ALTON PARISH COUNCIL ("APC")
Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 9 September 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 A Dronzek, Councillor N Moult (Staffordshire Moorlands District Council ("SMDC")
Mrs A Barker (Clerk).
No members of the public.

Apologies: Councillors P Gwinnett, S Beardmore (Staffordshire County Council ("SCC").

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

126/26. Declarations of Interest.
None.

127/26. Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 12th August 2026.
i. The minutes of the above meeting were declared a true record, proposed by Cllr Shepherd and seconded by Cllr Brindley, agreed by all and were signed by the Chair and the Clerk.

128/26. Matters Arising/Action Updates.
i. The responses to questions posed to Alton Towers, regarding highways matters and litter picking, had been circulated prior to the meeting. As regards litter picking, this has been re-commenced by Alton Towers.
ii. The work to tidy the hedge and verge at the cemetery had been completed by the lengthsman.
iii. The Clerk had updated councillors, regarding the Councillors' surgery held on 2 September, once the event had been fixed, and promoted the event, where possible.
iv. The Clerk had not been able to secure all necessary documentation and research, to enable a meeting to be fixed with representatives of the Village Hall. This will be progressed during the coming month.
v. Cllr Shepherd had attended at the triangle area between Malthouse Road and Station Bank, but the work required will take longer than the time he had available. It was therefore agreed, to ask the lengthsman to provide a quote to complete this work as a one-off task. **Action: Clerk to obtain quote from lengthsman.**

129/26. Alton Towers.
i. Cllr Moult confirmed that he had been trying to arrange a follow up meeting with Alton Towers, but the managing director and his secretary had been on leave. This meeting would cover all issues, including those raised at the Councillors' (SCC & SMDC) surgery, relating to Highways matters, held on 2 September 2026. Feelings amongst residents are running high, particularly due to issues likely to created, as a result of the upcoming "Scarefest" event. Councillors Beardmore and Moult will be attending a meeting on Monday next (14 September). A Community Liaison Meeting will subsequently be arranged.

130/26. Footpaths.

i. Cllr Nicholls reported that he had been asked by the landowner at Town Head, to visit to inspect work which had been carried out. A concrete wall had been constructed on one side of the property. Fencing had also been installed. Although the landowner had advised that there would be no barbed wire included with the fencing, it was now reported that barbed wire had been installed. SCC recommends that barbed wire is not installed, due to safety concerns. Gates, rather than stiles have been installed at either end of the nearby footpath.

ii. It was reported that there were crops blocking Footpath 35, despite APC issuing a letter to the landowner, in July 2026. It was agreed that this issue should be reported on the Staffordshire Public Rights of Way System. **Action Point: Clerk to report the crops infringement, on the portal, and write letter to landowner.**

iii. It was also reported that Footpaths 28 and 45 around Wheel Farm were blocked by barbed wire. **Action Point: Clerk to report the footpath obstruction on the portal.**

iv. Further issues regarding Footpath 28, which runs through a field, where the footpath appears to have been fenced in, were briefly discussed. This matter to be adjourned to the next meeting.

v. The Chairman referenced a complaint which had been received, by APC, since the last meeting, regarding bulldozing work which had been carried out a farm in Saltersford Lane, which impacted a nearby bridleway. Rubbish and branches had been left blocking the said bridleway. The Clerk had reported this matter on the portal.

131/26. Village Hall.

i. There was still much positivity amongst the Village Hall Committee, and they are seeking grants, notably to improve the heating system in the Village Hall.

ii. As regards the "No Camping" sign, it was agreed that the wording should state "No Overnight Camping by Order of Alton Parish Council". It was agreed that Cllr Ballard would report to the next meeting with details, and a price, for the proposed sign. **Action Point: Cllr Ballard to bring details/quote for signage to next meeting.**

iii. There was a discussion regarding the need to create a written agreement to define the relationship between APC and the Village Hall Committee/Charity, in order that each party understands its responsibilities which are documented, and to ensure that all risks are managed. There was a discussion regarding historical responsibilities relating to the Hall, and its land (see also 128/126 iv.above). It was noted that historically APC had been responsible for the front of the building i.e. the car park (deemed to be the public car park) and the front grass verge, with the Village Hall being responsible for the car park at the rear, and the playing field (although APC pays for the grounds maintenance (e.g. mowing) at the play-ground area). Previously, SMDC had declined to tarmac the car park in front of the hall, and this work was then completed by APC. Historically, maintenance of the Hall had been carried out by the Village Hall Committee/Charity.

