

These minutes are in draft form and are not official until ratified by the Parish Council at the next meeting. Any errors will be corrected at that meeting.



ALTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 10 June 2026 at 7:00pm

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

Apologies: Councillors A Dronzek, N. Conway, N Moulton (Staffordshire Moorlands District Council ("SMDC")) S Beardmore (Staffordshire County Council ("SCC")).

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

80/26. Declarations of Interest.

None.

81/26. Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 13th May 2026.

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

82/26. Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on Wednesday 13th May 2026.

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

83/26. Matters Arising/Action Updates.

- i. Cllr Shepherd reported that he intended to clear the brambles in the play area. (minute 51/26 iii), but had not yet had time to complete this action. **Action: Cllr Shepherd**
- ii. Cllr Shepherd reported that he had tried to obtain three quotes for the hedgework along the perimeter of the village hall car park. He had received a quote from the current lengthsman and one other contractor. Another quote had been requested but had not yet been forthcoming. In view of the need to get the work underway, it was proposed by Cllr Shepherd, seconded by Cllr Ballard, and agreed, to accept the lowest quote from the lengthsman, at a total of £910 to remove the existing fence and restore the hedge. **Action: Cllr Shepherd to liaise with lengthsman to carry out the required work.**
- 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 a few updates to share, and would forward details as soon as possible. Cllr Beardmore also stated that she had been informed that Hurstons Lane and Back Lane had now been assessed for pot-holes and these would be repaired as soon as possible.

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- iv. Cllr Dronzek was not present, but had reported to the Clerk prior to the meeting, that the tree work in St Peter's Churchyard, approved at the last meeting, had been completed. Cllr Dronzek was happy with the work carried out and had received positive feedback from neighbours of the churchyard.
- v. The Clerk had notified SMDC regarding the council's representative on the Parish Assembly.

84/26. Alton Towers.
Nothing raised

85/26. Footpaths.

- i. Cllr Nicholls reported that he had been liaising with Cllr Beardmore, following the previous meeting, and further updates would be provided
- ii. Cllr Wood raised the issue of the height of crops potentially becoming a problem, as experienced last year. They were not currently a problem but were likely to become an issue within the next month, if not addressed – notably at Saltersford Lane and Gallows Green (footpaths 19, 35 and 45-46). Councillors were asked to keep an eye on crop height and report back to Cllr Wood. Cllr Shepherd was asked to mention this concern to the landowner at Town Head Farm, if possible.

86/26. Village Hall.

- i. There was still much positivity amongst the Village Hall Committee, and they are seeking grants for further equipment e.g. CCTV, to improve the hall and surroundings. Bookings were still increasing. The date of the AGM for the Village Hall was to be agreed later on 10 June 2026.

87/26. Groundsman/Lengthsman.

- i. Cllr Dronzek had reported positive feedback regarding the grounds maintenance work.
- ii. There were also positive comments regarding the lengthsman's work, who should now walk the relevant route in the village on each visit, to set priorities for work required. This seemed to be creating positive outcomes, notably at Dibble Lane/Glen Drive, at which areas, maintenance was much improved.

88/26. Highways and Road Safety.

- i. Cllr Wood reported that some temporary filling of pot-holes had occurred at the Saltersford Lane/Blacksmiths Arms junction. There had however been no further updates regarding improvements to the junction itself. **Action: Cllr Wood to contact Cllr Beardmore for an update.** As regards potholes around the village generally, Cllr Wood had heard nothing further from Patrick Allen. Cllr Wood also reported that potholes had been filled in Bradley Lane, where more work, than originally requested, had taken place.
- ii. There was a discussion regarding road safety. Cllr Wakefield raised the issue of problems at the bottom of Cedar Hill, where recently two large vehicles had become stuck and there was some damage to a resident's vehicle. Cllr Wakefield also raised a query regarding the cobblestones

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outside the Londis shop, queried the status of this area, and whether this was a pedestrian crossing. It was stated, that this was not a pedestrian crossing, and had been created with the intention of traffic calming. The council had previously sought approval for an “access only” sign or weight restriction at Cedar Hill, but Highways were not in agreement. Councillors were advised to inform residents to raise issues/complaints on the relevant portal, under Highways, on the SMDC website.

- iii. There was a query regarding the number of vehicles parked on the road on the bend at Town Head, one of which, in particular, did not seem to have moved for some time, and appeared to have been abandoned. Councillors were advised that any vehicle on the highway should be taxed and insured and if there were concerns that a vehicle had been abandoned, this should be reported to the police.

89/26. Parish Cemetery and St. Peter’s Church Yard.

- i. Nothing to report, other than see minute 83/26 iv. above.

90/26. Cllr Shepherd announced an open forum to allow members of the public to ask questions.

- i. A member of the public queried reducing the speed limit in the village to 20mph, particularly due to the new developments which had recently been built. It was noted that there would be no one to police this, and also that there are no cameras. A similar issue had been raised previously, with Highways, and not agreed. A pedestrian crossing had been declined, and it was considered that such a plan was unlikely to succeed. There was further discussion regarding community speedwatch, which had previously been considered two years ago. There had then been a lot of support, but no volunteers to assist in its operation. Cllr Wakefield advised that she would volunteer, as did the member of public present. It was agreed that Cllr Gwinnett would look to try to promote the project, possibly via Facebook (Clerk to obtain access), and by putting posters up in the village. Cllr Gwinnett would also contact Cllr Moulton in this regard. **Action; Cllr Gwinnett to promote possibility of Community Speedwatch and search for volunteers. Clerk to obtain access to community Facebook page.**

91/26. Planning and Licensing Applications.

