

# Holybourne

& Neatham

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Spring 2024

### Planning Special: The Facts



*KJ Cox*

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# From the Editor

When I first threw my hat into the ring to be the new Editor, I expected to be fully-retired, with time to devote to this most august of local roles. As it turns out, I've been working more or less full-time, so am enormously grateful to our contributors for their articles. Special thanks to Jerry Janes, the outgoing Editor, for his support and to Stephen Lewis, our graphic designer who lays out the magazine.



The current major topic of concern and debate within the village is planning, whether the speculative development on the playground field or more strategic initiatives such as the proposed 'new village' on Neatham Down. As you might expect, there is a lot of concern and emotion around both proposals, which potentially threaten the special community atmosphere that we have in Holybourne and the green spaces around our village. In this age of social media, there is no shortage of opinion and factoids flying around the village WhatsApp groups. So, in the interests of bringing everyone in the village to a common level of understanding, we have created a 'Planning Special' feature. I have taken over from Paul Fitzgibbon as the Holybourne representative on the Alton Neighbourhood Plan steering group, so have started to gain an insight into the difficult trade-offs involved in local planning decisions, not to mention the complex planning processes themselves.

The information in this special feature has been fact-checked so that we can accurately represent the current position; not to campaign for or against development, but to present the relevant information in the right context.

Whatever the challenges facing us, it always seems to be better when the weather improves. So, as we enter the first days of Spring, if nothing else, summer is on the way.

**John Bound**  
editor@holybourne.com

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**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

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## Cover Photo

Holybourne gateway sign in London Road by Jerry Janes Gallery image & effects above by <https://funny.pho.to>



## 'We Love Where We Live' – Campaign Update

The HVA is not opposed to development in Holybourne and recognises that there are young people, born and or bred in the village who ought to have the right to live here. We certainly don't want the village to die as its population ages. What we do want however is sensible and proportional development that meets the needs of the village, not the needs of people coming in from other areas.

You will not be surprised to learn that fighting the threat of over development in Holybourne takes most of my time as Chair of the HVA. Fortunately I have managed to surround myself with immensely competent and thoughtful people who do the work while I watch and listen in awe. The battle goes on and while we enjoy civil relations with the would be developers, it seems impossible to convey to them, the horror that the village feels while the threat of putting at least another 220 houses in the village hangs over us. Who cannot see the impact that would have on the village?

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to our fighting fund and who has helped the campaign in any way. We have become a feared fighting force and we need it to stay that way. Please continue to offer your support when we ask for it. Currently we have more than £6,000 in the campaign account but trying to engage traffic consultants has, to our surprise, proved very difficult. Simply put, they don't want to engage in a fight that might come back to haunt them when representing developers in other similar scenarios.

It was a huge thrill and privilege to front the presentation in the church to the village. An incredible 300 people squeezed into the ancient venue and my grateful thanks to Vanessa Gist and Helen Walters for their pivotal contributions. When we organise something like that and see the response, it serves as a massive encouragement to keep going. Thanks too to the Reverend Andrew Micklefield for allowing us use of the venue.

So what have we achieved so far? I have always argued that the success of any opposition to development is dependent on basing it on fact and empirical data, not

hysteria and hearsay. To achieve this we invited the entire village, including Barley Fields to respond to a residents' survey and we have used that survey to argue our case ever since. It makes opposition to us challenging.

At the end of last summer we appointed professional planning consultants based in Winchester and they have been enormously supportive. Not only have they been able to advise us on how to respond to the Local Plan but they also made detailed representations to the Alton Neighbourhood Plan steering group. The success of that is seen in that Holybourne does not feature in either document. We recognise however that both are in draft forms so the fight must continue.

Perhaps our most emphatic and valuable success was in persuading the village to come out in force for the consultation on the ANP held in the Assembly rooms in September. Quite simply you presented such a powerful case that it was always going to be difficult for the ANP group to nominate Holybourne for large scale development. To everyone who went, thank you so much.

Since then and to the present day, we and our consultants have written frequent letters to both the Neighbourhood Planning Group, Alton Town Council and East Hampshire District Council, raising concerns on planning and procedural grounds. This work continues and we maintain a presence at all public meetings of significance. Not least among our successes had been the recent publication of the minutes of the ANP group. It is an expectation in the Government's advice to Neighbourhood Plan groups that their business is open for scrutiny and that all notes and minutes should be available to the public. It is only now that this is beginning to happen.

The fight goes on and I am immensely grateful to the small planning group that meets regularly. Dr Helen Walters, Vanessa Gist, Jackie Nelson, Guy Duder and Jeroen Hodges all make invaluable contributions to our work. I also meet representatives of other pressure groups in the town and report back to the HVA of which we are a sub-committee. We continue to do this because, we love where we live.

**Jerry Janes**



## Holybourne Village Association

The HVA magazine is now under new and infinitely better management than when I was editor. John Bound has brought a professionalism to the organisation that I couldn't even dream of and Barrie Lawrence is working miracles rustling up advertisements that fund the whole thing. Without his work there would be no magazine so if you feel you can help by advertising in the magazine, please do. I know John would be delighted to recruit new writers so don't be shy, email him at editor@holybourne.com

The HVA committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm and it's always good to greet villagers to our meetings. All are welcome and we listen carefully to what you have to say. Come along to the village hall and meet not only the committee but our Local Authority representatives from the Town, District and County Councils. We value their presence and I am extremely grateful to them for finding the time to attend.

The HVA are always looking for ways to raise money to enable us to hold the kind of events that we value in the village. The annual fireworks currently costs just over £3,000 to stage and this year with the increased attendance, it made a profit of £2,000. I wonder if anyone might be prepared to organise an "Open Gardens" event this summer? It could be a really great way of engaging with a lot of people so if you would like to have a go, please do contact me.

We are planning another village picnic this year as well as our usual things such as the Fireworks display, so if you feel like helping out with anything or have any ideas for enhancing the life of the village, please do get in touch with me. Similarly, if you fancy joining the HVA committee, you'd be welcomed with open arms. I love the fact that individuals do their own thing, such as the craft fair, the knitting group and so on in the village. Why not give something you enjoy a go? And did you know that there is a Men's Breakfast once a month organised by representatives of the church? I am sure they would welcome more participants. Something for everyone in this village..

**Jerry Janes** chairman@holybourne.com

## Drain Brain: Development Infrastructure Constraints

The proposed development of 220 new homes at the eastern end of Holybourne, at the site of the children's playground and green amenity space, will place significant additional stress on Holybourne's infrastructure.

The fundamental issue of limited road capacity at peak times: leading to congestion, gridlock and increased risk to children during the 'school run' is well known and has already been highlighted by a large number of residents.

However, there is also a lesser-known infrastructure constraint; that of domestic sewage.

The current sewage system at the playground end of Holybourne has had only limited upgrades since it was installed many years ago, despite the development of a number of 'brownfield' sites into residential areas over the last 25 years – sites such as SCATS, Allison & Garwood and the Rakemakers/Smithy Close cluster.

Holybourne sits under chalk downland and any rain that falls upon it percolates through the chalk and creating a very high water table that forms winter springs – and there are a number of these in the village and within the proposed development site. The names of two local houses, 'Springfield Lodge' and 'Stream Acres', reflect the nature of this location. The existing sewage system in Holybourne had many leaking pipe joints caused by tree root growth or simply the age of the pipe network. These poor joints allow the ingress of groundwater into the foul water system, overloading it – particularly the pumping station near Upper Neatham Mill Lane, that pumps Holybourne's waste up to the Alton Sewage Works. The consequences of this are, at times of prolonged wet weather, that some village households have had issues with raw sewage backing up into their homes. As an emergency measure to try to prevent this, Thames Water has the legal right to discharge

raw sewage into the River Wey and, during the winter of 2013/14, this happened on a number of occasions.

