

HERE AND NOW in HUNGERFORD

No. 32 in a series of regular briefings from the Council

JANUARY 2016

SQUEEZING THE PIPS

The further cuts of £6m to the already cut £11m from the Government grant to WBC, means only one thing. We can expect more misery as services and support from that quarter will be reduced or withdrawn.

Your Council has already picked up the bill for the public toilets (£17kpa), supplemented funding for the H1 bus route (£3Kpa) and Youth Centre (£3.5k pa), we are now faced with the prospect of meeting all of the costs for the CCTV camera coverage, currently £26K pa. and have no doubt that we shall have to consider other running costs that will be otherwise shelved by WBC. Furthermore, the administration of these services has resulted in a much higher workload in the Office and additional staffing is required.

HTC BUDGET

Inevitably this will mean that our Budget request (aka Precept) to WBC will reflect an appropriate increase even after using some of our reserves. Full details of this request will be explained at the Annual Public Meeting in March. Every householder in West Berks, might be facing an increase of 3.9% in the WBC Council Tax as we are told that all available savings have already been made. However if we avoid the question of why Berkshire requires 6 Authorities to administer a County with fewer than 1m population, we might ask what measures they have taken to amalgamate some of the administrative functions, or posts, with the likes of Wokingham and Windsor Councils to reduce costs further?

UP FOR A CHALLENGE ?

If you think that you could contribute to your Council's task of meeting this challenge, then why not apply for one of the current two vacancies available on it?

LOCALISM AND DEMOCRACY

If these two principles were taken seriously, why have the Hungerford Town Plan, formally adopted by WBC, and our proposals for new housing been ignored completely by WBC. Hopefully the Planning Inspector will be reminded of them when considering the HTC submission –now available to view on the HTC website- www.hungerford-tc.gov.uk

2016 FREEDOM AWARDS

Nominations are now requested and indeed encouraged for this year's awards to be received by 1st March. Forms are available from the HTC Office or online.

This is your chance to show your appreciation for the contribution to our Community by others – please use it.

BRIDGE STREET PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

Confirmation has been received that this crossing will be put in place by March/April- just like the promise made last year!

But just as the footbridge across the canal was installed in the year of the Diamond Jubilee, we may find that the "Royal" influence might be sufficient again to see another long term plan come to fruition in 2016.

HER MAJESTY'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

Suggestions for the appropriate manner that Hungerford should adopt to celebrate this historic milestone, are sought from as many individuals and organisations as possible. A special Team will be required to steer this most pleasant task, so be ready to volunteer to assist and promote. Please give details of either or both to the Town Clerk- Mrs Claire Barnes asap: townclerk@hungerford-tc.gov.uk

And despite the perceived problems ahead. Let's make it a...

HAPPY HUNGERFORD NEW YEAR!



- Cllr Martin Crane, OBE, Town Mayor of Hungerford