

# HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

The Mayor  
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**MINUTES** of the **Full Council Meeting** held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 at 7.00pm in the Corn Exchange Complex, Hungerford.

**Present:** Cllrs Simpson, Knight, Cusack, Winsor, Downe, Farrell, Chicken, Hawkins, Alford and Lewis. Also: Representatives from Newbury News, Penny Post, District Cllrs Dennis Benneyworth, Claire Rowles and James Cole. Several members of the public. Denise Gaines and Alistair Fyfe.

**Police were not present.**

- Note apologies for absence** – Cllrs Knight, Brookman and Hudson
- Declarations of interest** – Cllr Cusack (Triangle Field Management Committee and Chamber of Commerce), Cllr Crane (Chamber of Commerce), Cllr Lewis (Youth & Community Centre)
- Approval of Minutes of the meeting of the Annual Full Council meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and outcome of any actions** – Cllr Downe proposed the minutes as an accurate record, seconded by Cllr Cusack, one abstention, rest in favour.
- Option to fill remaining two vacancies by co-option** – Both candidates were invited to speak. Denise Gaines advised she was previously on HTC Environment & Planning (E&P) and Highways & Transport (H&T) Committees. Also, she is part of the H2036 project team and previously worked on the Town Plan. She was the first chair of the Youth & Community Centre and has lived in Hungerford for 3 years, working here for the last 15 years.  
*Cllr Simpson proposed co-option of Denise Gaines as a town councillor, seconded by Cllr Crane. The vote was carried out by paper ballot and the result was a majority in favour.*  
Alistair Fyfe spent 40 years in the Army. He has recently moved to Hungerford having worked in property and facilities management in London. He was a parish councillor in Upavon for 7 years and has experience in SSSI and conservation work.  
*Cllr Crane proposed co-option of Alistair Fyfe as a town councillor, seconded by Cllr Downe. The vote was carried out by paper ballot and the result was a majority in favour.*  
Denise and Alistair signed their Declaration of Acceptance of office and took their positions as Councillors at the table. The Mayor welcomed them and is pleased to have a full capacity of councillors.
- Mayor's Diary** – To receive a report for past month. Cllr Simpson's highlight of the month was attending the Queen's Garden Party where she spoke with Prince Harry. She has been contacted by West Berks Council's Economic Development officer, regarding the £62mill Heritage Boost for High Streets, who wishes to work with HTC and has suggested a couple of dates to meet.
- District Councillor's Reports** – The new District Councillors were welcomed. Claire Rowles introduced herself. She has never been a district councillor before. She is a solicitor and runs her own consultancy business and has lived around here all her life. Her father is Andrew Rowles who was a councillor in Kintbury for 18 years. She is a deputy on the Adult Social Care Committee, sits on the Western Area Planning Committee and hopes to attend as many meetings as she can. James Cole will be joining us later

tonight. Dennis Benneyworth (DB) advised as District Councillors they have been learning their new roles over the last month. The Tennis Club's planning application has attracted local interest and has received over 20 letters of objection, so he has called it in to committee. They have a new grounds manager so he hopes grass cutting around town will improve. The Canal Wharf has finally been cut. DB has spoken with Paul Hendry at WBC about S106 money due to be released to the Town Council and he is checking on what basis the S106 money can be spent.

7. **Hungerford 2036 – Receive a report from the Project Team (see attached)** – Cllr Downe advised the environment didn't feature at the top of concerns in the initial public survey. WBC are establishing a climate emergency group. H2036 will be seeking consultation particularly with younger age groups. Cllr Cusack advised he is attending the Health Conference in June if anyone wished to join him. Cllr Crane asked if H2036 have any view on the Industrial Business Strategy issued by WBC. Cllr Downe advised draft policies are being put together and the strategy will be considered as part of this.

8. **Committee reports (no more than 3 minutes per report)**

**T&E – Report has been circulated (see attached).** Cllr Crane added it is this Wednesday the gazebo goes up outside Travelwise with stands and literature from 10am to 4pm as a Seasonal Info point. They will also try this on a Sunday. This is under the Chamber of Commerce umbrella. Cllrs Crane and Winsor will be representing the town on the Twinning visit to Ligueil this Thursday and will be taking gifts. The spots for the new Welcome signs have been marked out. Hungerford is the first town to have signs to show it is 'on the Great West Way'.

**H&T – Report has been circulated (see attached).** Cllr Chicken added money from the LEP is to be pursued. He also advised Fuel Cells would like to power the Xmas Tree lights this year.