iv. There was a discussion regarding vehicles accessing the houses alongside the playing field, by driving around on/around it. This included large vehicles delivering building materials, and it was noted that there are currently building materials positioned on the field. Given that the land is owned by APC and managed by the Village Hall, it was agreed that permission should be obtained by the householders on each individual occasion when access is required over the playing field. The Village Hall had provided such permissions in the past. It was agreed that if vehicles were allowed access across the field, it needed to be by a certain route, without crossing the football pitch. No access should be granted without parish council authority. **Action Point: Clerk to liaise with Village Hall Committee.**

132/26. Groundsman/Lengthsman.

i. A quote had been obtained from the lengthsman, to add maintenance of the hedge and verge at the front of the parish cemetery, to his contracted schedule of visits, as this area had been previously been omitted from regular maintenance, in the past. Cllr Wood proposed and Cllr Dronzek seconded, and it was agreed, that this maintenance work would be added to the required work of the lengthsman on his contracted visits, for the reminder of his contract, at an additional cost of £15 per visit. **Action Point: Clerk to liaise with lengthsman, and implement and monitor, changes to contracted work, going forward.**

ii. A query had previously been raised (by a resident) as to whether or not maintenance of the alleyway alongside 16 Glen Drive, should be considered by APC. After further enquiry, it was established that this was private land, and therefore there was no requirement for APC to consider maintenance.

iii. The council considered a proposal by the lengthsman to supply and maintain planters at the Village Hall. However, there was insufficient detail available, in order to make a decision. This matter was therefore adjourned to the next meeting. **Action Point: Clerk to liaise with lengthsman and obtain further information.**

133/26. Highways and Road Safety.

i. There was a discussion regarding pot-hole repairs and the fact that in any given road/street certain potholes were identified (by marking) for repair but others were not, and subsequently were left unrepaired. Various roads have been identified for pot-hole repair work in the coming months e.g in Back Lane, and the council wanted to try to ensure that as many pot-holes, as possible, which required rectification, were repaired. It was agreed that councillors should report to the next meeting with details of pot-holes requiring repair. **Action Point: Cllrs to bring pot-hole details to next meeting.**

ii. Cllr Moult provided a summary of the Councillor (SMDC & SCC) Surgery for Residents, held on 2 September 2026. The Meeting was well attended with 50 plus residents present. There was constructive engagement with lots of ideas and suggestions, which were referred to Patrick Allen, responsible officer at SCC. Patrick Allen had followed up the meeting with summaries of actions for Highways, and the matters to be referred to Altron Towers. There was a suggestion to create a working group comprising representatives of APC, SMDC, SCC, Alton Towers' Operations Staff, JCB and residents. It was anticipated that the liaison meetings would be held, initially monthly, and then quarterly. It was noted that APC represents the villagers, and therefore there should be careful consideration as to the number of residents included in the liaison group. The meeting outcomes, noted that traffic monitoring, speed indicator devices, and speed limit reviews, should be further considered. The Malthouse Road sign had been agreed. As regards Satellite Navigation routing, APC could assist with this; consideration to be given as to how to upload the information. APC can report why this is necessary. Emergency vehicle access is a critical matter. A list of questions should be referred to Alton Towers. It was agreed that Cllr Moult should give

approval to the liaison committee. **Action Point: Cllr Mouth to report back regarding liaison group.** It was noted that Alton Towers' "good neighbour" relationship seemed to have waned, in recent times. It was felt that this was due to staff changes, but meetings are now being arranged, to try to get the relationship back onto a better footing. Cllr Wood noted that he had emerged from the Councillor Surgery considering one critical issue which needs to be resolved, and he believed that this was the gridlock issue – traffic controls would be required.

iii. Consideration of an improved method, for reporting matters to residents, was carried over to the next meeting.

