

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the **Full Council Meeting** held on Monday 1st June 2020 at 7.00pm remotely through Zoom.

Present: Cllrs Simpson, Downe, Knight, Crane, Chicken, Lewis, Winsor, Hawkins, Alford and Hudson.
Cllr Fyfe joined later at 7.43pm.

Also: District Cllrs James Cole, Dennis Benneyworth and Claire Rowles - West Berks Council (WBC).
Representatives from Penny Post and Kennet Radio and three representatives from Hungerford Nursery School.
In attendance: Claire Barnes (Town Clerk), Jeff Ford (RFO), Sarah Hennessey (Deputy Town Clerk) and Sarah Chatters (Admin Assistant).

Police Report – (attached). Cllr Simpson read out the report; there were no questions.

Presentation from Hungerford Nursery School. Suzanne Taylor, Headteacher at Hungerford Nursery School Centre for Children and Families, was present to update HTC on how the Nursery School has been operating during the pandemic. The school is extremely proud to have been open since the 23rd March and throughout the Easter holidays and half terms. A total of 21 children have been in school during this time and these children have all been provided with a hot meal. The school has issued free school meal vouchers from the government site to those who are not in school. Some staff have been working in school every day and those staff who have been working from home have been running a virtual school. All the nursery children have been taking part either by Instagram or by using learning packs at home. The Family Centre has also been operating remotely during the lockdown.

The school is welcoming more children back to school from today and from the 4th June, 48 children will be attending, with 92 children at home in the virtual school. They are hoping to increase the numbers attending school once the government gives permission.

The school has faced a number of challenges including increased costs and loss of income. Supplementary funding for Maintained Nursery Schools has been extended to March 2021 but the campaign to ensure this funding is permanent must continue. Funding for the Family Centre has been cut which means the school will have to generate an income to maintain the services and family support the Centre offers.

Suzanne asked for continued support, by lobbying the local MP, to raise the profile of Maintained Nursery Schools and to preserve the supplementary funding beyond March 2021.

Cllr Simpson extended thanks on behalf of HTC to the Nursery School, adding that HTC should fully support the Nursery's wish for permanent funding. This was echoed by the three District Councillors.

The representatives from the Nursery School left the meeting at 7.18pm.

1. **Note apologies for absence –** Cllr Gaines.
2. **Declarations of interest –** None.
3. **Approval of Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 4th May 2020, and outcome of actions.** *Cllr Downe proposed the minutes as a true record, seconded by Cllr Simpson, four abstentions (Cllrs Alford, Winsor, Hudson and Hawkins), rest in favour.*
4. **Mayor's Report – (attached).** The report had been circulated; there were no questions.
5. **District Councillor's Reports and update on Special Expenses –** Cllr Benneyworth reported that certain children were back at school from today and it is hoped that some non-essential businesses will reopen by the middle of the month. He took part in a Zoom meeting earlier today with Cllrs Hudson

and Knight and members from WBC to discuss ways of making the High Street safer in respect of social distancing when more businesses reopen (see more later under Item 7). He has been investigating the issue of Special Expenses with WBC; these are concerned with the maintenance, replacements, electricity costs and general contractor costs of the lampposts that are in the ownership of HTC. The RFO thanked Cllr Benneyworth for his help resolving this.

Cllr Cole advised of some of the measures that are being considered to ensure safety for staff returning to work at WBC offices. All WBC public meetings are currently taking place by Zoom but there is the assumption that the current situation may last for a while longer, which may mean that future WBC meetings are held with some members on Zoom and some in the council chamber.

Cllr Rowles updated HTC on which committees the three District Councillors are on:

Cllr Benneyworth is on the District and Western Area Planning committees.

Cllr Cole is Chair of the Licensing committee and on the OSMC (Overview Scrutiny and Management committee).

Cllr Rowles is on the Licensing and Governance & Ethics committees.

They all also attend various other bodies.

Cllr Simpson thanked Cllr Benneyworth for his help obtaining funding from WBC for a local business.

Cllr Benneyworth advised there is help out there for businesses and WBC is keen to continue to support local businesses.

Cllr Cole also advised there has been much praise for the WBC Community Hub which was set up in response to the pandemic and continues to operate.

6. **Hungerford 2036 – (attached).** The report had been circulated; there were no questions.

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

R&A (Cllr Simpson) – See attached report

E&P (Cllr Gaines) – See attached report

F&GP (Cllr Winser) – See attached report

H&T (Cllr Chicken) – See attached report

Cllr Hudson gave an update on the Zoom meeting he attended earlier with Cllr Knight, District Cllr Benneyworth and two officers from WBC (see Item 5). Discussions included new signage, possible temporary parking suspensions and a more consistent approach to queuing outside certain shops. There will be further communication with shopkeepers, Town & Manor and Chamber of Commerce with feedback to WBC. This is a work in progress.

