

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the **Full Council Meeting** held on Monday 6th October 2025 at 7.00pm in the Library, Hungerford.

Present: Cllrs, Simpson, Alford, Reeves, Cole, Fyfe, Mulholland, Hudson, Winsor & Hall

Also present: Sergeant Jo Willoughby & PC Luke Smith, Representatives from Hungerford Nursery School, District Cllr Denise Gaines (DG, Mr K Mayes, recipient of the Mayor's Medal & a member of the public.

In attendance: Deputy Town Clerk, (DTC)

The minutes of the meeting are recorded in order they were discussed at committee meeting.

Cllr Simpson welcomed representatives from Hungerford Police Station, Hungerford Nursery School and Mr K Mayes, recipient of the Mayor's Medal.

Cllr Simpson welcomed Sergeant Jo Willoughby (JW) to Hungerford in her new role and asked for any updates from PC Luke Smith (LS) regarding the shop lifting app 'DISC' (a crime sharing system designed to help businesses and communities reduce crime and anti-social behaviour). LS confirmed Tesco and Morrisons have details of the app. Cllr Simpson invited both JW & LS to attend the Chamber of Commerce meeting with her to ensure all local businesses were aware of the app.

LS confirmed the following updates:

- Two partial home closures have been enforced and will be subject to a three-month review. These measures will restrict access to the property to the tenant and other named individuals. They are intended to protect vulnerable residents from having their homes exploited—commonly known as being “cuckooed”—by third parties for activities such as drug dealing. Aim is to provide support and ensure safeguarding of vulnerable people. Increase multi-agency working is proving beneficial to ensure appropriate support is in place.
- Partnership meetings are being planned to address these and other related concerns. These will involve Thames Valley Police (TVP), HTC, WBC ward members, and housing providers, with the aim of holding these meetings monthly.
- Residents can contact the local police team via HTC, through direct contact via 101 or the website or by attending “Have Your Say” events, which are held periodically in the town.
- Vandalism at Smitham Bridge Playpark is a priority for the police, who have already visited the site and have placed signs at the entrances to the park. Police emphasized that anyone with information should contact the local TVP team. Importantly, consequences for those responsible may not necessarily receive a criminal record as they are keen to use the Youth Justice Referral process to prevent convictions and to ensure that support will be provided to young people with this in mind.
- Rural crime, including hare coursing and poaching, has been a particular issue during the autumn months. The TVP team noted that these illegal activities often serve as reconnaissance for future burglaries targeting farms and rural properties and has led to increased cross border working with other Police departments.

Action: JW to pass on the details of the app to Simon Hobden.

Cllr Alford invited JW & LS to provide an update at the Youth & Community Centre, which was accepted and they left the meeting at 7.15pm.

Cllr Simpson formally opened the meeting at 7.16pm and invited Chloe Summerville (Headteacher) and Marjorie Bannister (Chair of Governors) to present an update on the Nursery School. **See attached report at the end of the minutes.**

Chloe Summerville (CS) introduced the new Chair of Governors, Marjorie Bannister (MB) noting that she brings a wealth of experience from previous roles. CS confirmed that the introduction of the government's 30 hours of funded childcare has affected overall attendance patterns, with fewer children staying for extended periods. This has led to a reduction in self-funded places, resulting in decreased income for the centre. The decision to end the all-year provision, primarily due to staffing challenges and the impact on maintaining high-quality education during term time, has resulted in slightly less children attending but is proving to work well. The increase in links with the Resource Centre, the Library and improved community are proving invaluable.

Cllr Simpson thanked Chloe and Marjorie for their time and wished them well. CS & MB left at 7.27pm.

Cllr Simpson expressed delight at presenting Keith Mayes with the Mayor's Coin and Certificate in recognition of his remarkable fundraising efforts on behalf of CHAIN. Keith explained that the past 3 years have been full of challenges, from three open water swims of the Serpentine (swimming he said is his weakest discipline) to running the London Marathon and taking part in the Ford Ride London – Essex 100 route cycling challenge, claiming they were indeed a real challenge. Keith has raised over £7,000 towards the purchase of a new Handybus, which cost approximately £60,000 and is now in operation.

