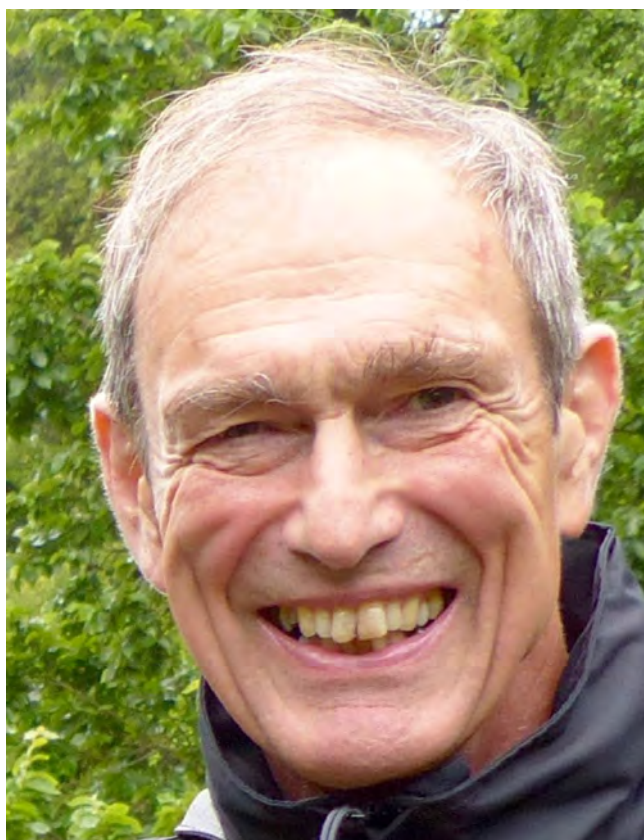


Individual Award for Outstanding Services to the Town



The Alton Society Panel was delighted to make the 2017 award to Mike Heelis MBE.

Mike and his family have lived in Alton for 20 years after a career of 37 years in the Armed Forces as an Engineer. He is a Hampshire lad, born in Winchester, spending his early years on a farm not far from Sutton Scotney. Not long after moving to Alton he joined the Alton Society Committee, remaining a member until 2012. He rejoined the Committee in 2013 with the prime objective of representing the Society and assisting the Town Council with the development and delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan.

In his early years, until 2003, he led the Alton Society Flood Meadows Conservation Group. He oversaw the building of the large bridge in Flood Meadows plus the repair of paths and other bridges, alongside many dedicated volunteers. He secured funding contributions for this work from the Town

Council and East Hants District Council. He also led the annual Alton Society Litter Pick for two years.

In recent years, Mike has led groups in no fewer than four vital and complex projects –

- Alton 2020 study published in 2005
- Alton Town Design Statement completed in 2008
- Alton Partnership Core Strategy Study undertaken in 2009 and
- Alton Neighbourhood Development Plan. This was formally adopted after a referendum in 2016.

Any one of these projects would represent a considerable achievement; to complete all four is truly remarkable.

His contribution summed up by one of those nominating him –

Mike has been the driving force behind a sequence of major initiatives over the past 15 years aimed at securing the future prosperity and vitality of the town. His almost superhuman contribution has at every stage been voluntary and unpaid.

The Society takes great pleasure in presenting the 2017 award to Mike. This, again, underscores the rich pool of people who love this town and contribute so much to it.

This award is normally presented at the Society's AGM, which this year takes place on 18 November. Unfortunately, Mike will be away then and we shall be presenting it to him on another appropriate occasion.

Martyn Dell

Chairman of Awards Panel.

Also in this issue:

- Sweet Fanny Adams
- Annual General Meeting - Agenda
- Minutes of the 2016 AGM
- Updates from your groups and Chairman's Report 2017
- Formation of Alton's Town Team

Remembering 'Sweet' Fanny Adams

by Martyn Dell

24th August 2017 marked 150 years to the day since the brutal murder of 8-year-old Fanny Adams in Alton.