**E&P –** Cllr Farrell advised Salisbury Road will be on the agenda for the next meeting. Nothing has been heard about the application for the Nat West building. She has visited the 3 Swans development and the slips are looking better. External worked should finish by the end of June and then internal works will follow. Let Cllr Farrell know if you would like to look around. Two of the properties have been sold already. Cllr Farrell advised she will not be Chair at the next E&P meeting.

**R&A – Report has been circulated (see attached)** – The Mayor welcomed Cllr Lewis to the committee.

9. **Finance –**

**a) Propose authorisation of cheque run payments (circulated) for last month** – *Cllr Winsor proposed the cheque run of £21,591 including VAT, seconded by Cllr Simpson, two abstentions, rest in favour.*

**b) Propose Budget/Actual accounts – refer to circulated Income/Expenditure Report** – Some notable variances were pointed out including training. Employment Law Service will come out of the contingency budget. *Cllr Winsor proposed the accounts as accurate, seconded by Cllr Simpson, two abstentions, rest in favour.*

**c) Propose the expenditure for installation of welcome signs** – *Cllr Winsor proposed the expenditure for the installation of welcome signs (£2500) that will be done this week, of which the AONB has agreed to fund 50%, seconded by Cllr Simpson, two abstentions, rest in favour.*

Thanks, were expressed to Cllr Crane for his hard work on this project.

The Mayor asked if the District Cllrs would consider rate reduction on the Croft Field Centre.

10. **Hungerford in Bloom – Consider proposals** (refer to report from Cllr Hawkins) – We have a number of entries to the competition and we hope to generate more interest through the press. HTC traditionally provided the prizes. This year there is some public interest in sponsoring these. One single sponsor is interested in sponsoring the whole competition but at this late stage it was agreed it should go to a wider group. *Cllr Simpson proposed HTC cover any shortfall in sponsorship, seconded by Cllr Gaines, one objection (Cllr Cusack), rest in favour.* It was agreed key sponsors would not enter the competition. The aim is to build on sponsorship and promotion right from the start in future to enable savings. Would a better prize affect the number of entrants? The prizes will not be monetary and may be meals or vouchers. *Cllr Simpson proposed Cllr Hawkins continues to seek sponsorship, seconded by Cllr Winsor, all in favour. Cllr Downe proposed we agree the wording 'the prize giving ceremony for Hungerford in Bloom is kindly sponsored by...', seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.*

- 11. Consider change to calendar of meetings - Suggested reduction to the number of both Full Council meetings and committee meetings, particularly R&A and H&T– (report was circulated, see attached) –** A discussion took place. Pros being – less pressure on the office, time for actions to be completed, avoidance of deferring items, a reduction on councillor’s time. Cons - less transparency, speed of decisions would reduce, a loss of momentum, monthly updates still needed in some form. It was noted both Thatcham and Newbury have bi-monthly Full Council meetings and was suggested the council should be more rigorous with adhering to its Action Plan, better chairmanship would help streamline meetings, councillors should have more involvement and own projects, committees could have more delegated powers or meet every 6 weeks instead of 8.  
*Cllr Simpson proposed keeping Full Council meetings as they are and changing H&T and R&A to meet every 8 weeks, starting in Sept with a meeting, for a 6 months trial, seconded by Cllr Gaines, all in favour.*

- 12. Any other Reports (3 minutes each) not to include any proposals - None**

**Meeting closed at 8.20pm**

Highways and Transport Committee report - Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019

1. A complaint by a member of the public regarding increased traffic in Charnham Street when the roadworks take place on the M4 was responded to by Highways England. They will take no action, and the complainant will now speak to them directly.
2. It has been established that the green cabinet under the railway bridge is owned by Southern Electricity Board, and a letter will be sent to them asking for it to be re-painted or cleaned as part of the Smarten Up Hungerford campaign.
3. Letters will be delivered to High Street businesses this week, with regard to delivery vehicles blocking the highway.
4. I attended a site meeting at Atherton Crescent with West Berkshire Highways department representatives, regarding parking on the green area, and they expressed a commitment to erect bollards and extend the double yellow lines to restrict parking at both ends of the road. We also discussed increasing the number of parking places which are currently using three bays set into the green area. I suggested that two of these could be ‘connected up’, and they agreed that to look into it further.
5. Smarten Up Hungerford is continuing successfully with 25 volunteers. Well done to them, and John for leading this initiative. John Willmott has also met with the CEO and Head of Transport at West Berkshire. Details of this meeting are in the H&T minutes
6. The Hungerford in Bloom competition is in progress and more sponsorship is being sought.
7. Railway Station update. Keith Knight and I had a meeting with Network Rail, and GWR last Thursday at the station where we reviewed the feedback from the formal procedure carried out by Network Rail to find out if any department has any objection to the development of a car park. The result of the report was negative, as far as we are concerned, and we are now looking at ways to resolve these issues with the Network Rail representative.
8. Safety concerns regarding lack of pavements in the area of the Play Park in Bulpit Lane is progressing we now have a clear drawing showing boundaries of ownership/responsibility between West Berkshire and the Town and Manor. With this data in place we can now move forward on this issue. A pedestrian warning sign to be fitted, also was agreed
9. Request for a publicity/information sign under the railway bridge by Crofton Beam Engines was postponed until more information has been submitted.
10. A-Boards in the High Street – awaiting guidance from WBC.
11. Moving the Telephone Box in the High Street – awaiting more information.
12. Speed reduction across the Common to 30mph. Discussions to take place with Town and Manor.