Keith explained that he is both the CHAIN HandyBus Co-ordinator and a trustee and that more drivers are needed. Cllr Simpson thanked Keith for all his fundraising efforts.

Cllr Simpson was delighted to confirm the good news that Hungerford was awarded Silver in the 'Small Town category of Britain in Bloom and declared it a fabulous achievement. It was noted a wide number of community groups had contributed to this success alongside HTC, including Smarten Up Hungerford, Town & Manor, HABA to name but a few, all of whom helped lay the foundation for this achievement.

Cllr Simpson invited any questions from the public:

A local resident questioned whether planning application **Ref: 25/01687/FUL** (14 Charnham Street, Hungerford, RG17 0ES) would be 'called in'. District Cllr Gaines confirmed that if WBC Planning Officers are 'minded to approve' the application, it would be called in and questioned how Highways could support this application given the road safety concerns. Cllr Cole, Chair of E&P invited the resident to the next E&P meeting for further discussion on this matter.

FC202500141 Note apologies for absence – Cllrs Carlson, Brunning, Day, Keates & District Cllrs Vickers & Benneyworth

FC202500142 Declarations of interest - none

FC202500143 Approval of Minutes of the Full Council meeting of 1st September 2025, and outcome of actions.

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Hudson

Resolution: Minutes of the meeting of 1st September 2025 were agreed as a true record. One abstention.

Outcome of actions: No actions outstanding.

FC202500144 Receive Mayor's Report – **See attached report**

FC202500145 Receive any update on Resource Centre

As outlined in the Mayor's Report, Cllr Simpson shared the excellent news that the Hungerford Resource Centre will remain open, the decision recognising that the unique care needs of its users simply could not be met through alternative care provision.

Dist. Cllr Gaines confirmed better use of the building and the increase in residents attending the sessions was needed. It was considered that a clearer application process was required to help remove the bottleneck in the assessment process, which currently prioritises only those with critical needs. It was noted that the centre use to be very busy with social clubs and groups offering a wide range of services and it was agreed that more needed to be done to ensure it reached full capacity again. Cllr agreed stairlifts would enable the centre to be more flexible and make the 2nd floor more usable and noted that a mix of private and NHS service users would enable the Centre to be more viable. It was also noted that the name 'The Resource Centre' does not describe the services it offers and a competition for a more appropriate name and increased advertising and marketing is needed to ensure community users are aware it is there and what services it can offer. It is currently operating at 65% capacity so there is room for increased number of service users.

Action: Dist. Cllr Gaines to liaise with the Portfolio Holder Patrick Clark.

FC202500146 Receive District Councillor's Reports.

Dist. Cllr Gaines confirmed that the **NDP referendum** is subject to Council endorsement on 16th October when hopefully it will go through. Provisional dates of 23rd October for publication of notice of referendum through to Polling Day on 27th November have been provided.

Chestnut Walk – currently producing a design statement and employing a design team to see what can be achieved. It will offer temporary emergency housing with possible areas for a whole family. There will be a Hub for couples; single mum & baby units as well as individual rooms (12 units). Dist. Cllr Gaines to keep HTC updated.

Tri weekly bins – appears to be working well. Dist. Cllr Gaines has only received 1 email complaint to date and asked Cllrs to inform her of any subsequent formal complaints.

Members Bid – submitted for new defibrillators for those that have reached their end life. This has been approved and waiting next stage in the approval process.

Hungerford Leisure Centre - swimming pool had an issue whereby the heating plate in the boiler broke down for approx 3 weeks and is still not fully functioning (as the pool is registering only 26 degrees). Dist. Cllr Gaines to keep HTC updated.

