

Hungerford



Hungerford Town Council - representing your town

Opening the conversation...

“A warm welcome to all Hungerford residents from Hungerford Town Council. I hope you enjoy reading our newest annual report publication, designed to recap and reflect on the past year, but more importantly, to share some of Hungerford Town Council's exciting new projects and discussions. We're really looking forward to reconnecting, representing, and celebrating our very special community. Please connect with us so we can 'open the conversation...' ”

*Cllr Helen Simpson,
Hungerford Town Mayor*



INTRODUCTION...

I find looking back over the past year exciting, it's nice to remember all the events and occasions I've attended as town Mayor. I'm always humbled by the enormous volunteer contributions in Hungerford, there are too many to mention in person, but Hungerford Town Council would like to thank all those who make Hungerford a fantastic place to live and work. I was thrilled to work with Karen Salmon at Hungerford's Chamber of Commerce to bring our first Friendship Bench to Hungerford Wharf, building on the importance of mental health and wellbeing in the town.

I'm really looking forward to joining many of you again when Christmas parties, celebrations and events begin. A date for the diary is this years Christmas Lights Switch-on taking place on Sunday 26th November.

Hungerford are to commemorate, celebrate and educate 80 years since D Day with a 3-day immersive event held on Friday 28th /Sat 29th /Sun 30th June 2024 to coincide with Armed Forces Day on the Sat 29th June. Please look out for updates in the new year.



Photos: Lee Sainsbury

UPDATE ON PROJECTS

Hungerford Skate Park Project

Back in January 2022, a survey was produced to gain feedback from users of the

Hungerford Skate Park telling us what they'd like to see with a new improved facility. After months of meetings, consultations and reviewing plans with our appointed contractor, Maverick Industries Ltd, the work is now complete. This is such an exciting community space for the town. We have a modern, all wheeled facility for users of all ages and abilities. Time to dust off those bikes, skateboards, and scooters.



Croft Field Activity Centre

In 2015, we took on a 99-year lease of the centre and field from West Berkshire Council when it was under threat from being demolished and the land sold. Our aim was to protect the facility for use by the community, but it was certainly in need of a refurb. After many months of building work, we're so pleased to now have a refurbished community space.

The centre consists of two redecorated halls, brand new showers and toilets, storage and cooking facilities. It is also now fully accessible for wheelchair use with ramps and a wider lighter corridor and foyer. There is a serving hatch for outside events which can be

held on the field or under the gazebo. The field has gated access to the canal and electric hook up.



If you're looking for somewhere to hold a family party, special event, fetes, bootcamps, overnight camping, regular classes or work events, the whole facility can be hired or just parts of the building. All info can be found on our website <https://www.hungerford-tc.gov.uk> or please feel free to contact the Hungerford Town Council office for further details.

Community Engagement

Firstly, Dick Lovett BMW in Hungerford has supported Hungerford Town Council by purchasing another SID (speed indicator device) for use within Hungerford. Manager Chris Taylor said he had really noticed the speed reduction outside the dealership since introducing the device. Chris also agreed to fund some new goal posts for our recreation ground in Bulpit Lane. Chris, thank you for supporting Hungerford Town Council and the community with your generous gift to the town.



Hungerford Town Council would like to thank Howdens (Hungerford branch) for kindly

donating a new kitchen for our newly refurbished Croft Field building. Liam Dixon and Manager Ben Price really went the extra mile for the community and we are thrilled with our new kitchen. Thank you for your generous donation.

Neighbourhood Plan H2036

The Neighbourhood Plan is making progress. We have a draft text of the Plan and the detailed evaluations of the housing allocations completed.

The Plan covers the whole parish for the period 2024 to 2039 and will be used to plan for Hungerford's future and determine planning applications alongside the West Berkshire Local Plan.

The Plan Vision

Hungerford sits at the heart of the North Wessex Downs AONB and is treasured for being an historic market town set within beautiful and accessible countryside and waterways.

The residents of Hungerford seek to work together to embrace constructive change that ensures a vibrant, robust and sustainable economy that will enhance their prosperity and provide an affordable and nurturing environment for current and future generations.

This should be achieved whilst conserving Hungerford's natural and manmade heritage and enhancing its strong sense of being a caring community and a fulfilling place to live.