Cllr Knight asked if we could consider reopening the public toilets in Church Street to coincide with shops reopening on the 15th June. **ACTION:** Clerk to check government guidance and seek advice from our H&S advisors and the cleaning contractor.

8. **Finance**

a) **Propose authorisation of cheque run payments (circulated along with copies of invoices) for May**
- Cllr Winser proposed the cheque run for May of £52,156.20, seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.

b) **Propose Year to date accounts – refer to circulated Income/Expenditure Report – Cllr Winser**
proposed the year to date accounts, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.

c) **Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2019/20**

I. Cllr Simpson proposed the Annual Internal Audit Report was noted, seconded by Cllr Winser, all in favour.

II. Cllr Simpson proposed approval of the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1), seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.

III. Cllr Simpson proposed approval of the Accounting Statement (Section 2), seconded by Cllr Winser, all in favour.

d) **Ratify the grant donations as proposed at F&GP totalling £12,725 (£13,225 less £500 as request for Foodbank withdrawn) – Cllr Winser proposed the grant donations of £12,725 plus £1,000 for Hungerford & Camburn Education plus £5,000 for Hungerford Library & Community Trust totalling £18,725, seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.**

9. **Tragedy Memorial at St Lawrence's Church – Consider suggestions to relocate or create a new memorial due to the planned internal improvements** – *Cllr Simpson proposed to suggest a framed photographic replacement of the memorial which could be placed elsewhere in the Church, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.*
ACTION: Office to contact the Church with this suggestion and offer to contact as many of the relatives as possible for their opinion.
10. **Consider request by Kennet Radio for HTC's support in extending their FM coverage to Hungerford (taken after Item 3)** – *Cllr Simpson proposed HTC write a letter which she will sign, supporting Kennet Radio in their application to Ofcom to extend their FM radio coverage to Hungerford, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.*
ACTION: Clerk to draft a letter.
Julian Swift-Hook from Kennet Radio left the meeting after this item.
11. **Health & Safety – Impact of Coronavirus** – This has been covered in Item 7 above. There was further discussion regarding reopening of the public toilets and what procedures we need to adhere to when we reopen the buildings we are responsible for. Cllr Downe will circulate a document from a local government information website which gives information on infections in West Berkshire and other details over time.
12. **Any other Reports (3 minutes each) not to include any proposals** – None.

The District Councillors and press left the meeting at 8.28pm.

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.

13. **Staff issues with working from home and future return to office** – *Cllr Simpson proposed purchase of a laptop to assist the Deputy Clerk in working more effectively from home, seconded by Cllr Winsor, all in favour.*
Staff were encouraged to continue to work from home in safety for now and only go in to the office as and when necessary.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

REPORTS

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL JUNE UPDATE FROM THE POLICE

Due to the COVID19 pandemic we are continuing to Police the town and wider area in a slightly different way. Furthermore to support the ongoing recovery of the UK we are expecting more changes to the way we work in the weeks to come.

We were due to return to Newbury Police Station however our stay at the TRI Station Hungerford has been extended. This enables us to maintain social distancing amongst our Police Officers and staff. We are continuing to provide a visible presence in the Town, in our smaller villages and the surrounding rural areas. We are engaging with our public to encourage and educate on the Governments regulations. Again I am pleased to say the majority of people are complying. 13th May saw the Government slightly relax the Lockdown with the new guidance encouraging people to return to work. It also allowed for people to visit public outdoor spaces, take outdoor exercise as much as they like and meet one person from another household.

From 1st June – The Lockdown is looking to be further relaxed with changes on the meeting of family and friends. This could see meetings of up to 6 people in open public spaces and gardens whilst maintaining a two metre social distance.

I am pleased to report that again this month crime in the town remains low. Two shopliftings occurred at the beginning of the month and a vehicle inference was reported on the 29th May after car doors were discovered wide open. Nothing however appears to have been stolen. If anyone has any information regarding this please contact us.

Please keep reporting stuff to us - We sometimes find that news travels fast round a community, especially via various social media channels but if no one tells us, we don't know about it.

You can report online at <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk>, but if it is urgent please continue to call on 101 (non-emergency) and 999 in an emergency.

Mayor's report June 2020

Another month in shielding lockdown, how spoilt have we been with the weather? I was lucky enough to take a week off with my husband, we tested the new operating procedures at the waste/recycling centre in Newbury. We felt it was working really well and was well managed and organised.

Following a call of concern/distress from a small business on the high street, I wish to thank Cllr Dennis Benneyworth for assisting me to support this business directly, we have successfully overcome an issue which meant the business (who were previously unable to claim the SBRR government loan) has now successfully qualified for the government loan, and who are now in receipt of the funds, securing the future of this 20yr established small business in the town. The owner contacted me on Friday afternoon to say thank you, she was completely overjoyed and very relieved... Great result!