Since then, Thames Water have carried out some remedial work, mainly cutting out tree roots and re-lining some of the pipes, but much of the system remains physically unchanged.

If the proposed 220-house development goes ahead there are a number of significant consequences:

1. The foul water load from the development will increase by 18-20%, based on flow and capacity computer models that we have developed.
2. This could lead to more untreated sewage discharges into the River Wey, as well potentially presenting domestic sewage problems for residents downstream of the development.
3. In order to alleviate this problem, significant investment in a new sewage network would be required – replacing the current pipes with much larger and more modern versions.
4. This construction work would cause significant disruption to this part of the village for a period of months.

Upgrading the sewage system in this part of the village is possible and this must be completed before the site is developed. No back-tracking by the developers! When making development applications, developers assume that the required services infrastructure – potable water, foul water, electricity and gas – are in place and effectively free. This infrastructure is required by law to be installed and is usually financed by the relevant local utilities. We believe that the current sewage system is a significant constraint to a development of this scale and, unless comprehensively addressed, is a major objection to planning consent.

**Bob Page & Andy Hankin**

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## The Deaf Lawyer My story

My name is Alex Strickland, and I am a Solicitor in England and Wales despite the fact that I was born profoundly deaf. My story is how, with unstinting help from many dedicated people, new technology and a lot of personal determination, I have qualified at the young age of 23,

We live in a world where unfortunately in the past deaf people have been discriminated against and just cast aside, destined for nothing. However, in the decade before I was born (in 1999), the resources available, the level of social acceptance and the drive for equality of the deaf improved dramatically. It gave people like me a chance in life. Technology played a huge part as well - the Cochlear Implant received its gold stamp of approval in 1990 and this changed my life. The Equality Act came into effect in 2010, consolidating previous legislation and precedents to protect disabled people from discrimination.

Now, of course, I have encountered people in my lifetime who were surprised that I could talk. I have encountered people who have followed me around shops staring at the magnet on my head. I have even encountered clients who have refused to work with me because they don't want to deal with a deaf person and equally, I have had clients, even recently, get frustrated with me for not hearing them despite explaining my hearing loss. In spite of this, the world is a much brighter place. Generally, we are seen as just as capable; we are seen as people who can communicate; and most importantly we are seen as human. I have no doubt that in the years to come more and more deaf people, like myself, will be making leaps in society – especially with the technology improving as it is.

### Early Life

Despite the advancements in technology in the 1990s, my deafness was not diagnosed until I was 2 years old. Despite the protests from my mother that something was not right with me, the attending Health Visitor would not accept it. Unfortunately, Universal Newborn Hearing Screening was not implemented until 2001 – two years after I was born.

Nowadays, babies are screened for hearing loss before they leave the hospital. This is a job my mother went on to do for the NHS, changing lives for people just like me.

When I was finally diagnosed at the age of 2, I was already far behind in my development. I was given hearing aids for the first time, but I could not talk or communicate. I attended The Elizabeth Foundation – a pre-school for deaf children where they taught me to speak successfully by the age of 4 when I began attending my local infant school. Academically I left a lot to be desired – I had so much catching up to do and remained at the bottom of the rankings.

### Technology Impacts

My first Cochlear Implant which took place in April 2009, when I was ten years old. In the few months between April and September, I had managed to promote myself into top set for English and middle set for Maths. The cochlear implant had changed my life.

Five years later, in August 2014, I was cochlear implanted on my right side so that I became bilaterally cochlear implanted. The surgery took place in the summer holidays between year 9 and 10 of school and the NHS used me as their guinea pig in their attempt at the fastest switch-on on record. I was switched on within 3 weeks post-surgery, down from 6. The plan was to have me fully functioning before I started my GCSE's, and it worked. There was an interesting phenomenon with the second implant, however, after having it switched on. When I had my first implant done, I could hear straight away, but with this one all I could hear was beeping and any sound that did break through that barrier was very robotic. I had to train my brain to get used to it by depriving myself of hearing in my left ear for a few weeks so that I could focus on training my right ear. Within a few weeks I was hearing out of both ears with this remarkable piece of technology.

### Academic Success

I got through my GCSEs with 3 A's, 1 B and 5 C's including Spanish, which I only took to spite a teacher who suggested on GCSE options evenings that a deaf student could never learn another language. So, I took it... and passed. I didn't even enjoy it.

I went on to do my A levels, studying Law, History and Creative Writing and I hit my academic stride getting an A\* in law, A in history and B in Creative Writing. I also made a great group of friends (including my fiancée) and my social life, as well as academic, was thriving.

In September 2018, I went to Royal Holloway, University of London – a University I chose because their small size suited me very much. I studied law and I did find the lecture theatre environment difficult. I ended up not attending too many lectures in person and teaching myself from the reading materials. I hit the jackpot when classes moved online and were recorded during Covid as this benefitted me greatly. I was able to connect my headphones to my laptop to direct the sound directly to my ears and take notes at a pace that suited me. I was also blessed with

continued...

## The Deaf Lawyer: My story - continued

an incredible lecturer in my final year who met with me via Teams on a weekly basis to go through everything with me. This made a huge difference to me as, until then, my results were averaging 2:2 in my first year and in the first part of second year prior to lockdown and then I attained consistent 1<sup>st</sup> across the board in my final year and I did eventually attain a First-Class Honours Degree in 2021.

### Starting a Career

Three weeks after leaving University, I was fortunate enough to be offered a job at a regional firm in Portsmouth, working as a Paralegal in Childcare & Adoption. After my university results came through a few weeks later, I was offered a Training Contract to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 and I began my Legal Practice Course, which would eventually enable me to practice as a solicitor. The next two years consisted of work and study, perhaps the most intense period of my life, but I had one goal: qualify at the youngest age possible and defy all the odds.

All the hard work paid off as, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2023 I qualified as a Solicitor in England and Wales. A few months later, in October of that year, I moved to KJ Cox Solicitors in

Bordon & Alton, and I have thrived here. KJ Cox Solicitors is a small environment which is perfect for a deaf person, as I am working with a small group of people and so those social situations do not get too overwhelming. I am also incredibly well supported in the work environment with regards my hearing loss as well.

### Reflections

Had I been born ten years earlier; I doubt I would be where I am today. The world has grown so much more tolerant of people with disabilities and the technology has developed at a rapid pace. I can now connect my cochlear implants to Bluetooth and talk on the phone directly into them. I can also now swim with my implants, and they have the ability to listen to my surroundings and tune out irrelevant background noise, further enhancing my hearing. Now, that is impressive. This change in attitudes has enable me to flourish in a profession that has traditionally been seen as the preserve of the wealthy and well-connected. Well, this is no longer the case as here I am, a disabled, state-school student who has made it and has been supported along the way by a host of dedicated people.

## Evolving the Holybourne Historical Archive

Over nearly 40 years, a large amount of archive material about Holybourne has been collected, catalogued and stored. But how many villagers have actually seen or used this treasure trove of information – too few! The principal reasons: Lack of awareness and lack of easy access. We aim to change this by creating an online history of Holybourne. The records are already computerised and the HVA website is the obvious medium to make the large Historical Archive records accessible to all villagers. We are looking to set up a small working party to do this in the near future and if you are interested in helping, please get in touch.