On 24th August, Rod Eckles and I joined a group of colleagues from Alton Town Council, the Curtis Museum/Allen Gallery and the Alton Town guides to walk in her footsteps during that fateful day, led by local historian, Jane Hurst.

Although it is widely recognised that this is a difficult occasion to commemorate, Rod and I felt that it was entirely appropriate – it is after all part of the town's history - and, in the event, the walk was handled with respect and sensitivity.

During the walk, we were also mindful of the many millions of young children around the world whose childhood is destroyed by murder, abuse or poverty.



Annual General Meeting 2017

The Alton House Hotel Alton

10.30am on Saturday 18th November 2017

AGENDA

Welcome & Presentations

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Approval of the Minutes of 2016 AGM

3 Matters Arising

4 Management Committee's Reports

- Chairman's Report (see page x)
- Treasurer's Report

5 Adoption of Annual Accounts

6 Election of Officers and Committee

Nominations received:

Chairman	Nicky Branch
Vice Chairman	Martyn Dell
Secretary	Barbara Burfoot
Treasurer	Peter Holden
Membership Officer	Bob Booker

Individuals standing for re-election to the Committee are:

Brian Good, Louise Parker, Rod Eckles, Penny Webster-Brown, Nikki Bird, Tony Cohen

Individuals standing for election to the Committee are: Simon Stoodley, David Simpkins

7 Other previously notified business

11.15am Open Forum

to be chaired by Nicky Branch

Presentation to be given by Julie McLatch, Business Development Manager, Alton Town Council and East Hampshire District Council on Coming Together is a Beginning: Working together to promote Alton.



Some of the members of your Management Committee from 2016/17 Working together to promote Alton

MINUTES of the 46th Annual General Meeting of the Alton Society held at the Alton House Hotel on 19th November 2016

1 Presentation of awards and gifts.

The award for Outstanding Services to the Town by an Individual was presented to Ann Foulkes by the Town Mayor, Matthew Bayliss.

The Chairman, Bob Booker, presented tokens of the Society's appreciation to Martin Gibbs who leads the monthly working parties in Flood Meadows and to Jim Dickinson, the Tree Warden.

Three members of the Committee were retiring: Phil Newell, James Willis and Nick Carey-Thomas.

The Chairman asked Damian Hinds MP to present Nick Carey-Thomas with honorary life membership of the Society in recognition of his services to the town and the Society over many years. Nick had been involved with the Society since the late 1970s and his experience and knowledge of design and architectural matters would be very much missed. (Note a gift was given to James Willis at the first committee meeting after the AGM as an appreciation for all he had done for the Society).

2 Apologies for Absence had been received from James and Lesley Willis, Mike Biddiss, Penny Webster-Brown, Keith Mentzel, Mike and Elspeth Isherwood, Rosie Hayward, Angela Cross, Phil Newell, Tony Souter, Kate Sills and Louise Parker.

3 The Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting (AGM) were approved and signed as true record.

4 Matters Arising

- Luath Grant Ferguson reported that the plan to site a small plaque at the entrance to Inwood Court to commemorate the late Les Packett's role in saving the building from demolition in 1970 and calling for the foundation of the Alton Society had been delayed earlier in 2016 because of the serious illness of one of his family. Les's family had now agreed for it to go ahead and the Sanctuary Housing Association had kindly given its permission for this to take place in the spring of 2017.

4 Management Committee Reports

- Chairman's Report had been published in the autumn edition of "Alton Now" and a copy is attached to these Minutes in the Minute Book.
- Treasurer's Report: A copy of the Treasurer's Report, the Business Plan and the Annual Accounts had been circulated to all those present and copies are attached to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Treasurer pointed out that the Society had needed to draw on its reserves for some of the work carried out during 2016 particularly:
 - o The preparation, printing and distribution of a "VOTE YES" explanatory flyer in support of the Neighbourhood Plan across the whole town.
 - o The development and management of a sustainability survey across the Society's membership
 - o The preparation and conduct of the survey across the whole town on the future of the Coors Brewery Site; this included investing in a half page advert and spread in the Alton Herald. The survey had elicited a significant response from Altonians.