134/26. Parish Cemetery and St. Peter's Church Yard.

i. Cllr Dronzek reported that he had liaised with the Clerk, who had, in turn, liaised with the grounds maintenance contractor, and the area of the cemetery which had previously been neglected, during routine maintenance, had now been cleared. Arrangements have been made for this area to be included in the routine maintenance visits going forward.

ii. There was a discussion regarding the need for written and detailed cemetery regulations, which can be published, as there are currently only prices listed on the website, or readily available to the Clerk. **Action Point: Clerk to draft Cemetery Regulations, as and when other more pressing work, allows.**

135/26. Planning and Licensing Applications.

i. Planning and Licensing Applications.

None

Planning Decisions.

ii. SMD/2026/0117. Mr John Miller, Garage Rear of 1A Town Head, Alton. Change of use of existing garage to form a 1 bedroom dwelling – Approved

iii. SMD/2026/0035. Jo Bartram, C/O Rob Duncan Planning Consultancy, Shaw House Farm, Cheadle Road, Alton. Variation of conditions on application DET/2024/0002 to alter the external appearance of barn 1. Change to list of approved plans on the decision notice along with changes to conditions 2 and 3 so that they refer to drawings 00851-005A. – Approved.

136/26. Section 106 funds for playing field and play area update.

i. The Clerk advised that she had been writing a report/plan for the playing pitch project, as a result of the meeting with the Football Association and the Grounds Maintenance Association, held on 10 August 2026. It had become clear that the work could not proceed without a detailed plan with

specialist input, which could not be produced, without a comprehensive report detailing the intentions of APC, further information regarding the playing field, and the current state of the pitch, financial information etc. This is almost finished, but the Clerk is trying to obtain further information regarding the current state of the drainage, from the Village Hall, Committee, in order to complete the document. **Action Point: Clerk to circulate Pitch Report/Plan once completed.**

ii. Clerk payment for Section 106 work undertaken is dealt with at 139/26i. below.

137/26. Parish Council Updates.

i. Clothing Bins – following brief discussion, it was agreed that Clothing Bins would not be approved – largely due to the Village Hall Committee intention to install vehicle charging points.

ii. CILCA – it was agreed that the Clerk would undertake the CILCA qualification, and the cost of £800 in total was approved for payment.

iii. Councillor vacancy – the Clerk has circulated the notice of the councillor vacancy prior to the meeting. Applications have been requested by 30 September 29026. Interviews for co-option to be carried out at the next council meeting on 14 October 2026, as required.

138/26. Correspondence/Communications:
Requiring response:

i. Various Cemetery Enquiries.
ii. Various communications with lengthsman and grounds maintenance contractor
iii. Concern re: condition/maintenance of old cemetery by war memorial
iv. Concern re: condition of grounds/bridleway at Saltersford Lane
v. Concern re: overhanging tree
vi. Request for Reference

For information only:

vii. Copy of Advert for Casual Councillor Vacancy
viii. Notification of Completion of External Audit
ix. Confirmation of Support from Su Beardmore for Grant from Community Fund to contribute to payment for Playing Pitch project
x. Notification of Annual Pay Settlement
xi. Details of Scribefest online conference on 17 September 2026
xii. Staffordshire Moorlands Local Action Plan Partial Review Consultation
xiii. Information regarding Alton Tapestry and request for involvement

xiv. Copy of Advert for Councillor vacancy for Co-option

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

139/26. Finance:

i. Clerk Hours for Section 106 work – The Clerk had submitted a report of work carried out for the Section 106 Group showing 9 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:

ii. Clerk Salary £527.77
iii. Clerk Mobile Phone £13.00
iv. Clerk Expenses £20.89 (£17.41 VAT £3.48) (for colour cartridge for printer)
v. Village Hall £28.00 (August Hire)
vi. Staffs Hedgelaying £285.00
vii. Key Maintenance Group £572.00 (£476.67; VAT £95.33)
viii. Staffs Hedgelaying £175.00 (hedge/verge work at parish cemetery)

Income:

ix. Interest £16.01
x. J Terry Monumental Mason £140.00
xi. Burial Plot Reservation fee £1,500.00

Final:

xii. Authorised payments were signed off by the Council.
xiii. 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 8.30pm

Signed..... Chairman Wednesday 14 October 2026

Signed..... Clerk