### How Did the Archive Begin?

**Phase One: 1988 - 2013 Collection.** On page 9 of the Spring 2023 magazine, Mary Blackwell wrote about the Holybourne Archive, and how a mass of old records about Holybourne had been collected. Most had been stored in a large cupboard in Andrews School. I started the collection after my wife Geraldine and I had moved to Church Cottage. Nobody had seen, or even knew of this collection of historical documents about the village, and they needed to be catalogued. Help was at hand when a newcomer to the village, Linda Habberfield, answered a cry for help in the village magazine. She had been an office manager, and on retirement she said she needed something to tidy up. The perfect person to tackle the problem.

**Phase Two: Catalogue and Research.** The newly-christened Holybourne Archive needed a room where Linda could store records and work on them. During a routine visit to the Lawn Residential Home, I noticed that their office was being moved, leaving an empty room! An

excellent opportunity and the Trustees were happy to have a new resident. Phase Two could begin.

Once that was underway, Linda did so much more than tidy up this large collection. She energetically began to research and wrote many articles about Holybourne for the Magazine. She also regularly researched and created fascinating wall displays about aspects of Holybourne. They were hung in a rather dark corridor in the White Hart, but they never had the publicity all her hard work deserved.

It is important to understand that she has been the only Holybourne archivist. Single-handedly she has created this marvellous collection of historical information about the village which she wants to be made available to all villagers.

**Phase Three: 2024 Publication.** Sadly, there is nowhere in the village where the Archive can be physically available to villagers unless it goes online. It is exciting to think that the Archive might be made available on the HVA website, but this can only happen if people with the necessary skills can be found to transfer the records. If there are one or two electronic experts in the village looking for a project, here is a fascinating and extremely useful one.

The village will also need someone to take over from Linda as Archivist, as currently she is heavily committed in the Alton Bowling Club. If you are interested in any aspect of this project, please get in touch with John Bound (editor@holybourne.com) or myself, so that we can begin Phase Three of the Holybourne Historical Archive.

### Dr Christopher Everett

Magazine founder and former HVA chairman  
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# When the going gets tough. . .

Yes, Billy Ocean's words are ringing true this term for Holybourne Village Pre-school's staff and supporters. The reasons for our 'tough going' forecast for Spring 2024 can be summarised as 'Fewer Babies, More Maintenance'.

The low birth rate since COVID has meant that we have started this academic year with a relatively small intake of children, and this has significantly impacted our funding as Government Childcare vouchers depend on the number of children in our pre-school. Fewer children mean fewer parents, who are a vital resource for us: helping with pre-school fundraising activities and lending a hand with practical tasks such as those listed at the end of this article.

After all, this not just any old pre-school, this is Holybourne Pre-School! Over the 40 years that the pre-school has been operating, we have built up an excellent reputation and extensive networks with schools that form the next stage of a child's education.

By instilling a sense of independence and achievement, teaching them to accept responsibility and how to develop valuable social skills alongside each other while at play, we are preparing them for the next stage in their lives. The primary schools we feed into not only include our own village school of Andrews' Endowed, but also Binstead Primary, Alton Infants, Wootey's and Chawton – a reflection of how well-respected we are among local parents.

Our pre-school is also an integral part of village life, with our children fully engaged with the wider local community through a range of activities.

- Weekly Intergenerational visits to the residents of The Lawn care home
- Annual Sports Day on the village Sports Field
- Frequent visits to the Mill Farm Cottage Experience
- Hosting entertainers such as French music, puppeteers and storytellers
- Running craft workshops, music and movement sessions, modelling with clay and basic cookery sessions

As a charity run by a committee of parents and local residents, we exist out of a love for what we do in preparing young children for their next steps in their development and education and, in so doing, serve our community.

But to do this well, we need your help.

Specifically, if you can assist with any of the following tasks, we'd love to hear from you:

- New gates and picket fence to replace orange plastic builder's fence

- Replace our old computer - do you have a computer (laptop or desktop) less than 5 years old that you would be willing to donate & help set up?
- Repair or replace the outdoor toy sheds
- Re-paint the faded playground markings and lines, which the children love as part of their outdoor play.

If you feel you could help, either by offering your skills, time, know-how, or through a donation, please contact Pre-school Manager Sue Husbands in the first instance by email: [holybournevillagepreschool@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:holybournevillagepreschool@yahoo.co.uk) or phone 07748 824942.

We also have a JustGiving page for those who would like to help by donating...

[www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/HolybournePreschoolplaygroundplan](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/HolybournePreschoolplaygroundplan)

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## Planning Special: The facts

### Introduction

One of the key issues affecting our Village is new development. There is a great deal of confusion, partial information, misunderstanding and understandable concern within our village at the moment. This 'Planning Special' aims to provide clarity and context to the ongoing debate about what we want our village to be and how we protect the strong sense of community within Holybourne that we all value so much. This is all public information, summarised from a wealth of documentation, and it deliberately expresses no opinion on any of the proposals - that is for others to do.

The current awareness, concern and controversy has, to some extent, been sparked off by planning processes that are running at three levels of government: National, District and Town...

### UK Government

Sets National housing targets  
 Currently 300,000 homes/Year  
 Allocates targets to District Councils

### East Hampshire District Council

Creates a 'Local Plan' for East Hants  
 Confirms housing requirement quota  
 Allocates District housing quota to specific areas  
 EHDC Draft Local Plan published January 2024

### Alton Town Council

Town Council creates Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (ANP-SG) - January 2023  
 Steering Group accountable to Town Council

### Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Steering Group begins detailed work on :

- Planning Policies
- Scenarios & Allocation options
- Public consultations

### National Context

At the National level, there is no dispute that we need to build more homes, particularly affordable homes that are within reach of young adults i.e., our children. The national statistics make grim reading:

- 30% of young adults aged between 24 and 30 are still living with their parents
- The cost of a first-time buyer home in the UK is now 8.3 times annual salary, up from 4 times in 2000
- Housing costs account for a high proportion of income—18% for mortgagees and 32% for renters.
- Average age of a first-time buyer is now 37, compared to 32 in 2000 (and just 26 in 1980)
- Average age of women having their first child is now 31 compared to 25 in 2000 (see figure 1 below)

As a result, young people cannot afford to start families. The national birth rate is the lowest in 100 years, falling below the population replacement rate. Housing is one of the key strategic problems facing the country: in terms of families not started, insecurity of tenure, geographic and economic mobility, and absorption of personal income – negatively impacting our economy and society in both the short and long term. The scope of this problem is too broad to cover in this article, but this is the key context in which to understand EDHC's planning objectives and their development proposals for our local area.

Figure 1: Average age of parents remains at record highs  
 Standardised mean age of mothers and fathers, England and Wales, 1938 to 2021

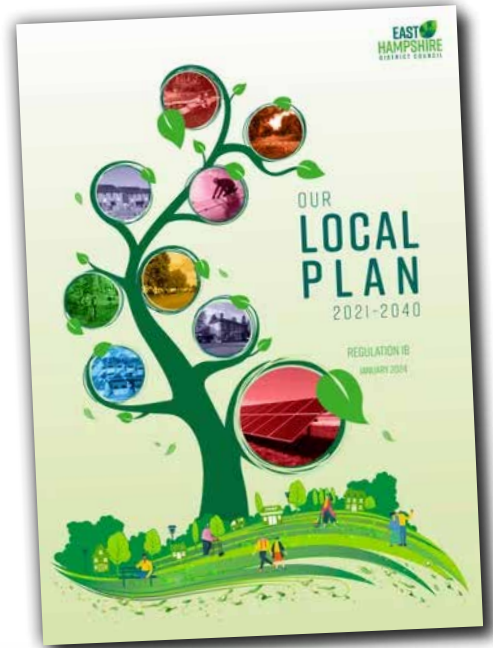


Source: Office for National Statistics - Births in England and Wales

**East Hampshire District Council: Local Plan**

The next level down in the planning hierarchy is not, as you might expect, County Councils like Hampshire, but District Councils like East Hants. Their responsibility is to manage planning and to identify potential development land – whether for housing, employment, transport and other strategic dimensions such as green amenity space. The National Government currently hands down a target of new homes over a 15-year planning period to District Councils who, with a greater understanding of their local area, are responsible for meeting those targets. Extensive work is required to balance all the various demands on the land within a district and achieve all the various objectives from all the different stakeholders.

