



## Alton Parish Council

### Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 7pm

Present: Councillor J. Shepherd (Chair), Councillor P. Gwinnett (Vice Chair), Councillor P. Ballard, Councillor A. Dronzek, Councillor R. Wood, Councillor H. Kelsall, Councillor N. Moulton (SMDC).

Mr S.J. Burton (Clerk).

One other person Cllr James Aberley from Churnet Valley Ward.

Apologies: Councillor E. Brindley, Councillor N. Conway.

Cllr Shepherd declared the meeting open at 7pm.

#### 82/24. Declarations of Interest.

- i. There were no declarations of interest.

#### 83/24. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

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

#### 84/24. Matters arising.

- i. The clerk reported he has not heard further from Cllr Deaville regarding a visit to the council. **Action: The clerk to follow up.** (Minute 67/24 v).
- ii. The clerk reported he has spoken to the lengthsman following a comment by a member of the public that his grass cutting could damage gravestones. Advice well received by the lengthsman. No damage has been caused. (Minute 74/24 i).
- iii. The clerk and Chairman reported they had checked the parking in Cedar Hill (minute 75/24 v) and that although not ideal nothing obviously dangerous was present.
- iv. Cllr Shepherd reported that Anna Roffey from the village has kindly spent £250 (to be reimbursed) on flowers and has dressed the village planters (minute 78/24 i). **Action: The clerk to remind the lengthsman to water the planters.**

#### 85/24. Alton Towers.

- i. Nothing for this meeting.

#### 86/24. Footpaths.

- i. Nothing for this meeting.

#### 87/24. Village Hall.

- i. Cllr Ballard reported the hedge is growing from the doctors surgery into the playing field at the village hall. Cllr Shepherd has asked the surgery to see if their contractor will cut the hedge back, if the contractor cannot do the work then a discussion will take place with the football team who use the field. **Cllr Shepherd to report back.**



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### 88/24. Lengthsman.

- i. The footpath on Church Bank, each side of the allotments is overgrown. Cllr Shepherd has spoken to the lengthsman, but it is still not cut back. **Action: The clerk to speak to the lengthsman.**
- ii. Weeds are growing in New Road. **Action: Cllr Shepherd will check.**
- iii. Cllr Wood mentioned Post Office Alley is in need of attention for weeds. **Action: The clerk to speak to the lengthsman.**
- iv. Cllr Dronzek stated he would attend to the War Memorial path where sycamores are growing into the path. **Action: Cllr Dronzek.**

### 89/24. Highways and Road Safety.

- i. Cllr Wood reported he has visited Battlesteads/Cheadle Road and that one pothole has been repaired but a second one nearby has not been repaired. Both were reported at the same time. Battlesteads potholes have been reported again.
- ii. There has been no reply regarding the potholes at Tythe Barn which have been reported and deemed not urgent.. **Action: Cllr Wood will follow up and report back.**
- iii. Cllr Wood reported a pothole in Hurstons Lane has been repaired.
- iv. Cllr Wood also reported that SMDC have announced that £8 million has been allocated to repair potholes.
- v. Cllr Shepherd mentioned the very sharp left turn vehicles have to make mainly when travelling to Alton Towers out of Malthouse Road into New Road, with vehicles often having to make a 3 point turn near to a blind bend. Following a discussion Cllr Kelsall will see if Alton Towers would support a 'no left turn' from Malthouse Road into New Road and report to the clerk who will in any case write to SCC for them to review. **Action: Cllr Kelsall and the clerk.**
- vi. Cllr Shepherd asked Cllr Kelsall to also ask Alton Towers about their support for the 'Quiet Lane' initiative which he is working on for Alton. **Action: Cllr Kelsall to report back.**

### 90/24. Parish Cemetery and St. Peter's Church Yard.

- i. Cllr Dronzek reported he has cleared some low hanging branches in preparation for the lengthsman to clear the perimeter path. **Action: the clerk to remind the lengthsman regarding the clearing of the perimeter path.**
- ii. Cllr Dronzek reported some mole hills in the cemetery. **Action: Cllr Shepherd to deal.**

### 91/24. Councillor Shepherd declared an open forum to allow parishioners present to ask question/raise issues.

- i. There were no parishioners present.

### 92/24. Planning and Licensing Applications.

- i. SMD/2024/0242. Blacksmiths Arms, Tythe Barn, Alton. Change of use and alteration of former public house to form 3 apartments. **No objections.**

### 93/24. Planning decisions.

- i. SMD/2024/0114 and SMD/2024/0136. Alton Towers. Removal of the existing 2 no. static and 1 no. portacabins and the decluttering of the site in general to provide a storage and visitor attraction (Multi use) building that consists of 6 no. containers (3 per side lengthways) and tensile domed roof. Approved.



