ALTON PARISH COUNCIL ("APC")
Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 14 October at 7:00pm

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

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

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

140/26. Declarations of Interest.

Cllr Shepherd declared an interest in agenda item 12.1 (minute 150/26 i. below), and took no part in the ensuing discussion, at that point in the agenda.

141/26. Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 9 September 2026.

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

142/26. Matters Arising/Action Updates.

i. A quote had been obtained by the Clerk, from the lengthsman, of £70 to complete the work to tidy the "triangle" between Station Bank and Malthouse Road. Cllr Shepherd proposed and Cllr Wood seconded, and it was agreed, that the quote should be accepted, and the lengthsman should be asked to complete the work as soon as he was able. **Action Point: Clerk to instruct lengthsman to carry out work at the "triangle".**

ii. The crops blocking footpath Alton 35 was reported by the Clerk, on the SCC portal, after the previous meeting. A letter was issued to the landowner, regarding the obstruction. An acknowledgement of the letter was requested, but not received. iii. The blocked footpaths at Alton 28 and 45 were reported by the Clerk on the SCC portal, after the previous meeting. It was also reported again by Cllr Sghepherd. iv. A quote for a sign for the Village Hall had been received. This matter was considered under the agenda item relating to Village Hall matters – see 145/26 iii. below.

v. The Clerk had obtained further information regarding the offer to supply planters, by the lengthsman, since the last meeting. This matter was further considered under agenda item 9.i. relating to lengthsman matters – see 146/26 i. below.

vi. Councillors had been requested to bring details of pot-holes to the meeting. There was a brief discussion, but it was confirmed that the final details would not be required until January 2027, when the work was expected to be carried out. Cllr Shepherd intended to map the pot-holes on Back Lane. There was a concern raised that photographs of the pot-holes did not identify the depth thereof. Cllr Wood requested that photographs still be provided, as they assisted in identifying where the pot-holes were located, in order to ensure that they were filled. A request

was made to forward all reports to Cllr Wood. **Action Point: Cllrs to deliver pot-hole details to Cllr Wood.**

143/26. Alton Towers.

i. A date for a meeting is still awaited. However, it was noted that Cllr Moult confirmed that he had arranged an Alton Traffic Working Group meeting, in early November, at which Merlin Management would be present.

144/26. Footpaths.

i. Cllr Nicholls clarified matters reported at the last meeting regarding land at Town Head and the nearby footpath - Alton 35. The landowner had previously agreed to improve drainage and access. All work agreed, had been completed, and the footpath route is clearly indicated. There is new fencing extending approximately 1.5 m from the wall, following the existing route and clearly delineating the path, separating walkers from farm traffic. A gateway has been installed at the far end of the fenced footpath.

ii. Alton 35 is now completely clear of crops. Cllr Nicholls asked an employee of the landowner to ask his employer to ensure that the crops were sprayed in the Spring, which the employee agreed. As regards the barbed wire erected along Footpath 45, and discussed at last meeting, the County Landowners Association recommends that barbed wire is located on the inside of the fence. The barbed wire has been located on the inside, as recommended, apart from a small area, where it would not be appropriate. Footpaths 45/46, at the Wheel are still closed. Landowners are responsible for the stiles.

iii. Alton 28 has been illegally diverted. This matter was reported on the SCC portal on 12/09/2022,

and no action appears to have been taken. There was a lengthy discussion regarding numerous footpath issues, which had been reported on the SCC portal, going back a number of years, in respect of which, no action appeared to have been taken. **Action Point: Cllr Shepherd to provide full details of the issues, and reports not actioned, to the Clerk, who will, raise the issue with Cllr Beardmore, and query why village footpaths are not being protected.**

145/26. Village Hall.

i. Update - The Village Hall Committee are still actively seeking grants. It is anticipated that improvements to the kitchen and replacement of the heaters, will soon take place. Another grant has been requested for fans to push down heat, so that it remains at lower levels.