The Local Plan is a large document of nearly 400 pages, which is an indication of the level of work taken to produce it. However, it can be difficult for the average resident to work their way through the detail, so we have extracted some key information relevant to Alton and Holybourne.



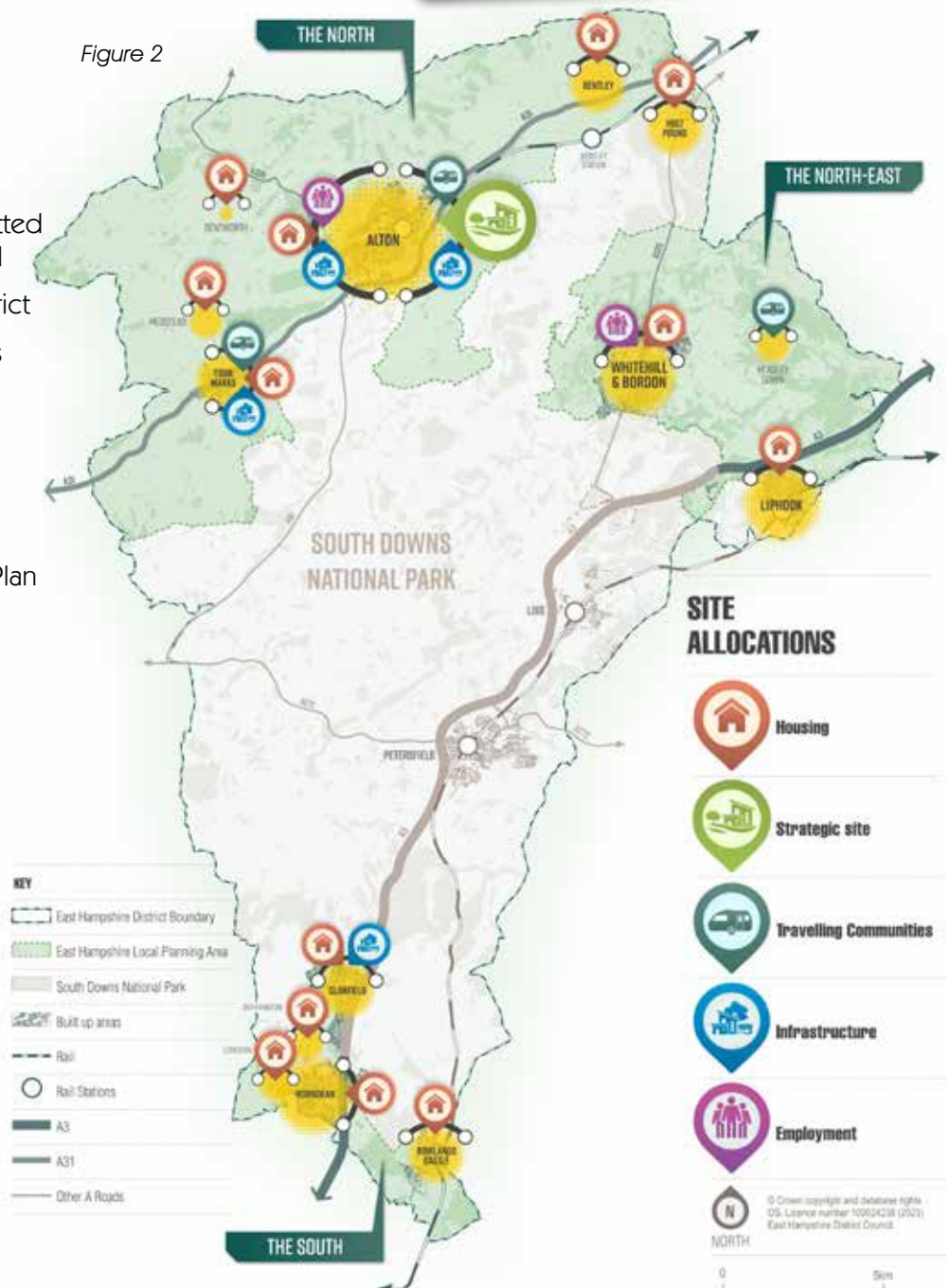
**East Hampshire Draft Local Plan: Key Points**

- 57% of East Hants is South Downs National Park (SDNP)
- Very limited development is permitted with the SDNP, including Petersfield
- Alton is the largest town in the district
- Development is focussed on towns with existing infrastructure:
- Road & Rail links
- Schools and Healthcare
- Retail provision
- Consultation Period for Draft Local Plan
- Published on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024
- Consultation closed 4<sup>th</sup> March (extended to 8<sup>th</sup> March) 2024

**Next Steps**

1. Final Local Plan created
2. Summer 2024  
Further consultation period
3. Winter 2024/5  
EHDC Councillors vote on plan
4. New Year 2025  
Planning Inspector examination
5. Summer 2025  
Planning Inspector report
6. Autumn 2025  
Adoption of Local Plan

Figure 2



continued...

Graphics in figures 2 & 6 created by Urban Graphics (www.urban-graphics.co.uk) reproduced from East Hampshire District Council's Draft Local Plan 2021-2040 with their kind permission.

## Planning Special: continued

More Details in the EDHC draft local plan

### EHDC Housing Targets: Figure 3

This Chart shows how EHDC's housing target will be achieved from now until 2040, based on standard housing need formulas. The 'buffer' of 20% has caused some controversy and Alton Town Council have challenged the justification for this. EHDC say that the buffer is needed to deal with likely unmet needs from other areas, such as Chichester, South Downs National Park, Havant and Portsmouth, and this is required by the planning rules.

### Proposed Housing Allocations: Figure 4

This shows how EHDC propose to allocate the 3,440 residual housing target across the Local Plan Area. Alton is expected to take half of all the required housing, with other towns taking proportionately less. Alton Town Council have challenged the justification for this.

### Alton Town Council

The final planning layer is at Town or Parish level. Alton Town Council have decided to create a new Neighbourhood Plan to replace the current one published in 2021. This was originally due to expire in November 2023 but last December the Government announced that existing plans are now legally valid until November 2026. In January 2023, the Town Council appointed a separate 'Steering Group' to work on the detail, that is directly accountable to the Council and has two Town councillors as part of its working membership.

### Who is involved in the Steering Group?

All members of Steering Group are volunteers who have been residents of the Alton area for a considerable time, ranging from 27 to 50 years. Half of these volunteers contributed to the original Neighbourhood Plan of 2016, and the second version of 2021, so we are benefiting from their experience of the process. They have freely given their time and expertise and have met every two weeks since February 2023.

