley Lane is due to be closed at the end of the month.
- ii. There was a discussion regarding difficulties in traffic access particularly for coaches, and the area at Pine Lodge was discussed. Efforts have been made previously to try to combat such problems – there have been suggestions of restricted access or weight restrictions but these are likely to fail, based on past experience. The issues need to be curtailed or restricted at an earlier point, from Cheadle, where improved signage is required. Cllr Wakefield proposed, Cllr Shepherd seconded, and it was agreed that the Clerk would write to Cllr Beardmore regarding signage in Cheadle. **Action: Clerk to contact Cllr Beardmore.** There was discussion regarding parking around the Londis shop without outcomes or action points, as this had been considered at previous meetings.



105/26. Parish Cemetery and St. Peter's Church Yard.

- i. The council had received an email from the Churchwarden at St Peter's Churchyard requesting funding to pay for strimming and maintenance at the churchyard extension behind the war memorial. The council is not legally in a position to make such a payment, as this is private land. The request will therefore have to be refused. **Action Point: Clerk to reply to churchwarden.** A number of councillors, did however suggest that they may be prepared to volunteer some time to assist, but this would be separate from the parish council. They were given contact details for the Churchwarden

106/26. Cllr Shepherd announced an open forum to allow members of the public to ask questions.

- i. A member of the public complained regarding speeding at Gallows Green to Tythe Barn. The resident was advised that Cllr Gwinnett was trying to set up a community speedwatch initiative, and this would be one of the areas considered for such action.

107/26. Planning and Licensing Applications.

None.

108/26. Planning decisions.

- i. SMD 2026/0214. Mrs Susan Matthews, 5 The Hurstones, Hurstones Lane, Alton. Replace existing conservatory with a single-storey modern rear extension, along with the removal of the front porch, and the construction of a minor side extension to the garage. Permission approved
- ii. SMD 2026/0211 Mr D Taylor Merlin Magic Making, Alton Towers, Farley Lane, Farley. Proposed Walk-Through Attraction Building. Permission approved.

108/26. Section 106 funds for playing field and play area update.

- i. At the last council meeting, councillors had requested additional professional input to assist with/determine the next course of action for the playing field project. Since the last council meeting, members of the Section 106 group had met with representatives of the local Football Association ("FA"), to consider and discuss the current state of the pitch and future requirements. The FA suggested that an agronomist's report would be required prior to further action, to understand the current state of the ground and the drainage. The costs of an agronomist's report cannot be discharged from the Section 106 funds. The FA suggested that a typical cost might be circa £1,000, but this might only be for a desktop report. The Clerk has asked the FA for details of agronomist who have previously assisted in such projects, and is awaiting further details. The Council therefore needs to decide how to fund the agronomist's report. It was suggested that initially it should be determined if there is any grant funding available. It was agreed that the Clerk, and Cllr Shepherd would look through recent communications to try to determine if any grant funding was available. **Action: Clerk and Cllr Shepherd to search for grant funding.** Cllr Shepherd also noted that Linda Goodwin from the Village Hall Committee and Section 106 Group had located details of the contractors who completed the 2020 drainage work, along with a map from Severn Trent Water. She will forward details to the Clerk, as this information may be useful to inform the current project.



109/26. Parish Council Updates.

- i. Gritting Bins – Cllr Wood had identified 7 gritting bins in the parish. These were noted and no other additional bins suggested as missing from the list. **Action: Clerk to reply to SCC correspondence providing details of bins in Alton.**
- ii. Charity clothing bins – Cllr Ballard advised that the Village Hall Committee had previously refused to have such bins on the car park. There was a discussion as to whether this should be a decision for the Village Hall or the Parish Council. A majority of councillors were in favour of such bins. It was agreed that a decision would be deferred until next meeting. Before the next meeting, **Action: Cllr Ballard to find out why the bins had been refused previously. Cllr Shepherd to liaise with Linda Goodwin at Village Hall.**

Correspondence/Communications: Requiring response:

- i. Cemetery Enquiries.
- ii. Updated Finance Records request for Lengthsman Scheme Grant

For information only:

- i. Note of Village Hall AGM date on 18 June 2026.
- ii. SMDC information regarding Locality Plans, Opportunity to Comment and Participate in Online Discussions
- iii. Councillor Engagement Workshop regarding Locality Plans – 1 July 2026
- iv. Findings of SPCA member Survey
- v. SMDC Consultation re: Smoke Control Areas
- vi. SMDC Street Furniture Report
- vii. In Touch Newsletter
- viii. Leukaemia & Myeloma Research UK Clothes Banks
- ix. SPCA June Bulletin
- x. SPCA Councillor Training Pack
- xi. Local Government Reorganisation Presentation from Parish Assembly Meeting
- xii. Business Planning Course – 16 July 2026

The Clerk gave details of the correspondence.

110/26. Finance:

Section 106

- i. Clerk Hours for Section 106 work – The Clerk had submitted a report of work carried out for the Section 106 Group showing 2 and a half hours worked. Cllr Shepherd proposed and Cllr Wood seconded, and it was agreed, that these hours should be paid. Keith Ford to calculate the payroll.



Payments:

- i. Clerk Salary £519.17 (Month of April 2026)
- ii. Clerk Mobile Phone £13 (April 2026)
- iii. Village Hall £28 – April Hire
- iv. The Ford Partnership £468 (£390 VAT £78) (Internal Audit)
 - v. Zurich Insurance £885.88
 - vi. Staffs Hedgelaying £280
 - vii. Key Maintenance Group £572 (£476.67 VAT £95.33)
 - viii. Clerk Mobile Phone Bill £13 (May 2026)
 - ix. J K Arboriculture £2,700 (£2,250 VAT £450)

Income:

- x. Interest £36.33

A VAT reclaim has been prepared by the Clerk, given the substantial amount of VAT now due for refund.

- xi. Authorised payments were signed off by the Council.
- xii. Current bank balances were signed off by the Council.

The finances were read out by the Clerk.

There being no other business the meeting was closed by Councillor Shepherd at 8.20pm

Signed..... Chairman Wednesday 12 August 2026

Signed..... Clerk