Rob Chicken, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019

## R&A report for full council May 2019

Following my re-election as chair of R&A, I hope the committee will continue to work on progressing our plans through 2019-2020.

Welcome to our new Cllr and now new committee member Daniel Lewis, his knowledge will be a welcomed addition to the team.

R&A is a large committee and we are hoping to focus on producing scheduled planned works to enable better management of our facilities and the allocation of budgets.

Our Annual Health and Safety walkarounds started last year are proving helpful in keeping track on HTC assets and outstanding actions. These reports always bring a huge number of actions, hence my report to full council regarding bi-monthly meetings to give the office more time to action the many tasks. R&A noticed many agenda items are repeated as time between meetings isn't always enough to obtain quotes, meet contractors etc. before the next agenda is out.

HAHA - Marsh Lane Allotment lease is now awaiting final signatures. All plots are occupied at Marsh Lane site. Plant sale on Town Hall steps 9-1pm 8th June. 7th July 10yr celebration fete (all welcome) details to follow.

### Tree maintenance program

following a report from the arboriculturist. Our first task will be to lower the height on the fir trees in the centre of St Saviours, budget agreed and works planned for September. The committee will continue to work through the actions in order of importance. A new notice board will be placed at St Saviours and will contain information on the location of the War Graves.

A reminder - Armed Forces Day 29th June 12pm following the parade refreshments/BBQ will be hosted at the RBL.

### Triangle Field

Claire Winser has handed the baton to Keith Knight (now chair of TFMC). Huge thanks to Claire for her huge efforts and many managed improvements. The perimeter of the field and car park surface remain the two big projects for this site. Quotes are currently being obtained.

### Croft Field

Quotes are now being sought to complete the floor surface in the garden room. I noticed the swifts have nested again on a recent visit. R&A are also obtaining quotes for new fire exit doors. Remedial works on the car park potholes has been actioned.

Cllr Simpson

## Mayors Diary: May 2019



Cllr Helen Simpson

3<sup>rd</sup> May

Open Studios Private Viewing

5 <sup>th</sup> May	Constables Parade
7 <sup>th</sup> May	Full Council Meeting (re-elected as chair)
11 May	Town Band Concert
12 <sup>th</sup> May	Thatcham Mayor Making
13 <sup>th</sup> May	Planning & Environment Meeting
18 <sup>th</sup> May	Final Reading Crown Court Youth Competition
19 <sup>th</sup> May	Newbury Mayor Making
21 <sup>st</sup> May	Recreation & Amenities Meeting (re- elected as chair)
22 <sup>nd</sup> May	REME – Meeting for Armed Forces Day
29 <sup>th</sup> May	Buckingham Palace Garden Party
31 <sup>st</sup> May	Meeting with contractor – croft field centre

Hungerford Town Council  
Tourism & Economy C'tee  
June 2019 report

1] Welcome Signs

These have been delivered to WBC for installation sometime in June.

50% of the total cost to be met by North Wessex Downs

2] Trade Showcase

Working with John O'Gaunt Academy and will be in conjunction with their evening Careers evening – on Tuesday 22 October TBC.

3] VisitHungerford

Working with newly created sub C'tee of the Chamber of Commerce to provide Visitor Information Point.

Trial on steps 17 May gave useful guide for the next Pop-up on Wednesday 5 June under Gazebo provided by Rotary. Volunteers required?

4] WBC Industrial strategy

Need to work under H2036 umbrella to construct material to submit.