ii. As regards the relationship between the Parish Council and the Village Hall, the Clerk had circulated a detailed document, following research prior to the meeting. It is now clear that the Parish Council owns the land but holds (most – see below) as Custodian Trustees. The Village Hall Charity has responsibility for management of the hall and surrounding land. There is however, part of the land/playing field, which is owned by the Parish Council, which is not covered by the Charities Commission agreements. There was a brief discussion regarding maintenance and insurance, and it was agreed that representatives of the Parish Council should have a meeting with the Village Hall Trustees to discuss these matters, and formalise an agreement going forward. **Action Point: Clerk to arrange meeting with Village Hall Trustees. iii.** "No Camping" sign – a quote had been provided to the council prior to the meeting. However, as a result of the

information obtained, as referred at 145/26 ii. above - -it was considered not now appropriate to include the wording "by order of Alton Parish Council". It was suggested that a "no camping" sign could be secured cheaply from an online website. It was agreed that the matter should be discussed at the meeting referred to at 145/26 ii above.

iv. The council had received a request from the Village Hall Committee for financial support for the 10% shortfall (after grant funding, if application successful) required to complete the fencing of the playground. The shortfall, quoted was £905. The Council agreed that it would match, on a

50:50 ratio, funding provided by the Village Hall for this purpose – i.e. up to £452.50. **Action Point: Clerk to convey decision to Village Hall, in first instance, pending outcome of grant application.**

v. Access to housing across playing field – Given the information obtained, referenced at 145/26 ii. above, the Council is not able, to give permission for access across the playing field. Persons requiring access should notify the Village Hall Trustees, as per the currently identified process. This is to be finalised at the meeting between the Parish Council and the Village Hall referenced at 145/26 ii above.

146/26. Groundsman/Lengthsman.

i. Planters – it was agreed that the lengthsman would replace the two dilapidated planters on Limekiln Bank, plant them in the Spring, and maintain them going forward, at the lengthsman's own cost, as per his voluntary offer. It was agreed that he would be entitled to affix his name/ the name of his business, thereto. **Action Point: Clerk to inform lengthsman.**

ii. Winter "tidy ups" – it was agreed that Cllr Gwinnett would discuss the scope of the two winter "tidy-ups" identified in his contract, with the lengthsman. At the same time, he would be requested to remove any dilapidated planters. **Action Point: Cllr Gwinnett to speak to lengthsman.**

iii. Maintenance/Clearance of "triangle" at Station Bank/Malthouse Road – as per 142/26 i. above, it was agreed to accept the lengthsman's quote for this work, at £70. **Action Point: Clerk to instruct lengthsman.**

iv. Planting of Whips required to complete gap in hedge at side of Village Hall/Uttoxeter Road – the lengthsman had provided a quote of £100 to supply 60 whips for this purpose. The Council agreed to this cost. As the work needed to be carried out quickly, the council also approved a charge of up to £100 for the lengthsman to carry out the planting of the whips. **Action Point: Clerk to instruct lengthsman.**

147/26. Highways and Road Safety.

i. There was a discussion regarding how to better disseminate information to residents, in order that they are aware of the Council's intentions and actions – Traffic in the Village, is of notable

concern to residents. Therefore – how does the Council make residents aware of what action it is taking, in this regard. It was, however, also noted that few residents attend council meetings, and there are few volunteers for Action Groups e.g. Alton Traffic Working Group & Community Speedwatch. Consideration could be given to a council Facebook Page with a link the community Facebook page "Alton in the Staffordshire Moorlands". Another suggestion was a quarterly "bulletin" – You said – we did". This all links to community engagement. **Action Point; Cllr Shepherd to liaise with Sue Green in order to try to obtain further information regarding the operation of Facebook. Cllrs were also requested to think about ideas to support proposal referred to above**

ii. Pot-holes – see 142/26 vi. above.

iii. Cllr Moult had provided an update on the Alton Traffic Working Group, which now has its own Facebook Page with circa 150 followers to date. The first meeting was due in the last week of October (since confirmed as Wednesday 4th November at the Bulls Head at 4pm).Group Members confirmed, so far are Cllr Moult (SMDC); Cllr Beardmore (SCC); Highways - Angela Dickinson; APC - Cllrs Shepherd & Nicholls; Merlin Group - Simon Burge, Group Community Liaison – First meeting Only; Alton Towers Operational Management - Simon Day, Director Planning & Business Support / Gary Birks, Head of Operations / Simon Bird, Park Operations Manager - Car Parks; Staffordshire Police - David Evans, Deputy Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner; Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership – TBC; JCB - John Kavanagh, Head of Communications Local Residents - Jan Wakefield, No other volunteers.