There are chapters in the Plan under the following headings:

- Housing
- Employment and economy
- Getting about
- Leisure, Wellbeing, Public Safety and Learning
- Our heritage
- Climate change and biodiversity

In each of these there are aims, objectives and proposals.

Housing Site Allocation

The Neighbourhood Plan has to allocate sites to deliver a minimum of 55 dwellings to comply with the West Berkshire Emerging Local Plan. If it doesn't, then the Emerging Local Plan will do this and the community will have less say over which sites are chosen.

After careful and detailed evaluation of many sites around the town several sites have been identified that represent sustainable and deliverable options.

An informal consultation to obtain residents views and comments will take place in The Corn Exchange building on:

- Wednesday November 1st upstairs in the Town Hall 2pm to 4pm and 7pm to 9pm
- Saturday November 4th in the Magistrates Room 10am to Midday

This will be your chance to comment on the alternative housing sites and we look forward to seeing you there.

Way Forward

The main next stages for the Plan are:

- Complete the Draft Plan
- Send this to West Berkshire Council for comments
- Formal six week consultation, early 2024
- Public examination, mid 2024
- Public referendum on the Plan, autumn 2024

UPDATE ON EVENTS

King Charles III Coronation

Coinciding with many events across the country, Hungerford joined in celebrations for the Coronation of King Charles III with Hungerford Town Council organising music and entertainment on the Croft Green.

Residents were encouraged to bring picnics and grab a seat and after a warm welcome from Hungerford's Mayor, Cllr Simpson, the crowd enjoyed music from the Hungerford



Town Band, as well as singing from Abbie Cleary, James Johnson, Kat Jayne and Hungerford Theatre Group plus a special guest appearance. This was followed by accordion playing, as well as a local DJ which saw the crowd singing and dancing along. Food and drinks were also available throughout from pop up shops on the green. A special thanks to Hungerford Club who hosted the committee for several months whilst we planned the event.

Grants

Hungerford Town Council operates an annual grants scheme whereby grants are awarded to local organisations offering services to Hungerford residents. Grants are usually awarded in May / June with an awards ceremony taking place in September. Although we can consider late grants, please note that there is no guarantee funds will be available later in the year. Hungerford Town Council administers its grants scheme via The Good Exchange website and encourages all applications to be made directly on The Good Exchange website in-order to be considered for matched funding.

Details of the grants awarded this year and information on the organisations can be found on the Hungerford Town Council website Grants - Hungerford Town Council (hungerford-tc.gov.uk)

Hungerford in Bloom

The month of May sees Hungerford bursting into colour with the launch of our annual event, Hungerford in Bloom. Residents,



community groups and businesses are all welcome to enter the annual competition – there's always the chance to put gardening hobbies to the test. We're open to entries from private residential properties, volunteer and school gardens and commercial premises.

For full details of Hungerford in Bloom including entry forms, clarification of categories, judging criteria and prizes, please call HTC on 01488 686195, email admin@hungerford-tc.gov.uk, download an application form from the news page of the Hungerford Town Council website (www.hungerford-tc.gov.uk) or collect a copy from the HTC office.

Awards

In September this year Hungerford Town Council held a joint civic ceremony to present the grant recipients and winners of the Hungerford in Bloom competition with their certificates and prizes.



The first set of awards were held to formerly recognise the deserving local charities and groups of this year's grants. The annual grants awards is still a firm favourite on the

Mayor's calendar. The number of deserving organisations and charities offering advice, encouragement and support to our community is so very humbling especially during recent economic times.

The latter part of the civic ceremony was then dedicated to congratulating the winners of Hungerford in Bloom 2023 who had beaten off stiff competition with their enviable gardens, outdoor spaces, and courtyard gardens from the residential and commercial categories. Nothing beats a British summer and with a mix of rain and sunshine over the past few months the winners showed true resilience and perseverance with all their gardening achievements.

New Councillor news

We're delighted to report that we have gained four new councillors,

Welcome to Stella Coulthurst

"Stella became a resident of Hungerford in 2022 and she has very much enjoyed discovering the town, its adjacent countryside, and its many facilities. With a great hope that she is rooted here for a long time, she was delighted to have really been made a part of the town through Hungerford Town Council – and looks forward to making a contribution over time that repays the gesture and helps to make a sustainable and ever more thriving Hungerford. With a long-ish career, mainly as an investment banker but enjoying a number of roles and sectors (including older care, hospitality, Citizens Advice and Kennet Radio – 106.7 FM), her aim is to bring some useful know-how and experience. Stella enjoys rugby (union – she shouts for the Newbury Blues, oops!), soccer, horse riding (dressage), opera, good wine and community life. When she's not in town, you'll likely bump into her in the footpaths, bridleways and lanes around Hungerford walking her (giant) yellow Labrador Retriever."