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The planning decisions were read out by Cllr Shepherd.

### 94/24. Parish Council Updates.

- i. **Village Planters.** As mentioned in minute 84/24 iv above.
- ii. **Round House-update.** The clerk reported that he has spoken to the council insurers and that the current public liability insurance will cover the Round House. A re-build valuation is required for the insurance. He has spoken to Whittaker and Biggs Estate Agents and they will complete a valuation for £75. Cllr Shepherd proposed and Cllr Dronzek seconded this valuation be carried out which was carried. Cllr Wood stated that an evaluation of the state of the structure would be required to ensure that any urgent work was carried out. **Action: The clerk to make inquiries and report back.**
- iii. **Vacancy on the Council.** The clerk stated he has received a reply from SMDC and because the current councillor vacancy was not filled at the elections last May 2023, the council may co-opt a new member.
- iv. **Re-appointment of the council accountants.** The clerk stated he had received a question from the external auditors asking for confirmation that the internal auditors are re-appointed every year. The council appointed the current accountants The Ford Partnership in July 2020 and the appointment has rolled over every year since. To regularise the appointment Cllr Shepherd proposed and Cllr Gwinnett seconded The Ford Partnership be re-appointed for the year 2024/25. This was carried.

### 95/24. Correspondence requiring response.

- i. Correspondence with a grave owner re turfing a sunken grave.
- ii. Correspondence with Slaters Funeral Services re burial service.
- iii. Correspondence with a parishioner re tree thinning.
- iv. Enquiry from SJL LANDSCAPES LIMITED re ground maintenance contract. Responded to and details kept on file.
- v. Correspondence with a gentleman regarding the future burial of his father to fulfil his wishes.
- vi. Correspondence with a lady regarding planning application SMD/2020/0679 (still ongoing), which APC have already objected to on 14 December 2020 (council thanked for the objection).
- vii. Email re a campaign about the safety of lithium batteries (circulated). The email was request for support in a campaign by Lord Don Foster to improve the safety of lithium batteries used in e-bikes and e-scooters, some fires have been caused by the batteries. Following a discussion Cllr Shepherd proposed and Cllr Dronzek seconded the clerk to write a letter of support. This was carried with 4 votes in favour and 2 abstentions. **Action: The clerk to write as proposed.**
- viii. Email re rotten road sign in Knight Lane from parishioner. Reported and replied to.

### 96/24. Correspondence for Information.

- i. Email from SMDC re election notice.
- ii. Notice of next parish assembly on 27<sup>th</sup> June.
- iii. Road closure notice, Greatgate Lane, Alton. Circulated.
- iv. Email from SCC regarding pothole repairs (circulated).



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- v. Email to Historic England re valuation of the Round House.
- vi. Email from Cllr Shepherd to Alton Towers re donation of flowers and response. The response did not indicate what or when a donation would be made.
- vii. Emails to SMDC planning with APC comments on planning applications.
- viii. Emails re parish assembly – forwarded to Cllr Wood. Cllr Wood commented that he would like any ideas or comments councillors wish to be brought to the attention of the parish assembly to be passed to him, for example, he will be asking for a summary of how re-cycled waste is dealt with. Also Cllr Deaville may attend so any questions on highway issues would be welcome. Cllr Gwinnett stated it would be interesting to know what service level agreements are in place for SMDC. **Action: Cllr Wood to report back after the parish assembly.**
- ix. Road closure notice Dimble Lane, (circulated).

The clerk read out the correspondence.

### 97/24. Finance.

- i. Accounts were sent to Mazars external auditors on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2024.
- ii. Clerk salary £440.46
- iii. HMRC £880.80.
- iv. Buxus Green invoice May £689.79 (paid).
- v. Ford Partnership (council accountants) invoice Gross £468.00 (Net £390.00 VAT £78.00) (Paid).
- vi. Payment to Anna Roffey of £250 for flowers for the planters (minute 84/24 iv).
- vii. Income Slaters Funeral Services £206.00 (re-open grave and re-inscription).
- viii. Interest income £41.60
- ix. Authorised payments to be signed off by the Council.
- x. Current bank balances to be presented to the Council.

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

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

There being no other business the meeting was closed by Councillor Shepherd at 7.45pm.

Signed..... Chairman Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Signed..... Clerk