

COUNCIL MEETING – 26TH FEBRUARY 2026

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 (2) - PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No	Question from	Question	Response from	Response
1	Peter Crerar, Manor Park Ward	<p>Heritage Site In 1983, Alfred Burtoo was fishing on the Basingstoke Canal and claimed that a UFO landed nearby, and he was examined by two aliens.</p> <p>I am sceptical about this story for many reasons... particularly that aliens travelled light years across the universe to then visit North Town... why not Manor Park? Many, however, treat Alfred Burtoo’s story seriously including Reform UK PCC for Leicestershire.</p> <p>Given that Alfred Burtoo has created an urban myth for Aldershot like the Loch Ness Monster, is it not time that we have the location of this legend on the Basingstoke Canal marked out for heritage?</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning</p> <p>Cllr Keith Dibble</p>	<p>Thank you for the question, Mr Crerar. Alf Burtoo is a man who deserves respect and not to be mocked.</p> <p>Alf lived with his wife and son in Pegasus Avenue, Aldershot. He was a friend of mine, and he played a very important role for me when I first won Belle Vue ward, now North Town, in 1984.</p> <p>Alf was convinced it happened, never doubted it. However his family and friends were of the opinion, he fell asleep while fishing, and he had a very deep dreamed. He believed until this until his dying day, and he was never mocked by friends and family. With hindsight, he may well have been correct because if aliens from another planet were to visit planet Earth, North Town being the best urban village on earth, would be the obvious place to visit. Their visits would see an award-winning butchers in Turners, the internationally acclaimed Tangerine Café, a diverse and lively community, the ancestral family home of our Mayor, and they would be welcome to pop into the very popular and successful North Town Councillors weekly advice surgery.</p> <p>So, the answer to Mr Cerar’s question is no, we do not need a special memorial to Alf Burtoo, because every day the diverse and lively North Town community reflects the heritage of Alf and everyone past and present from my home, North Town.</p>

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2	Resident of North Town Ward	<p>H-Stop HVM “Why are there H-Stop HVM installed at the top of Union St in Aldershot. These things are designed to be rapidly deployed to prevent vehicular attack. Has the council received such a threat and what is that threat if so, if not, then who has funded these barriers and why?”</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Growth</p> <p>Cllr Julie Hall</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. The Council has not received any threat.</p> <p>The bollards controlling access to Union St and Wellington Street were not working and during this time the area was accessed by vehicles which were driven without care and attention.</p> <p>The Council assessed that the risk to pedestrians was significant and the barriers were hired to ensure that whilst the bollards were out of action the area could still be quickly secured from uncontrolled vehicles.</p> <p>The Council will consider whether the barriers have been effective and whether to retain them in the event of future issues with the bollards.</p>
3	Caroline Emberson, Aldershot Park Ward	<p>Lifts in Aldershot Town Centre When will lifts providing access to town and in the town be fixed and maintained fully, including Union Yard, Westgate and the Wellington Centre – it is a nightmare for disabled people currently?</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Regeneration</p> <p>Cllr Julie Hall</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. I understand and recognise the frustration with these lifts.</p> <p>The only lifts for which the Council is responsible in Aldershot Town Centre is the disabled lift at Union Yard. Unfortunately, despite a number of repairs the lift is currently out of action and both short and medium term actions to get it working are being pursued. Union Yard is still accessible for disabled visitors via other entrances, though I recognise this is inconvenient.</p> <p>The owners of the Wellington Centre have recently invested in fixing their lifts, although there remains a few problems currently with one of them. The escalators are posing a more significant problem due to their age and difficulties obtaining parts, but the owners are continuing to seek a solution, and we are pressing as much as we can.</p> <p>The lift at Westgate, again not a council owned or controlled property, has been raised repeatedly with the</p>