- i. SMD 2026/0087. Mr Jefferey Holtom, 22 Town Head, Alton. Widening of existing driveway by relocating the left-hand wall 1.5m, increasing the wall corner radius to 3.0m, installation of low-level lighting, relocation/removal of small trees and shrubs and the installation of new wider timber five-bar gates to replace existing gates.

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ii SMD 2026/0088 Mr Jefferey Holtom, 22 Town Head, Alton. Listed Building Consent for the widening of existing driveway by relocating the left-hand wall 1.5m, increasing the wall corner radius to 3.0m, installation of low-level lighting, relocation/removal of small trees and shrubs and the installation of new wider timber five-bar gates to replace existing gates.

The two matters above are linked in that one relates to the planning application and the other relates to the listing building permission for the same work.

The Council did not oppose the application(s), with the exception of the installation of lighting, which it considered was not in keeping with the conservation area.

iii. SMDCS 2026/0205 Ms Nicole Dempster, Humble Bee Bank, Red Road, Alton. Alterations and Extensions

The council had no objections to this application.

92/26. Planning decisions.

- i. SMD/2026/0119. Ash Grove, Tythe Barn, Alton. Changes to front elevation including new porch, windows and render finish. Permission approved.

93/26. Section 106 funds for playing field and play area update.

- i. A meeting of the Section 106 Group took place on Tuesday 19 May 2026, and minutes had been circulated. There was a discussion regarding the potential work to level and widen the football pitch on the playing field. Due to the likely size of the project, tenders will be required. The question of closed or open tender was to be determined when the Financial Regulations were approved – see minute 94/26 i. below. Some preliminary quotes had been obtained, but more detailed tenders will ultimately be required. Under closed tender, the council would be required to approve the contractors approached. The council determined that this could not be progressed until more detailed information was obtained as to the work required, from a surveyor or other specialist. This might incur fees.
Action: Clerk to try to determine next steps to enable detailed tenders to be obtained, including contacting Angela Dale, engagement partner at SMDC.

94/26. Parish Council Updates.

Approval of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

- i. The Clerk had produced draft Financial Regulations, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The draft was accepted, with the exception of point 7.2, which should be removed (authorised signatories to be able to view online banking). This was proposed by Cllr Wood, seconded by Cllr Ginnett and agreed. As regards point 5.6, there was an option regarding closed or open tenders for contracts over £60,000. Cllr Gwinnett

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- proposed and Cllr Shepherd seconded, that the first option for closed tender, from at least 3 contractors, approved by the council, be adopted, and this was agreed. **Action: Clerk to update draft Financial Regulations, obtain signatures and then upload to website.**
- ii. The council had been requested by SCC, to provide an inventory of gritting bins in the village. Cllr Wood had walked the village and noted various bins. There was a discussion and provisionally, 6 bins were identified. Councillors to revisit this matter at the next meeting and confirm the location of all bins prior to reply required in late July 2026. **Action: Councillors to consider location of gritting bins in the village, and bring back information to next council meeting.**

95/26. Correspondence/Communications:

Requiring response:

- i. Invitation to comment from Historic England re: entry on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for the Roundhouse.

For information only:

- i. Licensing List Applications - showing Christmas Carol Event at Alton Castle & Work at Alton Towers
- ii. Information regarding disposal of Lithium Batteries
- iii. Site Suggestion – Call for Sites for Retail/Community Sites/Greenspace etc
- iv. Councillor Development Courses - 9 June & 25 June
- v. NSPCC Concert – 13 June
- vi. Information re: grants available from Moorlands Partnership Board and Rural Regeneration Fund
- vii. Information regarding Inclusive Travel Campaign
- viii. SPCA May Bulletin

The Clerk gave details of the correspondence.

96/26. Finance:

- i. Clerk Hours for Section 106 work – The Clerk had submitted a report of work carried out for the Section 106 Group showing 8 and a half hours worked. Cllr Shepherd proposed and Cllr Ballard seconded, and it was agreed, that these hours should be paid. Keith Ford to calculate the payroll.

Payments:

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- ii. Clerk Salary £519.17 (Month of April 2026)
- iii. Clerk Mobile Phone £13 (April 2026)
- iv. Village Hall £28 – April Hire
- v. The Ford Partnership £468 (£390 VAT £78) (Internal Audit & Annual Payroll)
- vi. Zurich Insurance £885.88
- vii. Staffs Hedgelaying £280 (underpayment of £5 to be added to next invoice)
- viii. Key Maintenance Group £572 (£476.67 VAT £95.33)
- ix. Clerk Mobile Phone Bill £13 (May 2026)
- x. J K Arboriculture £2,700 (£2,250 VAT £450)

Income:

- xi. Income – Field Funeral Services £192.00
- xii. Interest £41.10

Final:

- xiii. Authorised payments were signed off by the Council.
- xiv. Current bank balances were signed off by the Council.

The finances were read out by the Clerk.

Cllr Gwinnett concluded by informing the Council that the new Clerk had successfully completed her probation. The Clerk thanked the council.

There being no other business the meeting was closed by Councillor Shepherd at 8.10pm

Signed..... Chairman Wednesday 8 July 2026

Signed..... Clerk