Welcome to Mark Cusack

"After growing up with fond memories of Hungerford, personal reasons saw me return to the area several years ago. I am humbled by the inspirational residents, business owners, charities and community groups who make Hungerford what it is today. A small town with a huge heart. A community which pulls together in good times and in darker times as the last few years have demonstrated. Hungerford is rightly proud of its traditions and history. My grandparents and parents always instilled in me a strong sense of responsibility to stand up for others who feel they won't be listened to. Having said that, as a councillor my personal priorities are young people and especially those who are not engaged with current groups."



Welcome to Helen Armstrong

"Having moved to Hungerford in 1999 for a couple of years, I realised I can either not count, or just love Hungerford and it's big-hearted little community. Living here alongside my husband, whilst enjoying the complexities of my daughters up bringing.

Working for a huge but not well-known consulting company, who invests in both their people and their clients, future and present. I have gained a vast number of skills and experiences which will benefit Hungerford through my councillor role."



Welcome to James Cole

"I have lived in or been based in this area since the age of 6 months old and my father was on the old Hungerford Rural District Council for many years which does have a little to do with how I came to be on West Berkshire Council. I have 8 years of experience on West Berkshire Council, the last four for Hungerford and



Kintbury, and I hope that that some of that will prove of benefit to the Town Council. By business background, I was a reinsurance broker travelling the Middle East and North Africa who got involved in IT, and I am still in that combination, helping a small Iraqi insurer put in a new computer system, and with a catastrophe modelling business."

Meet our councillors

All councillors live in the area and are passionate about their commitments to the town and role they can play in serving on the council.

Cllr Helen Simpson

As the current Hungerford Mayor, serving my 6th term, I feel privileged to serve Hungerford's wonderful community. As ex officio on all committees, I try to attend as many meetings as possible, gaining a full insight and becoming fully informed on all tasks.



As well as being chair of the council, I also chair the Recreations and Amenities (R&A) committee. R&A look after the town's parks, cemetery, war memorials, community gardens and open spaces.

Hungerford Town Council has been incredibly busy with two major projects. The first is the complete renovation of the Croft Field Activity Centre. The centre is just about complete, we've made the building fully accessible, with new disabled toilets and showers. Seeing this project through to conclusion has been so rewarding, it was one of the first projects I became involved in on joining Hungerford Town Council. I'm thrilled we can now offer the community a vibrant space to hire and enjoy.

The second project is the All- Wheeled Park which has replaced the old skate park facility. Former Mayor Elizabeth Cardwell championed the original facility, sadly, Elizabeth passed away earlier this year. As a friend of mine, it

felt entirely fitting Hungerford Town Council were to rebuild a facility originally championed by Elizabeth.

We really enjoyed talking to the youth within our community, engaging them in our plans and receiving a very knowledgeable wish list of equipment. I really hope the younger members (and not so young) residents enjoy our new state of the art facility.

There have been lots of events to support over the last year. I would like to thank all those who attended the Kings Coronation celebration held at The Croft. Hungerford Town Council has received so many compliments for organising the town's celebrations. I would like to pass my thanks to the committee and all those who helped Hungerford mark this historic event.

I remain extremely proud of team Hungerford Town Council. Councillors are volunteers who give their time and dedication to so many projects within the community. We said a sad farewell to our office administrator Sarah Chatters, Sarah is now busier than ever enjoying her retirement. We also said goodbye to our Deputy Clerk Lydia Cutland, who has left us to spend more quality time with her family. Admin assistant, Molly Monro, who after a short but sweet time in the HTC office is now off on a new adventure with her family to New Zealand. We are excited to be welcoming two new members of staff in November.

Cllr Claire Winner

Another full-on year with Hungerford Town Council; the new Skate Park and Croft Field Activity Centre building renovations having been completed. These are two great assets for Hungerford residents, and I hope they are used to their full potential. There are many aspirations in regard to improving other areas in the town which will be scheduled in as funds allow. My hope is to have made a difference to the town



in my years serving as a councillor, chair of Finance & General-Purpose Committee and Deputy Mayor.