I feel it's important to mention that any business requiring advice or assistance should get in touch. If we can't help, we can certainly signpost you to the current person.

Although I have been unable to attend outside meetings there are still many actions that require my attention.

I know the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk remain extremely busy with actions and revised practises. I wish to thank all HTC staff for their support and tenacity during the covid-19 outbreak. I believe Hungerford, has managed this pandemic well and is blessed to have an army of willing volunteers.

There are always challenges to overcome, I hope we've highlighted processes that could be improved upon. I'm sure there will be reviews in due course, hopefully emergency calls for action in communities will be easier, clearer policies and guidance following safe exit and upon reflection of measures from our Covid-19 response.

We are now looking to support residents and businesses to safely transition into a strange new 'normal' as we start to reopen. I hope Hungerford residents will be patient and understanding as we emerge, showing consideration and support to residents who could still feel quite uneasy and anxious because of the changes to lives from this on-going pandemic.

I would also like to clarify HTC's position following a report in last weeks NWN.

In May's R&A committee meeting, committee agreed to form a working party to discuss onward viability of the TFMC (triangle field management committee) and consider any further amendments to HRFC (Hungerford Rugby /football club) hire agreement.

I would like to formally state that HTC has a very good working relationship with both HRFC & TFMC, all past concerns (from over two years ago) have been addressed and the club continues to grow and thrive.

HTC wishes to ensure this town owned asset is managed and maintained, remaining a valuable community space for sport and recreation.

H2036 Report

Hungerford Town Council

Public Report

Report to Full Council meeting 1st June 2020.

Agenda Item No 6: Report from Hungerford 2036

Current Activities

Following the HELAA publication by WBC the H2036 project team asked all site promoters to respond with further information. This was requested by end May. The promoters were asked:-

1. How their site(s) will help achieve the Hungerford 2036 Neighbourhood Plan Objectives and
2. How the site(s) meet the H2036 Site Assessment Criteria
3. If they have an outline master plan for their site(s) including proposed access.

Information has been received back from the promoters for the majority of the sites and their submissions will now be reviewed by the project team.

We have requested (and they have agreed) that WBC conduct HELAA-type assessments of the additional sites submitted after the HELAA publication – now known as HUNNDP_A/B/C. We understand that the WBC portfolio holder and Planning have not yet decided what the charge to HTC for the assessments will be.

We plan to start work with the external consultant on the site assessment work with a sites visit mid-June. Progress and conditions allowing, and following feedback to HTC, in the Autumn we would hope to running some public consultation events around this aspect of the NDP.

WBC Local Plan to 2036 Progress

We understand the WBC approach to local plan housing numbers are yet to be discussed with WBC members and no date is set for when we might see the outcome of that and how it affects Hungerford 2036.

Signed: John Downe, Joint Chair H2036, 30/5/2020

June R&A report for full council

HAHA were pleased to notify HTC that Marsh Lane allotments has 100% occupancy with a current waiting list of 17. HAHA have a project on the good exchange to raise funds for replacement/improvement of the water storage tanks. The committee worked hard, adhering to government guidelines, ensuring the users are kept safe during visits to tend plots.

HRFC/TFMC/HTC

R&A committee agreed to form a working party to discuss the now overdue review of HRFC's rent agreement, plus consideration to the future of the management committee.

Maintenance – HTC's maintenance employee has returned to a fuller work schedule following a period of reduced workload, complying with government advice and social distancing rules. A list of works has been coded and prioritised by the Town Clerk.

We have agreed a yearly contract to deep clean the wet pour surfaces under the playpark equipment, all equipment has been pressure washed and painted whilst playgrounds have been closed to the public.

R&A has agreed to purchase a keyless entry system to be installed at the croft field activity centre. A working party has been requested to manage the project of improvements to the building following successful allocation of S106 funds to fulfil the project. This will be on the discussed in July. The car park has already been resurfaced and has greatly improved the overall appearance of the site.

A working party will form to discuss and plan improvements to both bridge street war memorial and tragedy garden sites. HTC is hopeful these important town sites can be maintained and nurtured by community volunteers.

Cllr Helen Simpson committee chair.

June E&P report

A virtual Meeting of Environment and Planning Committee Monday 11th May.

Planning Applications -

20/00856/FUL - Cakewood House, Bath Road, Hungerford variations plans for the property. HTC proposed Objection as this appears to be a significant change to the plans in size and layout.

20/00782/HOUSE - 28 Hillside Road, Hungerford

Proposed single storey rear extension to replace existing conservatory.

