

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

The Mayor
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MINUTES of the **Full Council Meeting** held on Monday 4th May 2020 at 7.00pm remotely through Zoom.

Present: Cllrs Simpson, Downe, Knight, Crane, Chicken, Lewis, Fyfe and Gaines. Cllrs Winsor and Hawkins joined later.

Also: Representative from Penny Post, District Cllrs James Cole, Dennis Benneyworth and Claire Rowles - West Berks Council (WBC). Representative from Newbury Weekly News joined later.

In attendance: Claire Barnes (Town Clerk), Jeff Ford (RFO), Sarah Hennessey (Deputy Town Clerk) and Sarah Chatters (Admin Assistant).

Cllr Simpson welcomed everyone to the first Full Council meeting through Zoom. She advised the meeting was being recorded; the recording will only be used for public record.

Police Report – A report had been circulated (**and is attached**). Cllr Simpson read out the report; there were no questions.

1. **Note apologies for absence** – Cllrs Hudson and Alford.
2. **Declarations of interest** – None.
3. **On 4 April 2020, the government brought The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 into force to allow local authorities to conduct meetings remotely.**
Cllr Gaines proposed as permitted under Section 78, not to hold an Annual Full Council meeting this year. Therefore, all Councillors including the Mayor will remain in their current roles until May 2021. Seconded by Cllr Chicken, all in favour.
It was noted that meetings will be held through the Zoom platform until further notice. These will be accessible to the press and public through a link on the agenda posted on the home page of our website. An audio record of meetings may be kept.
4. **Approval of Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 2nd March 2020, and outcome of actions.** (Note for the record: A Full Council meeting did not take place in April due to lockdown).
Cllr Simpson proposed the minutes as a true record, seconded by Cllr Downe, two abstentions (Cllrs Lewis and Chicken), rest in favour.
5. **To note co-option will be postponed until further notice. Applicants have been advised.** This was noted. Cllr Simpson would like to thank the applicants for their continued interest and patience and as soon as we can, we will hold a meeting where they can come on board and we will be able to support and mentor them through the first steps of the process.
6. **Mayor's Report**
 - a) **Note cancellation/postponement of events**
 - b) **New way of working.**
The Mayor detailed the many events that have been cancelled due to the pandemic. She has written an article for the Adviser which will be published on Friday 8th May (VE Day) and is encouraging the community to still mark this occasion. We may be able to do more on VJ Day in August. Christmas Lights switch on is on hold. Councillor surgeries will resume at the first opportunity to do so.

She praised the organiser and volunteers of the Hungerford Self-Isolation group who have done an exceptional job in creating the group so quickly and for being so effective. Thanks to the Town Clerk and Cllr Downe for liaising with Boots and enabling prescriptions for the self-isolation group to be collected more efficiently. Thanks also to the many businesses and individuals in the town who are working very hard to keep the community safe, especially those who are shielding. The community of Hungerford is exceptional and the Mayor is very proud to represent the town and is honoured to serve the town for another year.

