

# HERE AND NOW in HUNGERFORD

No. 33 in a series of regular briefings from the Council

FEBRUARY 2016

## INTELLECTUAL SUICIDE?

Our esteemed local author Robert Harris has described the prospect of closing our library as “*cultural vandalism*”. Your Council believes it is far more serious than that. The staff and a band of volunteers have developed a Community Hub beyond the traditional concept of a mere lending library.

It now plays a central role in harnessing skills and experience of residents to the benefit of a much wider audience, enriching the lives of so many. The reading groups, I.T. tuition and access to the internet; and half term activities for children are just the tip of this intellectual iceberg. The building known simply as **The Library** is better described as **The Life Enhancing Centre**.

The current Consultation being carried out by West Berks Council [WBC] is on the stark choice of closure. This is simply not good enough. There must be many alternative strategies. Little or no factual evidence has been published other than a potential saving of £730k if 8 out of 9 libraries are closed.

Your Council will be insisting upon having greater analysis that can be explored to achieve a mutually acceptable balance of the financial and community books. In the meantime I ask everyone to make their view known to WBC emphasising the impact on you if our library is closed.

## PREVENTION v CURE

Why is it that officials in WBC at times ignore the tried and tested advice that prevention is better than cure? A prime example of the WBC failure to adopt such a principle is on road safety. Instead of reacting to real concerns of residents and local knowledge, action is only considered necessary **after** a fatality.

I am sure many can cite areas around Hungerford where an accident is just waiting to happen.

Residents of Hungerford Newtown are living in constant fear of speeding traffic through the 40mph zone which includes a really hazardous crossroads. But WBC continues to resist pressure to reduce this speed limit and install further safety measures.

The recent serious crash at the exit from Lower Denford on to the A4 required the injured motor cyclist to be airlifted to hospital. Yet the obvious safety hazard of poor sight line for vehicles has yet to be resolved. Come on WBC stop hiding

behind office based guidelines and use some common sense or risk being regarded as a Council that is **Without Basic Care**.



## YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

After 6 years successfully building up a popular youth club, the centre is facing several risks to its future. The Centre is expensive to run paying over £9k to WBC in rent and heat. It receives funding from your Council, the Town and Manor and Greenham Common Trust but the Management team are looking at ways to reduce the running costs.

However the real risk to the future of the Centre is the prospect of losing the current team Leaders, Sue and Felicity. It is true to say that without their tremendous input over the years, it would have folded. But we need to find new volunteers to fill their oversized shoes, **can you help?** Or do you know someone else that would be interested in helping? If so, please contact Eoin Walsh- e-mail: [eoin.walsh@hungerfordyc.org.uk](mailto:eoin.walsh@hungerfordyc.org.uk)

## DIARY DATE

The annual HTC Public Meeting will take place in the Corn Exchange at 7pm on Thursday 24 March; please be there.



- Cllr Martin Crane, OBE, Town Mayor of Hungerford