After receiving its Gift Aid payment this year, the Society had an operating loss of just £350 and retained reserves of around £12,500.

The Treasurer thanked Jacob George for giving freely of his time to act as our Independent Examiner. Jacob had been able to confirm that the Trustees were operating with due regard to our fiduciary duties and meeting all the requirements placed upon them by the Charity Commission.

5 Adoption of Annual Accounts: The Adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Pam Jones, seconded by Nicky Branch and carried unanimously.

6 Election of Officers and Committee

- The following officers were elected unopposed:
 - o Chairman Nicky Branch (on rotation)
 - o Vice Chairman Martyn Dell
 - o Secretary Barbara Burfoot
 - o Treasurer Peter Holden
 - o Membership Officer Bob Booker
- The following were re-elected to the Committee unopposed: Brian Good, Louise Parker, Rod Eckles, Penny Webster-Brown
- The following were elected to the Committee unopposed: Tony Cohen, Nikki Bird, Kate Sills

7 Other previously notified business

- A request made for the Society to examine specifications for Community Facilities, including any such facility proposed for the Coors site was accepted for consideration by the Committee at its first meeting after the AGM.
- The Friends of Alton Station thanked the Alton Society for the donation of £200 towards the independent survey of the heritage bridge at Alton Station.

8 Open Forum chaired by Bob Booker began with a presentation by Simon Jenkins, Head of Planning at East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) entitled "Pressure Groups and Why We Love Them". Simon introduced himself. He had worked for 30 years in Town Planning and housing development in Poole, North Norfolk and the New Forest. He had worked for a housing developer pioneering zero carbon housing and as a sustainable development consultant.

The Planning Department writes policies and deals with planning applications. Every communication to the department is considered and commented on.

Alton had done a fantastic job on its Neighbourhood Plan. Its exemplary work was used as a reference for others.

The development brief for the Coors Brewery site had been produced by Alton Town Council (ATC), EHDC and Neighbourhood Plan representatives. The Alton Society had made two presentations suggesting amendments to the brief. The results of the Alton Society's survey of Alton residents about the future of the Coors site would be sent to the developers when they have been chosen.

In 2017 ATC would be refreshing the Town Design Statement, reviewing the Conservation Area and the Local List. The Alton Society would have an important part to play in this as well as the rest of the planning process. He had been having useful monthly and/or bi-monthly updates with the Society's Chairman. Representations on planning matters must be robust and supported by evidence. The presentation was followed by some lively comment and questions from Geoff Nicolas, Pam Jones, Nick Carey-Thomas, Christopher Napier (CPRE), John Grace, David Willoughby, Jonathan Hughes, Nicky Branch, Rod Eckles and John Hubbard.

The Chairman thanked Simon Jenkins for his interesting talk and closed the Open Forum at 12 noon.



Yuletide Festival
Sunday 3rd December
10am - 4pm

This is traditionally a wonderful Town event and the Society will have a stall in the Assembly Rooms, so do come and see us and enjoy the Festive spirit!

Reports to Members 2017



Chairman Nicky Branch

Chairman's Report

My term as Chairman started with an earlier than expected hip replacement, followed shortly by a nasty form of lymphoma, with its related chemo treatment routine. So I have not been as useful – so far – as I had hoped. I must thank, here, Bob, Martyn and Rod for supporting me throughout, and Barbara for holding the fort as Secretary and taking the Newsletter so ably off my list of concerns.

I had always intended to be more 'hands-off' than my predecessors, not least because of living in Bentworth, and because of having a team of Group Chairmen with so much more local knowledge and expertise than mine. So, for this Annual General Meeting, rather than include their achievements in my report, they are shown individually

There are, however, a few points that I would like to highlight:

- We have successfully recruited some really excellent new working members, with a wide range of experience and expertise.
- We now have a modern, smart website and related Facebook and Twitter sites which we can be proud of, achieved with input from many working members, but particularly Louise and Nikki.
- We have developed good working relationships, in particular with EHDC's Head of Planning and Alton's Town Development Manager, which we believe will be mutually helpful.
- We are establishing a new Community Group to help and advise local community organisations and charities, hopefully making some use of our significant reserves on projects that conform to our charitable objectives.