Cllr Alistair Fyfe

"I have been chair of Hungerford Town Council's Planning Committee for the past 3 years. The committee meets every month to scrutinise planning applications for the Parish and then offer a town council opinion to West Berkshire Council on its merits. We have lively debates and reach a consensus and mostly, West Berkshire Council and our opinions align. I continue, with other councillors to work on improvements to the footways across the town and sit on all the town council's committees."

Cllr Mark Greenwell

"As a resident in Hungerford for over 20 years, I took early retirement in 2020, though in the past year I have taken a role working for Bristol University's IT department. I am a member of Sporting Bears Motor Club; a national fund-raising club, raising money for children's charities as well as keeping busy volunteering as a mentor in the ENACTUS UK organisation, supporting UK students in delivering community impact projects. I am a member of the Highways & Transport and Environment & Planning committees".



Cllr Richard Hudson

"It has been a few years now and it seems just part of my life. Most Monday evenings popping along for a meeting, either the Full Council, Planning or Transport. My background is a professional transport planner, so I have mainly aimed to assist with planning and transport related matters. The council is a friendly team; we have a great set up with an office and a Clerk to help. I was chair of the Highways and Transport Committee for several years, but I tend to take more of a



back seat these days. This year I have been organising the Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs), which help to slow traffic. I have also been working on the Neighbourhood Plan and recently became chairman which takes up quite a bit of time. Planning and housing are major issues for the town so it's important that we try and protect it and the Area of Outstanding Beauty around us.

I'd recommend being a councillor if you are interested in your community and you really can make a difference. Key achievements that I've been heavily involved in include the pedestrian bridge over the canal, the SIDs and Neighbourhood Plan. Don't be scared off by the process and formality as you soon get used to it."

Cllr Keith Carlson

"I moved to Hungerford with my wife in September 2021 and became a councillor in February 2022. During this time, I have found the town to be extremely welcoming and acting as a councillor is an opportunity to help shape the future to ensure that the town is able to thrive while preserving the best of what makes Hungerford a special place to live."



Cllr Jerry Keates

"I am passionate about our wonderful town and promoting the amazing community spirit we enjoy.

Following on from both the Jubilee and Coronation celebrations we are looking forward to organising an immersive 1940's weekend 28th - 30th June 2024. This is to remember and celebrate the significant part Hungerford played in the build-up to D Day 1944. I am the lead event organiser for the towns D Day 80 weekend and look forward to seeing everyone dressed for the part."



Cllr Derek Alford

"I am very keen for young people to have a strong voice in their local community. My working with a Youth Council in Hungerford is a start, there is a long way to go. By giving young people influence and control over their future activities, interests and a voice on the town council is an important part of this. This will help young people with their Hungerford identity and the sense of belonging in the local community.

As a Hungerford Town Councillor, I have other responsibilities and will continue to carry them out for the people of Hungerford."



Cllr Nick Schlanker

"The members of the Highways and Transport committee, which I chair, have had a busy year. The accident just before Christmas caused and continues to cause disruption to the town and has drawn attention to the risk of cars speeding in our community. Many residents have asked about the repair to the shop and the removal of the lights. Frustratingly it has taken longer than expected to get repairs underway, and we continue to monitor the state of the building and any risk it might be to people walking past. We have met with West Berkshire Council (WBC) several times to look at the challenges of having a major 'A' road running through the centre of the town. We are at the early stages of discussing the introduction of 20mph zones in the residential parts of the town and plan to consult widely in the new year to gauge the towns views of having lower speeds areas in parts of Hungerford.

We have now got three Speed Indicator Devices (SID) that help us monitor the traffic flowing through the town which provides us with detailed data about speeding. If budgets allow, we'd like to have further SIDs in the



town as we have found them useful in slowing drivers and improving road safely. This winter we shall look redeploy one of the SIDs to monitor traffic on Park and Church Street where residents have raised concerns about speeding to the council.

Outside the town, councillors have walked the many the footpaths and byways that surround us to provide feedback to the WBC so that they are able to better manage the paths and keep them clear of obstructions and overgrowth. We have identified issues such as broken styles, blocked rights of way access and missing signs which we'll work with WBC to get resolved in the coming months.

There have been challenges with the collection of dog waste across the town. We have worked with WBC to discuss the contract and how collection could be improved so we don't have a repeat of the overflowing bins next summer."