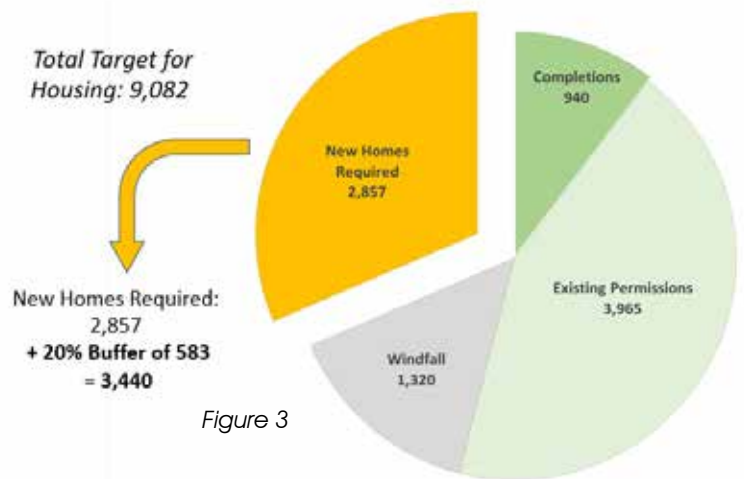


Figure 3

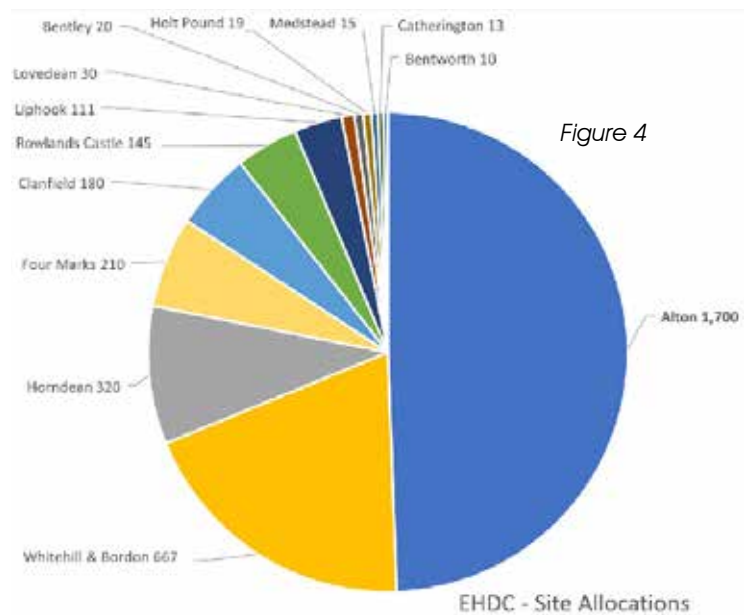


Figure 4

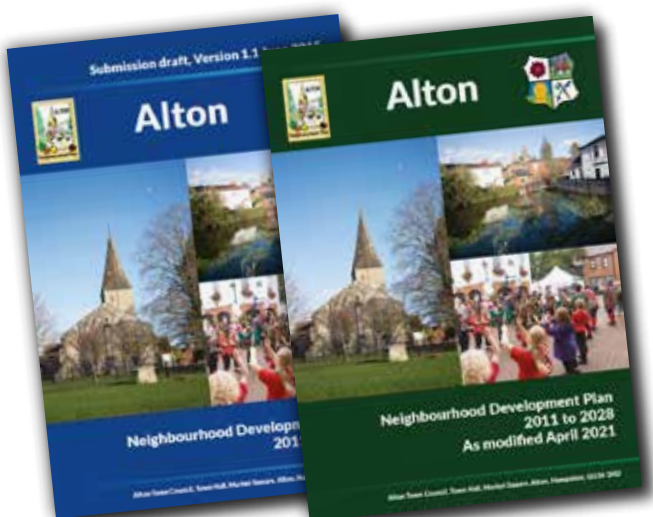
EHDC - Site Allocations

### What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a highly influential Development Plan document that is a key part of the East Hampshire District planning process, giving residents of Alton Neighbourhood Plan area the opportunity to express their views on both residential and infrastructure development within their town or village.

The Neighbourhood Plan aims to capture and communicate these needs and concerns in two ways:

- **Policies:** These will influence development applications and planning decisions at both Alton and East Hampshire level. They are valuable documents that can have significant influence on development proposals and planning decisions. The policies provide guidance to planners and developers in areas such as design, environment and the preservation of local character and green amenity spaces, and they will be published as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- **Site Allocations:** The Neighbourhood Steering Group have the opportunity to identify (or 'allocate') small local sites that they believe are viable for residential development, both brownfield and greenfield sites, based on a publicly available list of all the local land



Alton's 2015 and 2021 Neighbourhood Development Plans

that has the potential to be developed - for either employment or residential use - called the 'Land Availability Assessment' or LAA. It is very important to understand that any sites listed in the LAA only have the potential to be developed, it does not indicate that the site can be developed or that the owner even wants to do this.

**Housing Allocation Sites: Figure 5**

EHDC's Draft Local Plan has proposed three site allocations sites in and around Alton, in order to reach their target of 1,700 new homes in this area.:

- Brick Kiln Lane—150 homes
- Whitedown Lane/Petrius Av.—90 homes
- Travis Perkins – 24 homes

A fourth, 'strategic site', has been identified as Neatham Manor Farm aka Neatham Down, where EHDC wish to allocate 1,000 homes. This is in Binsted Parish, so falls outside of Alton's Neighbourhood Plan remit.

If the Local Plan remains as it is, this leaves 436 homes to allocated to sites in and round Alton and Holybourne, over the next 17 years (up to 2040), or an average of 26 homes each year.

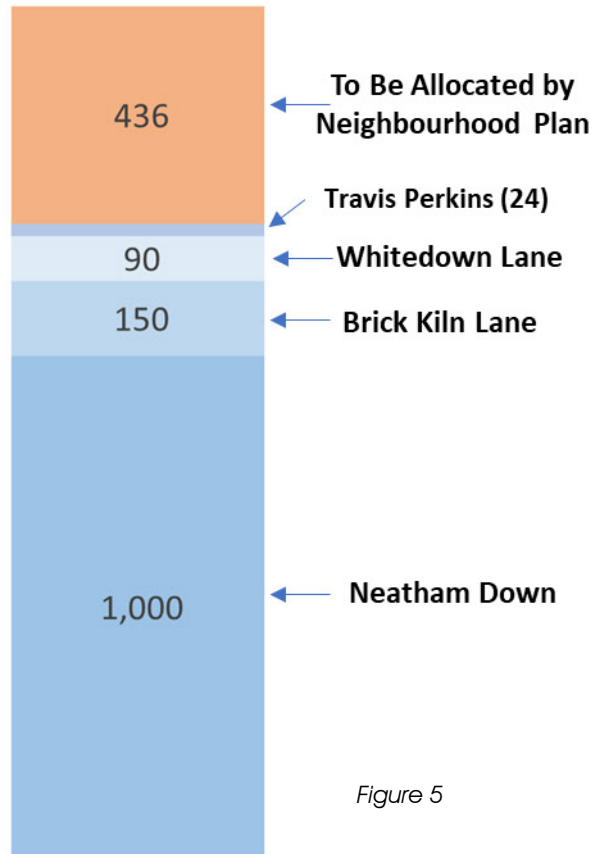


Figure 5

**Public Consultation**

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan process, some development scenarios were created and tested at a public consultation held in the Assembly Rooms in Alton (pictured right). This event was attended by 370 people (of whom 51% were from Holybourne!), who made over 887 comments, many containing multiple points, so that a total of 1,400 individual points of view were recorded.