FC202500147 Health & Safety – Receive any complaints or concerns – no concerns raised.

FC202500148 Propose authorisation of payment run (circulated along with copies of invoices) for Sept

Proposed: Cllr Winser

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

Resolution: Payment run authorised for September of £17,927.89

FC202500149 Propose accounts to date – Refer to circulated Income/Expenditure Report

Proposed: Cllr Winser

Seconded: Cllr Reeves

Resolution: Agree accounts to date with a positive variance of £12, 993

FC202500150 Britain in Bloom

- Receive feedback from our Britain in Bloom entry – Cllrs Keates and Day
- Sponsoring of Smarten Up Hungerford

Feedback on Britain in Bloom - Cllrs Day & Keates were both absent from Full Council meeting. Cllr Simpson had already provided an update on Britain in Bloom at the beginning of the meeting and the wonderful news that Hungerford had been awarded Silver in the Small-Town Category.

Action 1: Cllr Simpson to contact absent and previous Cllrs, who had been actively involved in driving HTC's entry in BIB and to provide an update of this achievement.

Action 2: A working party to be established (to include HTC, Smarten up Hungerford, T&M & other interested parties,) to consider whether HTC should enter Britain in Bloom 2026.

Action 3: DTC to email winning certificate to Cllrs, Simon Hobden and Brian Quinn.

Sponsoring of Smarten Up Hungerford (SUH) – It was confirmed that SUH was initially sponsored by HTC and then went under the support of Chamber of Commerce (CoC), who hold a small pot of money for SUH. However, HTC continues to budget for SUH and the Chair of CoC has confirmed they would be happy for HTC to resume responsibility for SUH once again. Cllrs felt this would help with future planning and budgeting as HTC already purchases the tubs etc this would be especially helpful should it be agreed that HTC enters Britain in Bloom 2026. Cllrs recorded disappointment that HTC is not mentioned on SUH signs despite its sponsorship and agreed further discussions are needed with SUH regarding this; insurance cover and bank accounts and whether SUH could in fact become a charity and apply for grants.

Cllr Simpson mentioned that Mr John Wilmott (founder of SUH) had hosted a soiree for members of SUH and had invited Cllr Simpson to attend. Cllr Simpson thanked him for his warm welcome, refreshments and hospitality both he and his family provided.

Action 1: TC & Cllr Simpson to meet with SUH to discuss options.

Action 2: HTC name to be put on future signs

Action 3: Meeting to be established with SUH, Chamber of Commerce, Cllrs and TC

Propose acceptance of recent modifications to Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan—Cllr Hudson (See report attached)

In summary: at the previous Hungerford Full Council meeting, Cllrs had approved some amendments and are now being asked to approve the following five additional modifications:

FC202500151

Full Council Acceptance motion

Proposed Further Modifications to Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan for Approval.

- PM5 (related text): Para 6.7 refers to the extension of the Primary Shopping Area which needs to be removed from the Plan. Para 6.7 should therefore also be removed, as should Appendix B.

- PM8: They have copied this across incorrectly from the Examiner's Report. Criteria B. d) and B. e) should be deleted yet the WBC report says it should be B. b) and B. e).

- MM5: Para 2.25 – whilst it is correct to capitalise the words, the correct term is 'Scheduled Monuments' rather than 'Scheduled Ancient Monuments'.

- MM21: this modification seems to require the removal of reference to the number of dwellings in the policy. This would certainly not represent a minor modification. Given that the same has not been required of Policy HUNG13, I assume that this is an error.

- MM27: This text is already in criterion f). The wording needs slight amendment to be consistent with that suggested, but it should not be added to the end of criterion d).

Proposed: Cllr Hudson

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

Resolution: Cllr Hudson proposed the further 5 amendments (listed above) are approved.

Action: Dist. Cllr Gaines to present proposal to WBC Council and then it will go to Election if approved.

Cllr Simpson thanked Cllr Hudson for all his good work.