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				agents and owners of Westgate. We are pursuing information on its repair and will share news when we have it.
4	Maria Hardy, Fernhill Ward	<p>A331 Litter and Fly Tipping Can the council tell me what they propose to do about the flytipping and litter on the A331. Over the last 3 years it has become increasingly worse. I often use this road, and I am appalled at the state it is in. I have reported this litter problem many times, but nothing seems to be done about it.</p>	<p>Pride in Place and Neighbourhood Services</p> <p>Cllr Christine Guinness</p>	<p>This Council is responsible for cleaning a certain section of the A331, which is between the Basingstoke Canal aqueduct and the Farnborough Gate junction. The section to the south of this is maintained by Guildford Borough Council and the section to the north is maintained by Surrey Heath Borough Council. As this is a high-speed road, there are strict health and safety rules in place to allow work to be carried out, including full lane closures. Due to the significant disruption this causes to the public, the highway authorities for the A331 (which are Hampshire County Council and Surrey County Council) carry out maintenance twice per year where they allow the district authorities to enter their lane closures to carry out litter and flytip clearance. This is once in the spring (usually April/May) and once in the autumn (usually September/October).</p>
5	Darren Brady, Rowhill Ward	<p>Cost of Supporting Asylum Seekers Data published by TaxPayers' Alliance from local authority spending shows that Hampshire Councils spent £31.7 million supporting asylum seekers during the most recent financial year. How much did Rushmoor Borough Council spend supporting 'asylum seekers'?</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities and Active Lives</p> <p>Cllr Sophie Porter</p>	<p>Rushmoor Borough Council did not use council tax to support asylum seekers. There is an asylum seeker grant awarded by the Home Office specifically for asylum and resettlement support.</p> <p>During the 2024/25 financial year, the Council allocated £85,174 towards supporting asylum seeker support from this government grant, therefore, there was no additional cost to the Council. The majority of this expenditure relates to direct staffing costs and casework provision.</p>

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				Funding was also used for initiatives aimed at supporting the integration of asylum seekers and refugees including English language and cultural classes and the coordination of volunteering opportunities to prepare for working life.
6	Michael Mills, North Town Ward	<p>Scouting Lease Renewals Are the Council supportive of Scouting or trying to close Scout Groups across Rushmoor? If supportive why has rent gone up 700% at the recent lease renewals? This rise is linked to the councils new Asset Management Plan. It affects 50% of groups in Rushmoor, those who own their huts but lease Council land. Our rent for the land increased from £750 to proposed £5,600. Whilst groups receive rebates this is not guaranteed and needs to be applied for every 3 years. This rise is not sustainable. We fundraise to subsidise maintenance, bills and keep subscriptions affordable to all.</p> <p>Supplementary comment:</p> <p>With the need to apply every three years for a rebate, there is concern over the changes to unitary councils. If a lease is not signed, we could lose the rebate and that would mean the end of Scout Groups.</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Regeneration</p> <p>Cllr Julie Hall</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. The Council is supportive of scout groups and has not implemented the large increases referred to – as part of the 2023 asset management strategy we inherited as an administration. The Council is reviewing the situation and is re-examining the rental valuations and subsidies/rent relief it gives. At present 90% rent relief is provided to all eligible community organisations, and this does result in very low net rents for a number of organisations. For example, a rent of £750 with 90% relief results in a yearly rent of £75. The Council has a responsibility to ensure good management of its assets and part of this is ensuring that at lease renewal, rents reflect current, not historic levels, and that subsidies given are economic and reflect good value for taxpayers.</p> <p>However, the Council does recognise the concern around the cliff edge that rent increases can cause. It will be bringing forward a revised policy to Cabinet on 17th March 2026 to address this issue alongside the new Asset Management Strategy, and I'm very happy to have conversations on this if you would like to contact me, separately ahead of that, or officers.</p>

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7	Martin Gear, Manor Park Ward	<p>Scouting Lease Renewal – Delays Why are the leases for scout huts taking so long to renew? It has so far taken over 7 years to renew the lease of the 2nd Aldershot Scout Hut, and it's still not completed. Last correspondence was 5th June 2025 from the legal team saying they would be in touch. The 14th Aldershot has been delayed from November 2025 to June 2026 so far. Is this a trend with the scouting leases. These need to be sorted as soon as possible especially with the uncertainty of the unitary council on the horizon.</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Economy, Skills and Regeneration</p> <p>Cllr Julie Hall</p>	<p>Thank you for your question. The recent delays have been due to the issues mentioned in the previous question with changes to rents.</p> <p>Previously when implementing a new IT system a substantial number of issues, including lease renewals, were identified and the Council has been working through these issues over the last couple of years.</p> <p>We regret these delays and we recognise the timing concern and will ensure these leases are resolved this year, and prior to LGR.</p>