The Summary report is here: [www.alton.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Consultation-Summary-1.5.pdf](http://www.alton.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Consultation-Summary-1.5.pdf)

There were several clear messages that came out of the comments people made:

- Brownfield First: Strong support for Brownfield development and Town Centre regeneration.
- Infrastructure: Great concern about the ability of existing infrastructure, such as healthcare, schools and utilities to cope with large increases in population implied by some of the development proposals.
- Traffic: density, congestion and safety concerns, This was primarily a Holybourne problem, but a significant one.
- Loss of access to green amenity space: widely used for recreation and mental health in both Alton and Holybourne
- Loss of character: both a concern for Alton and Holybourne residents.

continued...



Figure 6



## Planning Special: continued

### What Are the Timings?

The Draft Local Plan

It is important to remember that the Draft Local Plan is just that - a Draft. There is a legally required consultative process that the Draft Local Plan has to go through before it can be voted on by the District Council.

The first stage was the public consultation that ran from 22<sup>nd</sup> January to 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024, during which both members of the public and 'statutory consultees' (such as the Highways Department, NHS & other healthcare providers, Environment Agency etc.) are invited to comment and make recommendations.

Also, the public and statutory consultees will have further opportunity to comment at Reg19 stage (stage 3 in figure 6 diagram), and comments made at this stage are sent to the Independent Examiner.

Finally, the whole plan and background process is subject to an examination by the Independent Examiner, to ensure that it was created correctly and is fair. This examination reports in the Summer of 2025.

Providing there are no issues, then the plan can be adopted - current timing will be Autumn 2025

### What is the Current Situation?

Alton Town Council's Response:

The Town Council is an official Local Plan Regulation 18 consultee (stage 2 in figure 6) and they have sent a detailed response to East Hampshire District Council challenging some of the fundamental assumptions of the Draft Local Plan. The full response can be found on the Alton Town Council website, but here are the main points, taken directly from the that document:

"ATC wishes to raise objection to the draft Local Plan as presented. The explanation for the objection is detailed below but the focus is concentrated on the following areas:

- The incorrect placement of Alton as a stand-alone tier one settlement
- The resulting distribution of housing numbers across the settlements
- The overall quantum of housing advocated in the plan
- The inclusion of a 22% buffer without justification
- The omission of capacity testing to obtain the numbers on each proposed site
- The lack of brownfield first approach"

The response document goes on to describe how the proposed 1,700 allocation to Alton is disproportionate and that the development of Neatham Down (figure 7) is in direct contradiction to many of EHDC's own planning policies.

Figure 7



### Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Recommendation

Given the context of the Draft Local Plan, the ANP Steering Group currently felt unable to allocate any of the sites for development in and around Alton and so recommended to Alton Town Council a 'No Allocation' policy for the Alton Neighbourhood Plan. This extract from their report to the Town Council on 23rd February 2024 explains the reasons for this decision:

"The options open to the Steering Group were therefore as follows.

- Do not allocate any sites. This would then become the responsibility of the District Council, who have the flexibility of being able to reallocate sites within the District as seems appropriate to them to meet their District-wide targets.
- Allocate sites to meet the full requirements identified in the emerging Local Plan (i.e. 700 dwellings). This is not possible without allocating sites at either Holybourne, or South Alton, or both.
- Allocate sites to meet some of the requirements identified in the emerging Local Plan. It is not possible to meet the full 700 home allocation for Alton, and the identified shortfall of 292 homes is significantly below the provision required by the District Council.

Based on the analysis set out above it was agreed that, if it is to succeed at referendum, the Steering Group had no other option than to make no allocation of sites in its revised Alton Neighbourhood Plan."

### Where Does This Leave Holybourne?

The current Neighbourhood Plan remains in force until November 2026 or until the new version is accepted via a Public Referendum and incorporated into the emerging Local Plan. Holybourne was not specified for any particular development in the current Neighbourhood plan, although there have been some relatively significant brownfield developments since it was published (the old SCATs site that extended Inhams Way, and the old Allison & Garwood site, now known as Pentons Close).

However, if the new Neighbourhood Plan makes no allocations, then the control of where to allocate the remaining 436 homes specified for the Alton area by the Local Plan returns to East Hampshire District Council, with potentially little or no local input.

With the Local Plan being challenged by Alton Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan not finalised and subject to a public referendum, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the final outcome. What is certain however, is that the next six months are critical for both Alton and Holybourne, determining the size and nature of development within our local communities over the next 15 years.

**John Bound**



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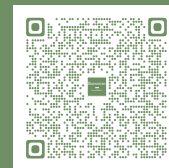


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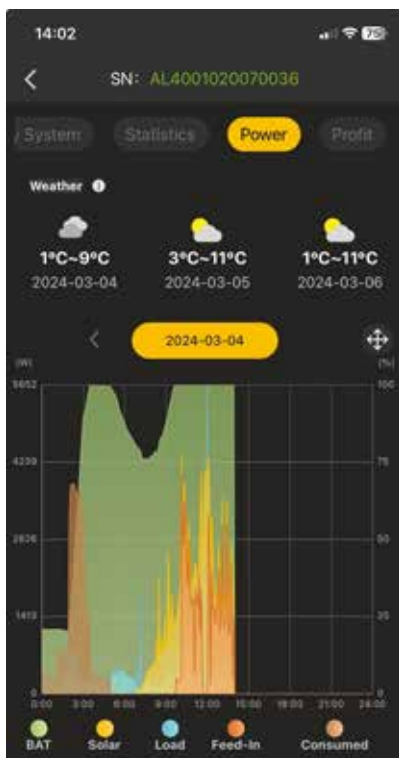
# In praise of Solar Panels and Electric Cars



I have watched several television series about home solar power and electric cars, most recently the BBC programme 'What they really mean for you'. Having been left feeling irritated by the angle they take I felt it was time I shared our real-life experience of these two modern phenomena.

We had investigated solar panels about 10 years ago but the cost at the time put us off. In 2020 we once again found ourselves considering the possibility and we therefore invited 'Infinity Energy Services Ltd', a Southampton company, to come and talk to us. They were effusive about our large, southeast facing roof and gave us a quote for a 16 panel, 5.44kw system (the maximum allowed at the time), 5.8 kw of battery storage and an iBoost water heater for our hot water tank. The cost was £10,000. This was less than the panel-only system quoted for 10 years earlier.

The fitting took place in January 2021 and the system has proved to be a fantastic boon to us both environmentally and financially. The system works via an 'app' on our phones (see image below) and it is easy to monitor the power levels and to make timely use of the incoming power to do laundry and cooking. The set up automatically runs a pattern of charging the batteries, then heating the water then charging our car if it is plugged in, then sending any surplus electricity generated to the grid. Once the light falls below a certain level and no more electricity is being generated we move to using the power in our batteries which will



usually last until the middle of the night. If there is a power cut in the area we are often not aware of it because we automatically use our battery stored power.

We get our electric and gas through Octopus Energy and have chosen to use their 'Agile Tariff'. This tariff gives prices by the half hour which are shown from 4.00pm for the next days 24 hour period. Knowing what the power costs we can select when it is cheapest and during the winter months

when there is less sunlight we can charge the batteries at the cheapest time then run off those for a lot of the day or until the light re-charges our batteries.

From mid-March to mid-October we rarely use any electricity at cost to us as there is enough solar power to cover all our needs plus charge the batteries. We also gain from feeding in our excess electricity to the grid at 15 pence per kilowatt hour. In a sunny month we can get back as much as £30.00.