148/26. Parish Cemetery and St. Peter's Church Yard.

i. Cllr Dronzek reported that he had cleared the perimeter path of the churchyard, including cutting overhanging branches. He had also treated the memorial bench to improve its appearance.

149/26. Cllr Shepherd announced an open forum to allow members of the public to speak/ask questions.

i. The chair of the Village Hall Committee was present due to interest in various agenda items. She advised that, as regards access across the playing fields (see 145/26 v.), the Village Hall had always expressly required permission, it had not just been generally allowed.

ii. Confirmation was given that the Village Hall insures the Village Hall Building and its contents and the playing field. It had previously been understood that the front car park was the responsibility of the Parish Council.
These matters to be taken to the proposed Village Hall/Parish Council liaison meeting.

150/26. Planning and Licensing Applications.

Planning and Licensing Applications.

i. SMD/2026/0464. Mr Jack Nathercott, Cliff Farm Cottage, New Road, Alton.
Extension to existing single story detached garage. **– The Council had no objections to this application.**

Planning Decisions

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 fivebar gates to replace existing gates. **Approved**

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. **Approved**

151/26. Section 106 funds for playing field and play area update.

i. The Clerk had circulated a copy of a Pitch Project Plan prior to the meeting. There were various questions regarding the proposal for the playing field, and notably queries regarding the measurements for the new pitch . The Council considered that it was important the Section 106 committee clearly communicated what it wants to do. The Council wanted to know, more clearly, what the 106 Group was trying to achieve, i.e. what the specific objectives were. A further meeting of the Section 106 Group would be required, for this purpose.. **Action Point: Clerk to arrange meeting of Section 106 Group, in order that clearer objectives, notably as regard the requirements for the football pitch, could be referred to the next council meeting.**

ii. Clerk reported to Council, a record of 2 hours of Section 106 work carried out in the preceding month – this will not be paid due to two and a half hours erroneously paid twice for July (Half hour still owing).

152/26. Parish Council Updates.

i. Royal British Legion – the council agreed a donation of £75 to the Royal British Legion (Poppy Appeal).

ii. CILCA – the Clerk will be required to undertake additional work to complete the CILCA qualification (12 months allocated by assessor). The Council agreed to pay, up to, an additional 10 hours of work per month, for time spent completing the qualification. To be reviewed at the February meeting. Proposed by Cllr Gwinnett, seconded by Cllr Wood, and agreed.

iii. Councillor Vacancy – there had been no applications for the councillor vacancy.

iv. Council Website – no action to be taken at the present time due to Clerk's workload. The current website is functioning and change to councillor emails can be delayed. Those councillors looking to isolate council matters from personal emails should set up a separate email address.

153/26. Correspondence/Communications: Requiring response:

i. Various Cemetery Enquiries.
ii. Various communications with lengthsman
iii. Request from Religious Organisation in France requesting information regarding the church at Bradley le Moors.

For information only:

iv. Request to add Staffs Walking Guides to Website
v. SPCA Information regarding "Understanding Material Planning Considerations"
vi. Supportive Communities Partnership Networking Events Programme
vii. Notification of Phoenix Singers Autumn Concert
viii. Licensing Authority Applications showing details of applications from Alton Towers. ix. Information accompanying email from Keith Ford re: Clerk Pay.
x. Dates for Autumn Wellbeing Sessions
xi. Notification of Staffordshire Local Council Conference on 23 November.
xii. Opportunity to Sign the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Clerk gave further details of the correspondence, where requested.

154/26. Finance:

i. Clerk Hours for Section 106 work – see 151/26 ii.

Payments:

ii. Clerk Salary £527.77 iii. Clerk Mobile Phone £13.00 iv. Village Hall £28.00 - (September Hire) v. Staffs Hedgelaying £285.00 vi. Key Maintenance Group £572.00 (£476.67; VAT £95.33)
vii. Staffs Hedgelaying £300.00
viii. Interest £0.58

Income:

ix. Interest £19.77
x. Precept £10,250

Final:

xi. Authorised payments to be signed off by the Council. xii. Current bank balances to be presented to the Council.

Close the meeting.

The finances were read out by the Clerk.

There being no other business the meeting was closed by Councillor Shepherd at 9pm

Signed..... Chairman Wednesday 11 November 2026

Signed..... Clerk