FC202500152 Receive any reports (no more than 3 minutes per report and not to include any proposals).

Cllr Cole - reported he attended WBC Heritage Forum and will update E&P Committee on the Blue Plaque process which he confirmed is paid for by Councils (e.g. Thatcham and Newbury pay for the blue plaques) and not private home owners. The current Chair of the Heritage Forum confirmed the current fee is £350 and Cllr Cole stated that HTC would need to budget for this.

Action: Put Blue Plaque on the next E&P Agenda

Cllr Simpson - confirmed the good news that the Emporium is re-opening by a local couple and a few of the previous antique stall holders on 17th October. Chris & Ken Calloway will mark the opening with drinks and nibbles and will feature a showroom for their Flueline Designs business as well as antiques. Cllrs support welcomed.

Cllr Simpson noted that the Kebab House is re-opening as a Kebab Shop and will be leased by a local company.

Meeting closed to the public at 20.35pm

PART 2 Confidential

The public and press may be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity might be prejudicial to the public interest as per the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960.

FC202500153 Leisure Centre – Receive any feedback from WBC.

Proposed: Cllr Reeves

Seconded: Cllr Armstrong

Resolution: Cllr Reeve to talk to Portfolio Holder Nigel Foot to obtain a resolution. If not, will escalate queries to Jeff Brooks, Leader of the Council.

Meeting ended 8.50pm

Town Council Meeting Reports - October Full Council Meeting

Hungerford Nursery School – Current picture

Summer 2025

- 119 pupils / 111 families
- 13% Early Years Pupil Premium (vulnerable)
- 13% of our 2-year-olds received Free entitlement 2-year-old funding (vulnerable)
- 13% are on our SEND register including 4 EHCP (Education & Health Care Plan)
- 10% are EAL (English as an Additional Language)

Autumn 2025

- 98 pupils / 94 families
- 31% Early Years Pupil Premium (vulnerable)
- 31% of our 2-year-olds receive Free entitlement 2-year-old funding (vulnerable)
- 6 % are on our SEND register including 3 EHCP (Education & Health Care Plan). 17% are currently being monitored before a decision about whether they should be placed on the SEND register is made.
- 9% are EAL (English as an Additional Language)

Successes

- Improvements made to the outside and inside environments.
- New perimeter fencing.
- New logo and optional uniform were introduced.
- Improved communication to parents.
- Staff wellbeing day offer was introduced.
- New Chair of Governors.
- Shoal of Friends ran several successful fundraising events
- Whole staff vision evening.
- Apprentice teacher qualified and has become an ECT with us.

Challenges

- New government funded hours offer introduced.
- Family Hub was taken over by the Local Authority last year.
- All year-round provision.
- Solar panels.
- Very high levels of needs and behaviours from last year's cohort which was very challenging for staff.
- High numbers of Child Protection cases.

This year

- New website.
- Ofsted visit due
- New structure to the nursery classes with staffing slightly altered.
- Increasing opportunities to make links within the community.
- Developing the leadership of teaching staff.
- Improve the IT within the nursery school.
- Climate action plan – statutory for all schools from September.
- Working with an external training provider to enhance our PSED curriculum.
- Finance Officer is retiring.

Cllr Helen Simpson – Mayor Report

Hungerford Resource Centre

We are pleased to share some positive news that has brought significant relief across the community: the Hungerford Resource Centre will remain open. This decision recognises that the unique care needs of its users simply could not be met through alternative care provision.

We hope that West Berkshire Council (WBC) will now consider ways to increase the centre's usage by utilising available space to support other social care needs. One ongoing concern is the bottleneck in the assessment process, which currently prioritises only those with critical needs. This can unfortunately result in some individuals missing out on timely day care support, potentially leading to deteriorating health and more costly home care requirements.