There's lots going on in Alton, and for the

coming year we must continue to build up our strength of working members. Personally I am dismayed by some of the policies of the District Council, and by their impact on Alton in particular. Without causing the Society to stray into the arena of party politics, I feel that the Society must be bold in querying apparent priorities, and be ready with constructive alternatives.

Natural Environment

The Alton Society's "Friends of Flood Meadows" working party has continued to meet on a monthly basis, usually on the third Sunday of the month, and there has been plenty of activity maintaining the delicate balance of nature in this fragile environment. Activities have included maintenance of the Trees for Life, running repairs to the riverside paths, and cutting-back and clearance activities in the former watercress beds to provide a suitable wildlife habitat.

The Alton Society has been actively represented on Alton Town Council's steering group looking at proposals to enhance and improve facilities in both the Flood Meadows and the Kings Pond areas. This work was subject to public consultation over the summer months, and it is anticipated that real benefits will be forthcoming, subject to the availability of funding, over the next five years or so.

Brian Good

Chairman of the Natural Environment Group



First picture shows a big hole in the path parallel to the River and the second picture our efforts to repair it. The third picture is the "Friends" enjoying a well-earned hot drink at the end of a session.

Membership & Events

Our numbers are a healthy 317. All members are paying the correct subscription. I deleted those who did not respond to my requests for an uprating to the current fee of £12.50.

Our Annual Litter Pick was very well attended and our thanks must go to Barbara Burfoot who organised it.

We continue to work with partner organisations and the Councils on sorting out problems. See the report on the "Town Team".

We were present at a number of events to promote the Society, including the Victorian Cricket Match, 2016 Yuletide Festival and the Charities Fete at the Allen Gallery. Thanks to you all who continue to support our events.

Bob Booker Membership & Events

Built Environment Group (BEG)

With so much pressure on Alton's built environment we continue with our efforts to be more pro-active in influencing the way our town develops. Only in this way will we achieve better quality outcomes in terms of design and layout. For example:

- Early contact with developers at pre-application stage, where this is possible. This is always a challenge, given that the Society is not party to official pre-app discussions, but we have already approached Cala Homes - new owners of the brewery site - to seek an early meeting.
- Help with drafting important policy documents (eg the Alton Town Design Statement update, and input to the town's Conservation Area guide). We see these as really important opportunities to 'sell' the town and its wonderful heritage, and the Built Environment Group is now far better equipped to offer the necessary expertise. We're determined that these documents should not be left to gather dust, but rather be meaningful tools in promoting the Alton's heritage, and what makes the town so special.

"Quality, quality, quality" is now our mantra. I will be happy to answer any questions at the AGM on current developments such as Coors and the Magistrates Court.

Rod Eckles

BEG Chairman 10th Oct 2017

Sustainability, Greening And Environmental Group

The Sustainability Group was established as it was felt that these areas were not receiving adequate coverage in our overall work.

Following several membership changes, the Sustainability Group began work at the beginning of 2017 and agreed that its immediate area of focus should be issues – particularly 'town vitality' - arising out of the 'Shaping Alton's Future' survey, a very comprehensive study undertaken by the Society in 2016 under the leadership of Rod Eckles.

Alton Town Council has recently established a 'Town Team' to focus on key aspects of the Town's Neighbourhood Plan with particular reference to Economic Sustainability and Viability. This closely accords with the Society's view on priorities and the Society provides a core member of the Team which is operating at both a strategic and very practical level.

Our plan for 2018 is to also turn our attention to the very important 'Greening and Environmental' aspects of our brief.

*Martyn Dell Convenor
Sustainability Group*

Please note that our website has more information on all the work our Groups are doing, so go to www.altonsociety.org.uk for further information.

Get in touch!

info@altonsociety.org.uk

or check our website for more information, updates, and more:

www.altonsociety.org.uk

Did you know we are also on Facebook and Twitter? Have a look and give us a like!