ClIr Martin Crane

**Hungerford Town Council**

**Public Report**

**Report to:**

Full Council committee meeting 3rd June 2019

**Agenda Item No 7:**

Report from Hungerford 2036

**Background**

The H2036 Project Team is currently seeking consultation input from local organisations and individuals on the plan draft Aims and Objectives. During May the Hungerford Surgery practice manager participated in the H2036 meeting and explained their current status and plans. He has also agreed to be an ongoing participant in the project.

Further consultation and discussion opportunities are in plan for the coming 2 months including with the faith communities and youth groups.

As a result of the further work ratified at the last HTC meeting in May, PlanET have now carried out the planned exercise to take the H2036 Aims and Objectives, separate out Planning related topics from the Town's aspiration ones and draft some early ideas on possible planning policies.

The H2036 Project Team has agreed to use their output as a framework and "straw man" for their work on policies for the Neighbourhood Plan. The team will work through them one theme at a time.

The Project Team reviewed the document presented by West Berkshire Green Exchange to the new WBC Council. Although the initial H2036 survey did not highlight environmental issues as a major local public concern possibly due to the respondents age profile. Over the coming months the Team will be seeking views on this topic particularly given the protected natural environment of the town.

The Project Team would be interested to hear the Town Councillors views on the importance of the environmental issues within local planning.

To date £1427 of the £5546 grant received by HTC has been spent so £4118 remains available from which £420 already agreed for PlanET.

**Signed:** John Downe, Joint Chair H2036  
3/6/2019

**Hungerford Town Council**

**Public/ Private Report PUBLIC**

**Report to:** FULL COUNCIL MEETING JUNE 2019

**Agenda Item No: 11**

**Background**

I have witnessed the pressure upon staff to ensure reports, (which may contain quotes or outside correspondence) are prepared in time for their release alongside agendas for committee meetings (3 clear working days)

It was noted that due to the short timescales from each committee meeting, staff can sometimes face very tight turnaround deadlines (waiting for contractor quotes). This can sometimes mean reports are not always published in time for councillors to read, print, and absorb in sufficient detail. We are a busy council with many actions.

It is important to allow time for proper consideration and to ensure fully informed decisions on motions are achieved with confidence, and with full understanding of facts.

Staff should be allowed the time needed to fully explore actions from committee meetings and write up reports.

**Objective**

To ensure councillors have confidence in their knowledge and understanding. I don't believe current timescales are long enough for working councillors, (who may not have seen the reports prior to a meeting) to vote fully informed. This can lead to delayed agenda items and often repeated agenda items due to further consideration needed by councillors or to allow time to obtain quotes or feedback by staff on information gained.

This could lead to motions being passed with a poor understanding of information with some councillors abstaining which wouldn't have been necessary with more time.

Motions that are agreed are then unable to be changed for 6 months following decision. We need to get these decisions right. TOIL hours could be considerably reduced, and office staff will have time to fully prepare for committee meetings, sufficient time would then be available to produce detailed reports/quotes etc...

This proposal would see HTC following the lines of larger town councils, (Newbury/Thatcham) both of whom are serving more residents with a much larger precept. This proposal would mean less commitment to councillors for meetings and may encourage more people to consider standing as a councillor. (I know many residents who would like to stand but can't commit to the number of meetings required).

## **Options**

- 1) The proposal would be to follow other larger councils (mentioned above) by reducing the number of full council, highways & transport, recreation & amenities, committee meetings to every 8 weeks (alternating as we currently do) with the option of extra meetings should an urgent action require it.
- 2) To apply the above motion to full council only
- 3) To continue as we currently are

## **Financial and Legal implications**

The change being proposed will save money, staff will build less toil hours and will be under less pressured deadlines; this ensures staff are working smarter, providing more job satisfaction and reducing stress. Councillors will attend less meetings. Venue costs reduced due to less meetings.

## **Reference to Council Strategy, where relevant**

To ensure HTC are providing the residents with considered responses (without pressured deadlines) to ensure the financial implications are fully considered and to reduce overall costs to HTC.

## **Consultation:**

I suggest we trial the proposal for 6 months

## **Other information**

If we do nothing the pressure will continue on both staff and councillors. toil hours will continue to build.

Councillors would be more likely to own actions and fully research agenda items, becoming fully informed, hopefully resulting in more confidence and efficiency.

Confidence that the best options are being supported for the town.

Council debate will be considered and balanced with all councillors becoming better informed.

## **Recommendation(s)**

To trial as suggested

**Signed:** HELEN SIMPSON