With solar power systems there has to be a consideration of pay back on the original outlay. We expected it to be around 8 to 10 years to pay back but once fuel costs started to rise we think this will have reduced to around 5 years.

In April 2022 we bought our first full electric car. It has a range of around 300 miles when fully charged and is a dream to drive. With solar power to charge it we have also gained free fuel for our driving or we charge it using the Octopus Agile cheapest times. We have travelled to the Lake District and to the French Alps without any great problem finding charging points and it is rare that we have an issue with a charger. In France our hotel gave us free charging and we used Lidl twice where charging is also free while you shop. We use Octopus Energy Electroverse and Zapmap to find chargers when we are away from home. Currently there isn't any Road Tax to pay but this is likely to change in the coming years.

"So how do the costs look?" I hear you thinking. We have a large, 4 bedroom house and we are at home most of the time so can make maximum use of the best solar availability. We eat our main meal at lunch time and cook, do the laundry and run the dishwasher during the day to take advantage of the solar power. We travel about 12,000 miles a year and charge the car mostly at home. We have gas central heating but use it very sparingly and choose to wear lots of layers to keep warm. We have 2 electric storage type heaters (Fischer) in our sitting room so we can just heat one room if necessary. Our total bill for electric and gas in the last 12 months has been around £1400 which includes most of our 12,000 miles of travel.

We hope our experience gives a positive view of both solar power and electric car driving. We are always happy to talk further to anyone interested in taking one or both of these steps into a new way of powering life.

The app screenshot shows that, even on a cloudy day in early March, the Solar panels supply nearly two-thirds of the power consumed during the day.

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SCAN ME



## Turning the tables

### The Man Who Made His Own Bed, and now lies in it!

So, we got a new home in the village and some of our furniture fitted but not all. That's OK though as I enjoy making furniture, but did I make my own bed? Well, sort of...

We moved to the village a year or so ago when the educational charity I work for relocated to Hampshire. I grew up in the county, so it was a bit of a homecoming for me. The charity raises money by designing and building science museum exhibitions, which means I have access to a very well equipped workshop. That not a necessity, but a huge bonus if you want to make your own furniture.

But why make it yourself? Does it save you money? Not at all. You can buy an oak table far cheaper than you can buy the oak to make one.

There are cheaper materials with a slightly more rustic appeal, such as recycled floorboards, scaffold boards or the dreaded pallet. Reclaimed floorboards often have a great character but they are much, much more expensive than new ones. Of course they are. Painted MDF is very versatile. Oiled plywood has a nice Scandinavian appeal if that's your style, and steel is surprisingly cheap if you've got the tools to use it. You also have to factor in all the extras you'll need to buy. Hinges, handles, wheels, drawer runners, wood dye, paint and wax polish all add up.

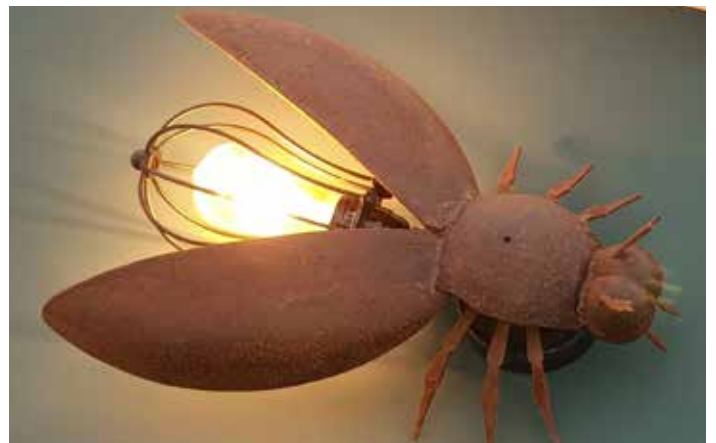
So if it's not the cost, then what? Well, you get exactly what you want. There's no standing in the shop with a tape measure saying "It's perfect but it won't quite fit". If we want a little drawer at one end, or integrated lighting, that's what we have. As a random example if, inexplicably, there are a thousand balls of wool that need storage, I'll design a much bigger cupboard.

So, what about the bed? Having been horrified by the cost of a half decent mattress but still needing something to put it on, the bed ended up being something temporary, knocked up out of a couple of sheets of plywood. A proper bed is on the list of projects, and I will get around to it... but I've just finished a dining table (pictured).

After that I've made some banquette seating, a coffee table for the lounge and a cupboard for the office, maybe the new bed will be next? The current bed is fine. It works, and most of the time you've got your eyes closed.

### Ian Walters

If you want to see how Ian actually made this table, we have a short video for you. Just open your phone or tablet's camera, point it at the QR code and tap the pop-up yellow tab that says 'vqr.vc'. Duration is less than 2 minutes. Alternatively, the link is: <https://vimeo.com/923779504>



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## NEW Alton Community Support Directory Website

A new Community Support Directory website has been launched to offer a comprehensive and easy to use platform dedicated to informing local residents of what support services, organisations and community groups are available locally. Please visit:

**www.AltonCommunitySupportDirectory.co.uk**

This directory was created by Alton Town Council with the support of the A31 Primary Care Network Social Prescribers Team and the Alton Health and Wellbeing Forum. This directory aims to connect people with community groups and other services, enabling practical and emotional support to be provided and help people with their health and wellbeing. We would like to thank EHDC District Councillors Graham Hill and Suzie Burns who funded this project with their District Councillor Community Grants.

Whether you need support for a medical condition; are looking for ways to improve your mental health and wellbeing; need help for an older person; are looking for support for your family or a young person are in need of financial help and don't know where to turn; need assistance with accessibility, mobility and community transport services; would like to make new community connections; or are just looking to volunteer within our community, this website can direct you to the right place.

There is also a section to inform local support groups, community organisations and charities where they might be able to apply for grants and funding to support the important work that they do for our community.

There will also be a limited number of booklets available soon for those who cannot access the website, and these will be available from the A31 Primary Care Network Social

Prescribers Team at Chawton Park Surgery, The Wilson Practice and Boundaries Surgery. As well as local support services like Dementia Friendly Alton Group located at the Alton Assembly Rooms and the Alton Citizens Advice Bureau located in the Market Square.

Alton Town Mayor, Cllr Ben Hamlin said "There is a small army of volunteers and professionals in Alton, seeking to improve the lives of Altonians of all ages. But it can still not be easy to find help of the specific kind that is needed. This directory is designed to provide up-to-date information on all the health and well-being services available in Alton. If you see a gap, let us know."

If you would like to request a local community support listing to be added to the directory there will be monthly updates.

**Emily-Jane Messenger** events@alton.gov.uk



Accessibility and Transport



Community Connections



Elderly Care and Support



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Mental Health Support



Medical Support



Financial Support



Volunteering in the Community

Screen-shot from the Alton Community Support Directory website showing search categories



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##### Non-Holybourne Residents

Weekdays:	£12.00
Weekends before 18:00	£14.50
Weekends after 18:00	£19.00

New prices as shown from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. The china, glass and cutlery in the kitchen are all included in the cost of the hire.

Hirers must ensure that the duration of their booking is sufficient for any setting up and clearing up. Free access to the hall cannot be given for this purpose.



## Hidden Gems: Curtis Museum

At the top of Alton High Street is a fine example of Gothic Victorian architecture and now home to one of Alton's hidden gems – the Curtis Museum.