Formation of the “Town Team”

At an Open Business forum held in March 2017 ideas were discussed to help Alton become a “destination” town for visitors. These included plans to tidy up the town, make it more attractive and help businesses to improve their appearance.

Given that Alton was part of the commemoration of 200 years since the death of Jane Austen it was anticipated there would be a boost in the numbers visiting Alton and this proved to be the case. The “Sitting with Jane Project” was very popular and Alton had its own seat outside the Assembly Rooms.

It was decided to set up a “Town Team” for Alton. This is led by Julie McLatch the Business Development Officer for Alton. The Society were invited to be part of the Team.

The Society’s Sustainability Survey identified the Town Centre as a major concern to Altonians. The centre of the town and the routes leading to it from the train station need to be kept clean and tidy. This requires constant vigilance by the authorities and voluntary organisations.

The Town Team took a walk from the station to the town centre on the 16th August with representatives of the Town, District and County Council. The group identified a number of litter hotspots, areas where weeds needed removing and frontages of shops and offices that needed repairs and refurbishment. There were signs of neglect by both tenants and landlords.

It was agreed that some street furniture needed sorting as there are various designs and colours used for traffic bollards, signage and lighting. Some signage had disappeared altogether (eg Bakers Alley and the junction of Paper Mill Lane and Normandy Street).

Further work is due to be done with the land around the station. The Society have been asked to contact BT Openreach to persuade them to tidy up the front of their property so that it can blend in with the new attractive seating area opposite the Railway Arms.

In the station entrance area there is now a carousel carrying leaflets promoting the town. There was no such dispenser before so any visitor had little information on the town that he or she was visiting and where it is!

This is an encouraging start. However, as with all these efforts, the proof will be in what is delivered by those who promised action!



Before and after shots of BT’s land in front of their building that we pushed to have cleared up. What should they do with this area now?



(Below) Bakers Alley: As a result of our pressure, this area has been tidied up.



Join the Alton Society now – have a say and a role in the future of our town.
Use the form below or check our website:
www.altonsociety.org.uk



Space for personalised label
for hand-delivered copy.

Committee members

Nikki Bird	84367/07977 192764	Brian Good	542819
Bob Booker (<i>Membership</i>)	83570	Peter Holden (<i>Treasurer</i>)	549521
Nicky Branch (<i>Chairman</i>)	562698	Louise Parker	07966 450054
Barbara Burfoot (<i>Secretary</i>)	89553	Kate Sills	07780 691813
Tony Cohen	82026	David Simpkins	83799
Martyn Dell (<i>Vice Chairman & Publicity</i>)	82978	Simon Stoodley	
Rod Eckles	83539	Penny Webster-Brown	84928

This edition of the newsletter has been edited by Bob Booker

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Join the Alton Society now – have a say and a role in the future of our town

The membership subscription is now £12.50 per year per individual. A second person at the same address can be added without further charge. Our membership year begins on 1 October. Application forms for membership, including standing order forms, are included in our leaflet or can be downloaded from www.altonsociety.org.uk for printing and sending. As we are a registered charity, members who are tax payers may opt to increase their effective contribution by agreeing to Gift Aid. For existing members who already pay by standing order, please use the Standing Order Renewal Form below to instruct your bank to increase the amount payable to £12.50 if you have not done so already. Contact our Membership Officer:

Bob Booker, 76 Victoria Road, Alton GU34 2DE Tel: 01420 83570 e-mail: bbooker5951@gmail.com

ALTON SOCIETY – MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

Standing Order renewal form

Please return this form to: Bob Booker, 76 Victoria Road, Alton GU34 2DE

My details may be held on computer in connection with my membership of the Alton Society



STANDING ORDER REQUEST

To The Manager, Bank plc

Address

I, (full name) request you pay to The Alton Society, Account No. 00026566 at Lloyds TSB (sort code 30-90-15) the sum of Twelve Pounds Fifty Pence (£12.50) every year starting on 1st October.

My Account No. Sort Code

My address

..... Postcode

email Phone number

Signed Date

Gift Aid: Give more at no cost to you!

Please tick (✓) if you are a UK taxpayer and wish us to reclaim tax on your subscription.