We encourage WBC to explore alternative referral pathways that might help to streamline assessments and improve access. I look forward to visiting the centre again soon, staff and service users alike will no doubt be delighted by this decision. It has been nearly a year since the review began, and the uncertainty has undoubtedly caused stress and anxiety for many. Hungerford Town Council (HTC) wishes the Resource Centre continued success moving forward.

Community Working Party – Station Road Car Park

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all the volunteers who joined us on October 4th to help clear overgrown shrubs in Station Road Car Park. Your time and effort are truly appreciated.

Special thanks to Broadmead Estate for generously providing a trailer and handling the disposal of green waste, and to St Lawrence's Church for kindly offering refreshments on the day. We're also grateful to Cllrs Fyfe and Keates, along with HTC staff, for their organisation and for ensuring the safety and coordination of the event.

It was a challenging task, but a fantastic example of what Hungerford can achieve when the community comes together. We are pleased to report that WBC has agreed to complete the remaining work before the end of the financial year.

Hungerford in Bloom Ceremony

Once again, Hungerford's green-fingered residents did us proud! Despite challenging growing conditions this year, the gardens and allotments around town looked absolutely stunning. Congratulations to all who entered, you continue to inspire us all.

As a fellow gardening enthusiast, I always come away from this event full of new ideas. This year saw the introduction of a new *Heart & Soul* award, created by HTC to recognise outstanding passion and dedication. This award now takes on special meaning, as it will become a lasting tribute to this year's awardee, who sadly passed away on the morning of the ceremony. Their family has kindly offered to sponsor the award going forward, ensuring their legacy continues.

Grant Award Ceremony

HTC is proud to support local community groups, charities, and individuals each year through our grant awards programme. These grants help empower those making a real difference in the lives of Hungerford residents.

We are continually amazed by the dedication of our volunteers, many of whom carry out vital work that helps keep our community thriving. Bringing the award recipients together not only recognises their contributions but also provides a valuable opportunity for networking and collaboration.

Many groups have told us how rewarding the event was, with several continuing their conversations beyond the ceremony and forging new connections. HTC is honoured to support such a vibrant, caring, and committed community. Thank you to everyone who attended and shared in this celebration.

Hungerford Emporium

On Friday 17th October the Emporium will open its doors under new ownership. Chris and Ken Callaway are passionate about keeping the Hungerford Emporium name. They both look forward to bringing some old and new traders to the town. HTC wish them both every success. Please pop along and support them.

Vandalism

HTC has had three separate incidents of vandalism at the Smitham Bridge Playpark. The damage caused, means the park has needed costly repairs, children are unable to play whilst repairs are carried out or broken glass is cleared away. We now have increased patrols at the location. Please report any incidents of vandalism you witness anonymously through crime stoppers or by calling 101.

The Neighbourhood Plan – update by Cllr Hudson

This document represents the Neighbourhood Plan for Hungerford parish for the period 2024 to 2041. The Plan contains a vision for the future of Hungerford and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.

The Plan builds on the extensive work carried out by the community in the development of the Hungerford 2010+ Plan (2005) and Town Plan Refresh from 2013. These included:

- detailed household survey work
- policies and actions for all the main issues

The principal purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the parish. It also provides guidance to anyone wishing to submit a planning application for development within the parish. The process of producing a plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible. The different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Hungerford, its residents, businesses and community groups.

West Berkshire have been updating their Local Plan, and we remain consistent with this Plan which is a requirement of the Neighbourhood Plan.

There has been some good progress this year that has included:

- Consultation over the development options for the town
- A completed draft document of the Plan
- Production of a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment
- An extensive formal consultation, known as the regulation 14 consultation on the latest Neighbourhood Plan. This has included extensive comments from West Berkshire Council
- Updating the plan in view of all the comments from consultees. The changes have been fairly minor and the housing allocations are unchanged.
- Preparation of documents ready for the final consultation stage which is done by West Berkshire Council.

It's been seven years in the making so far!... but we hope after the final consultation to have the Neighbourhood Plan ready for a referendum sometime in 2025.