Opposite the Assembly Rooms, the Curtis Museum is a fascinating collection of historical artifacts, including the 'Alton Buckle' – an exquisite example of Saxon jewellery. Other permanently exhibitions include a rare Roman enamel cup, ancient Saxon burials, hop picking and brewing, Cranford author Elizabeth Gaskell, the 1643 Battle of Alton - with a Civil War era helmet, breastplate and sword - and the notorious tale of Sweet Fanny Adams.

The museum was founded by Dr William Curtis (1803–1881) after he founded the Alton Mechanics Institute in 1837. The museum was originally housed in the Institute's building in Market Street. However, Curtis went on to raise money to create a new building complex at the top of the High Street, built in 1880, that included the Assembly Rooms

and Alton Cottage Hospital, as well as the new location for the Mechanics Institute - the Museum's current home.

In 2014, ownership of the museum was transferred to the Hampshire Cultural Trust as part of a larger transfer of museums from Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council. Established as an independent charity in 2014, the Trust promotes Hampshire as a county that offers outstanding cultural experiences to both its residents and visitors, supporting visitor attractions, museums, art galleries and arts centres across Hampshire, and its website is worth a visit: [www.hampshireculture.org.uk](http://www.hampshireculture.org.uk)

However, in this era of financial constraint, the Museum only has confirmed funding until 2026, when it may have to close after more than 165 years. So, if you've walked past it many times, and wondered what's in there, we suggest you go and look in soon – while you still can.



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Did you know that Alton is twinned with Montecchio Maggiore in Italy and Pertuis in France and has recently celebrated the silver jubilee of our twinning with Montecchio?

The Alton Town Twinning Association (ATTA) organises exchange visits with both of our twin towns, and this year a group from Pertuis will be visiting us in June.

We also hope to arrange a future visit to Montecchio. We have a programme of social activities throughout the year. New members would be most welcome.

If you would like further information, please contact Patric Hinde:- [209pcv@gmail.com](mailto:209pcv@gmail.com)





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# Walks & Talks with Alton Natural History Society

## Field meeting: Hollow lanes of Selborne Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024; 10.30am - 1pm

A 1-2 mile walk around the lanes of Selborne exploring the area's geology, plants and local history. May be muddy in places. Leaders: Dr June Chatfield (Plants), Ian Chisholm (geology) and Chris Webb (local history). Contact details 01420 82214. Meet in car park behind Selborne Arms (GU34 3JR) Grid ref SU/ 7421 3351)



## Field meeting: Pamber Forest for Botany Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024; 10am - 1pm

Approx. 2.5 mile walk through woodland with ancient plant indicators, coppice and rides, into open pastures and heath. Tracks may be muddy but are generally flat with some gentle slopes. Leader Isobel Girvan contact 07811 440892) Meet/park at off street gravel area on bend in Impstone Road, Pamber heath, Tadley (RG26 3EQ Grid ref SU/6166 6211)



## Field meeting: Birds of Home Farm, Burkham Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Approx. 2 mile walk around a Woodland Trust site with ancient woodland, hedgerows and grassland. A chance to see early spring migration as small birds arrive for the summer to breed. We hope to see warblers, skylarks, yellowhammer and some birds of prey. Mostly grass paths but may be muddy if wet. Leader Daniel Banks 07483 083837). Meet in car park in Spain Lane, Burkham, Alton (GU34 4RT Grid ref SU/6594 4250)



## Gilbert White Nature Day, Selborne Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024

We plan to have a stall to answer nature questions from the public and displays to promote the society. There may be themed walks. Visit Gilbert White's House website for details.



## Moths & Minibeasts at the Allen Gallery, Alton Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024; 8.45 - 10.30pm

Learn about setting up moth traps and enjoy the nightlife of a secluded walled garden in the middle of Alton.

## Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024; 10.30am - 12.30pm

Learn about and see moths trapped in the Allen Gallery garden the night before, then hunt for minibeasts (woodlice, centipedes, insects, snails and slugs). Children welcome, accompanied by an adult please. Also see the accompanying exhibition inspired by the wildlife and habitats at Blacknest Fields in Binsted parish. Leader Chris Piper 07711 506100. Meet at the Allen Gallery, 10-12 Church Street, Alton (GU34 2BW Grid ref SU/7182 3952). Nearest car parks opposite the gallery or in Vicarage Hill (no charge after 6pm).

continued...

## Walks & Talks with Alton Natural History Society - continued



### Field meeting: Bentley tree walk

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024; 10.30am – 1pm**

A gentle amble around fields and pond in Bentley looking at a wide selection of native and cultivated trees. Leaders Dr June Chatfield and Ian Chisholm Contact 01420 82214. Meet in car park off School Lane, Bentley (GU10 5JP Grid ref SU/7874 4419)

### Field meeting: Butterflies and plants of Bentley Station Meadow and Blacknest Fields

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2024; 9.45am – 1pm**

Approx. 3.5 mile walk through Alice Holt Forest taking in two important sites for grassland, scrub and woodland edge butterflies. Bentley Station meadow is run by Butterfly Conservation. Blacknest Fields is a habitat restoration project run by Binsted Parish Council. Undulating forest and field tracks may be muddy and slippery if wet. Leader Cathy Wilson (07557 643204 with John Oats and Fiona Scully (Butterfly Conservation). Meet in car park off Gravel Hill Road, Bentley (nearest postcode GU10 4LQ. Car park track leaves road at grid ref SU/8026 4342. Meet far end of car park Grid ref SU/8020 4332



### Field meeting: Meadows Morning with guided Wildflower Wanderers at Blacknest Fields

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024**

**9.45am – 1pm (walks at 10am and 11.30am)**

Blacknest Fields is a habitat restoration project run by Binsted Parish Council, adjacent to Alice Holt Forest. Leaders Cathy Wilson (07557 643204) with Sarah Womesley. Drop in any time during the morning to enjoy the wildlife of the meadows, including butterflies, other invertebrates and birds. Park on site. Drive up the bridleway leading from Blacknest Road, Alton nearest postcode GU34 4PZ Grid ref SU/7965 4180



### Field meeting:

#### Ashford Hangers National Nature Reserve

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024; 10.30am – 1.30pm**

Steep hanger woodland of mainly Beech with plentiful dead wood and small patches of chalk grassland with orchids – 14 species including Sword-leaved, White and Broad Helleborine. Good boots and reasonable fitness needed with a steep climb and descent. Leaders Dave Ball (01730 261872) with Chris Webb. Park/meet at Ashford Farm, Ashford lane, Steep, Petersfield (GU32 1AA Grid ref 7433 2665).

### Field meeting: Geology and habitats of Passfield Common and Conford Moor

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2024; 10.30am – 1pm**

Passfield Common and Conford Moor form an ancient common on the edge of Woolmer Forest. The Lower Greensand and hydrology, with the historic exercise of common rights, have combined to create a mosaic of habitats ranging from wood pasture to heathland and fen. Approx. 1.5 miles, all flat, possibly wet in the fen area if much rain. Leader Chris Webb (07731 939019). Park/meet near Conford Village Hall, Conford, Liphook (GU30 7QW Grid ref SU/8240 3303).

### Field meeting: Bats of King's Pond, Alton

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2024; 7.30-9.30pm**

A short slow walk around King's Pond observing and detecting bat species in the vicinity. They may include Common and Soprano Pipistrelle and Daubenton's Bats, with the possibility of larger bats such as Noctule and Serotine. This is International Bat Night when people across the UK and Us will be celebrating bats. Bring a torch and wrap up warm. Leader Chris Piper 07711 506100. Meet in King's Pond car park (no charge), Ashdell Road, Alton (GU34 2TB Grid ref SU/7241 3946)

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