Cllr Keith Knight

"I am chair of Hungerford Hub & Community Trust and Chain Mail, which keeps me very busy. I have also been the editor of Chain Mail since 2022. I have been a resident and part of the council for many years now and enjoyed every moment."



Cllr Stella Coulthurst

"As a brand-new councillor, I have a lot to learn about how the processes of local government work and the levers we must contribute to Hungerford as a place to live and work, relax and enjoy. My first aim will be to help deliver the Council's objectives – giving a voice to residents, providing a liaison between the town and other authorities, and working hard to enhance our thriving town. It's a great time to get involved, with the 2036 Neighbourhood Plan taking real shape alongside the everyday business of managing public areas, planning applications and our amenities."



Cllr Mark Cusack

"My role as a councillor is to work as part of a team to listen and act on behalf of everyone in Hungerford. Supporting new and established charities, community groups, clubs, and businesses. Road safety, safer streets & reducing the fear of crime are essential."



Cllr Helen Armstrong

"I am hoping that by serving on Hungerford Town Council I will be able to give back to Hungerford and the Hungerford community which has served as my home of choice for 20+ years. I would like to be part of making Hungerford a safer environment for businesses, and residents alike working with the Highways & Transport committee. Help preserve the wonderful historic nature of our town through the Environment & Planning committee. Finally, keeping the Christmas magic alive that Hungerford achieves so well."



Cllr James Cole

"My interests are many and include 'heritage', so I hope to help with the reassessment of Hungerford's Conservation Area. My experience includes some 'planning', in my time at West Berkshire Council which I hope will be of use in Hungerford's 'Vision' project. I really look forward to helping Hungerford in going from strength to strength."



Councillor departures

We said farewell to John Downe, Ellie Yakar-Wells and Daniel Lewis. We would like to thank them all for their hard work and contributions to the town.

Elections

Currently there is a vacancy for a new councillor. If you would like to know more about the position, please get in touch with the Town Clerk at admin@hungerford-tc.gov.uk

Or see our website for details

<https://www.hungerford-tc.gov.uk/>

District Councillors

We continue to work closely with our District Councillors. If you have any issues you are struggling to resolve with West Berks Council, you may wish to contact them.

Cllr Dennis Benneyworth

Email:

dennis.benneyworth@westberks.gov.uk

Cllr Denise Gaines

Email: denise.gaines1@westberks.gov.uk

Cllr Tony Vickers

Email: tony.vickers1@wesberks.gov.uk

Recipients of the Freedom of the Town 2023

Each year Hungerford Town Council invites Hungerford residents to nominate someone from within their community, who's demonstrated exceptionally loyal service to benefit the town. People who've made a significant, and often long-standing contribution to support the well-being of our community. The awards ceremony took place on Wednesday 27th September in The Croft Hall to present our three incredibly worthy recipients with their Freedom of the Town Award. High Sheriff, Simon Miur presented the medals and read out the citations below.

Charlie Barr

A huge congratulations to Charlie Barr. This was a no brainer for the panel. Charlie has been nominated for many reasons but recognised for her enthusiastic work with Hungerford Youth and Community Centre for over 12 years, promoting and taking it from strength to strength. She chairs the board of trustees and is a huge part of John O Gaunt's Youth Club. Charlie's role in the community of Hungerford is second to none, she volunteers at all kinds of events and opportunities. To name but a few; she has been previously involved with Hungerford Rugby Club, she runs Ladybugs a Mum and Toddler Group and for several years has run the Brownie's and Guide's groups in Hungerford. There is no

doubt that Charlie deserves this award for her exceptional dedication and input to the town. Congratulations Charlie

Stewart L Hofgartner

Stewart Hofgartner, a huge supporter of the town for 45 years, really is so deserving of this award! To start on the impressive list of attributes, Stewart is the founding member of Hungerford Chamber of Commerce and has contributed to countless charitable events over the years. He has given many inspiring talks to organizations, donated raffle prizes and has been the most outstanding auctioneer at charitable events. Stewart (along with Keith Haddrell) was the driving force that created The Victorian Extravaganza, Stewart continued to run the event for 15 years and the Extravaganza continues to succeed and is now in its 30th year! Other commendable contributions include his position as constable for Town and Manor between 1993 and 1995 and 25 years as a trustee. His support goes above and beyond for Hungerford Town Council with his generous contributions to brightening up the town with the Christmas Lights and Flower Baskets.