HTC No Objection

20/00863/HOUSE - North Hidden Farm, Newtown, Hungerford Formation of first floor extension above existing C21 single storey extension to form bathroom and part retrospective application to regularise formation of ensuite shower room. HTC No Objection

20/00864/LBC2

North Hidden Farm, Newtown, Hungerford Formation of first floor extension above existing c21 single storey extension to form bathroom and part retrospective application to regularise formation of ensuite shower room.

HTC No Objection
20/00748/HOUSE

7 Canal Walk, Hungerford – Demolish conservatory and build new single storey rear extension, new lowered kerb and one parking space at front.

HTC No Objection, One abstention

20/00989/HOUSE - 19 Cherry Grove, Hungerford Demolition of conservatory and replace with flat roof rear extension. Erect side extension to form utility room.

HTC No Objection

The question of the Western Area Planning committee's next meeting was posed. District Cllr Benneworth advised this was due to be on the 20th May and he would let the Clerk know if there was anything relevant to Hungerford on the agenda (update there was not). These are going to be virtual meetings with a submission of up to 500 words from the Hungerford Town council if we wish to make a representation. District Councillor Cole advised that the Ward Councillors will be entitled to speak on behalf of HTC at these meetings.

To note there are two important planning items on the agenda for the meeting on the 8th June.

Cllr Denise Gaines

28th May 2020

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSE REPORT FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON 1ST JUNE 2020

MONTH 2 INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT: MAY 2020

101 FINANCE:

50% of the Annual Precept has been received to date.

102 ADMINISTRATION:

Net Income over Expenditure £313 above Budget. Annual Insurance of £4781 paid in month 2.

103 GRANTS & DONATIONS:

No Expenditure to date.

104 POOL HOUSE:

£384 below Budget as the Tenants have been granted permission to pay a reduced rent.

105 CONTINGENCY:

No Expenditure to date.

109 HUNGERFORD 2036 PROJECT:

No Expenditure to date.

201 RECREATION & AMENITIES:

Net Income over Expenditure £217 above Budget. Phasing issue.

202 WAR MEMORIAL GROUND:

£245 below Budget.

203 ST SAVIOURS:

Net Income over Expenditure £965 above Budget. Burial Fee Income £813 below Budget.

204 CROFT FIELD:

Net Income over Expenditure £361 below Budget. Income £935 below Budget.

205 LIBRARY MAINTENANCE COSTS:

No Expenditure to date.

301 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS:

No Expenditure to date.

302 HIGHWAYS:

No Income to date. £1,425 above Budget due to a couple of annual costs in the first two months.

303 CCTV:

No Income or Expenditure to date.

304 TOURISM & ECONOMY:

£916 above Budget. £1250 Great West Way annual cost incurred in Month 1.

Annual Net Income over Expenditure £11,663 above Budget.

Claire Winser

Chair of F&GP

29th May 2020

Highways and Transport Committee

Report for full Council

1st June 2020

The Zoom meeting was held on 22/05/2020

Items

Station Road Car Park – Access for the Three Swans. This is now a dispute between residence in the adjacent flats and houses, the Three Swans, and West Berkshire

Additional parking for Atherton Crescent – no news.

Moving the Taxi Rank to the area in front of the Corn Exchange – no news.

Smarten up Hungerford – The installation of the new planters is ongoing. SUS will put forward specific siting options. This will then be considered, with regard to the health and safety of the public.

Re-painting or cleaning up the telephone control boxes will also be undertaken by SUS with the appropriate permissions.

Update on Hungerford in Bloom. – This is still going ahead. Full details are available on the Town Council website - <https://www.hungerford-tc.gov.uk/>

Monitoring of the Layby under the bridge. As part of the justification for moving the taxi rank. A temporary camera was set up. This showed that delivery vehicles were using this area outside the permitted time. Another possible siting for a taxi rank is an area within the station carpark. This was agreed by the GWR Station Manager last summer, but she retired in November and we have not been able to contact her replacement. We will keep trying.

Social distancing in public areas. West Berkshire will work with members of the committee to highlight areas in the town where social distancing is difficult. The manager from Boots the Chemist addressed the meeting to highlight the fact that people queuing for prescriptions are lining up along the High Street. The pavement at that point is not wide enough for them to keep a 2m distance from other members of the public who are passing in front of the shop. This issue will be a top priority.

Speeding traffic. Since the lockdown there has been an increase in the amount of traffic that is speeding in the area. West Berkshire is aware of this problem and they have offered suggestions to help. Members of this committee will work with them to address this issue.

Pigeon working party. Unfortunately, we have not met since the lockdown, but now with the Zoom facility, a meeting has been arranged for the 10th June.

Christmas Lights working party. Again, this group has not met because of the lockdown. A date for a Zoom meeting is being arranged.

Rob Chicken

Chairman – Highways and Transport Committee