It all began with trading in the Hungerford Arcade and then in his own shop 'Below



Photos: Stuart March Photography

Stairs' which celebrates 50 years of trading in 2024! Hungerford is known for its antiques trade and the town has benefitted from presence of 'Below Stairs' which attracts many visitors from far and wide. Finally let's not forget to mention Stewart is an ambassador for Hungerford as one of the most popular dealers on Dickinson's Real Deal on ITV1.

Stewart you are a real asset to the town and Hungerford is lucky to have you.

Tony Drewer-Trump

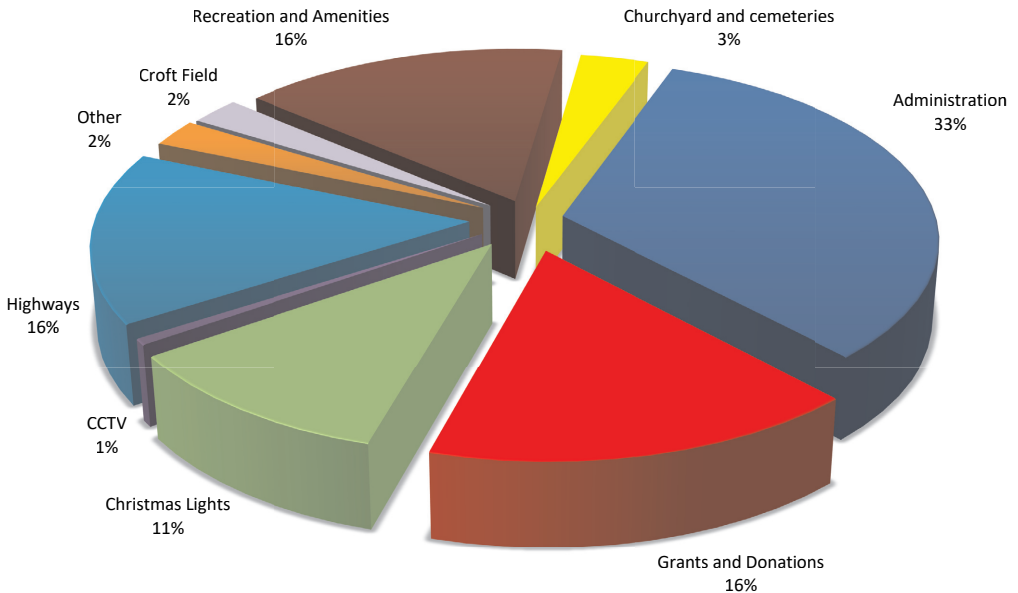
Congratulations to Tony Drewer-Trump. Tony has given up generous amounts of his free time over a significant number of years setting up and running events that are a huge benefit to the community. Some of his noticeable achievements include his involvement in Hungerford Environmental

Action Team (HEAT), his key role in Hungerford 2036 Neighbourhood Plan and being a trustee of the Croft Hall. For several years Tony has chaired HAA (Hungerford Allotment Holders Association) and has been hugely involved with the establishment and maintenance of the Marsh Lane allotments. He has also been the driving force behind Arts of Hungerford a CIC run by volunteers which puts on regular arts events for the community including an annual free arts festival for children. This year's event was a big success and the talk of the town for a while. The art festival's key goal is introducing children to the Arts and Tony has worked closely with the primary school to arrange music events.

Tony is undeniably an asset to the town and is appreciated for all the time an effort he has contributed over the years. Congratulations Tony.

Cost to Taxpayers

Breakdown of our Expenditure



Your feedback

If you think there is something you would like to see done or if you want to help in anyway, we welcome your feedback. Please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Contact Hungerford Town Council via email admin@hungerford-tc.gov.uk or by phone 01488 686195.

You can follow us on Facebook or twitter.

www.hungerford-tc.gov.uk

Finding out more about HTC's activities

HTC's website at www.hungerford-tc.gov.uk is regularly updated and has a wide range of information on all HTC's activities, including the agendas and minutes of meetings and a list of all the councillors and officers with their contact details. Lookout for our regular newsletter published by Penny Post Hungerford in the first week of each month which includes a summary of Hungerford Town Council's main activities. Subscription is free.

The Fortnightly Adviser (*a free fortnightly printed publication*) regularly features our Hungerford Matters article about our work.