7. **District Councillor's Reports** – Dennis Benneyworth congratulated Cllr Simpson on continuing as Mayor for another year. He also thanked the community of Hungerford for rising to the challenge at this difficult time. He advised that WBC approved legislation last week so that public representation at WBC planning meetings will only be allowed in writing. The public can submit comments up to 500 words but will not be able to join Zoom meetings. The WBC annual meeting is on 12th May at which the Chair and Vice Chair will be elected via Zoom. WBC has received a proportion of an extra £1.6 billion from central government which will help to cover increasing costs, especially in adult social care. He has been working in conjunction with Hungerford Chamber of Commerce to ensure local businesses are able to access all available funds to help them to continue operating during and after the pandemic. The WBC Community Support Hub is doing great work, especially for those who are shielding. Weekly waste collection services are continuing, residents are asked to put their bins out by 6am. Talks are ongoing regarding re-opening the local Recycling centres. WBC has sent out an email regarding scams and this has been circulated to the local community by the HTC office via social media. With regard to public speaking at planning meetings, James Cole and Claire Rowles advised that it is not a statutory requirement for public to speak. They suggested that if there are any planning issues HTC councillors have concerns about, they should use the District Cllrs to be their voice. Cllr Simpson thanked the District Cllrs for their hard work. She has been working with Claire Rowles to try and access funding for laptops to support families and pupils at Hungerford Primary School. CR will report back with any progress.
8. **Discuss and agree any change to the calendar of scheduled Full Council and Committee meetings.** *Cllr Downe proposed to continue to hold meetings as per the previously published calendar, seconded by Cllr Gaines, all in favour.*
9. **Hungerford 2036** – A report had been circulated (**and is attached**). There were no questions arising from this report.
10. **Committee reports (no more than 3 minutes per report)**
R&A (Cllr Simpson) – The car park surface at the Croft Field Centre has been relaid; all council owned parks and buildings have been secured and regular checks are being undertaken; the grass is still being cut by our contractors; the allotments remain open within the parameters of government guidance.
E&P (Cllr Gaines) – **See attached report**
H&T (Cllr Knight) – **See attached report**
F&GP (Cllr Winser) – **See attached report**
11. **Finance – Cllr Winser**
 - a) **Propose authorisation of cheque run payments (circulated along with copies of invoices) retrospective for March of £24,360.44, and for April - Cllr Winser proposed the cheque run for March of £24,360.44, seconded by Cllr Simpson, two abstentions (Cllrs Crane and Chicken), rest in favour. Cllr Winser proposed the cheque run for April of £49,458.76, seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.**
 - b) **Propose 31st March 2020 Final Budget/Actual accounts – refer to circulated Income/Expenditure Report** – Cllr Simpson feels it would be helpful to look at the budget more closely after period 9 in each year to see if there is the opportunity to do more projects that may have been postponed due to lack of finance. RFO advised the underspend will be brought back into the budget next year which will result in a lower precept. *Cllr Winser proposed the final budget/actual accounts with an underspend of £42,203, seconded by Cllr Gaines, all in favour.*

- c) **Note the change in total assets to £838,655 as at 31st March 2020** – *Cllr Simpson proposed the change in total assets, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.*
- d) **Note the reduction of Newbury Building Society interest rate from 17th April 2020 from 1.1% to 0.6%** - This was noted.
- e) **Retrospective approval of a £30,000 increase of funds held by Newbury Building Society from Dec 2019** – *Cllr Simpson proposed the £30,000 increase of funds, seconded by Cllr Gaines, all in favour.*
- f) **Review the Annual Interim Internal Audit Report 2019/2020 and propose acceptance, and if available the Year End Final Report** – The RFO advised the issues that arose in the Internal Audit Report have been dealt with. The final audit has been done but no report has been received to date. *Cllr Winser proposed acceptance be deferred to F&GP committee, seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.*
- g) **Delegate authority to F&GP for reinvestment of £85,000 held with Close Brothers Plc due for renewal in July 2020** – *Cllr Simpson proposed delegating authority for reinvestment to Town Clerk, RFO and Chair of F&GP, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.*
- h) **Confirm arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks (3-year agreement ends 2022)** – Town Clerk is working on this and is waiting for a final premium. *Cllr Winser proposed this be deferred to F&GP committee, seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.*
- i) **Retrospectively propose upgrading of 7 streetlights to LED for return to West Berks Councils ownership on both Tarrant's Hill and Atherton Road total cost £7253.52** – *Cllr Winser proposed upgrading of 7 streetlights, seconded by Cllr Gaines, all in favour.*

Cllr Simpson invited Cllr Hawkins to update FC on this year's Hungerford in Bloom competition. A lot of planning has gone on behind the scenes to ensure the competition will take place this year but it will be very different. Participants in each category will submit photographs for judging, there is a children's competition and HAHA will be involved. Thanks to Sarah Chatters for all her hard work on this.

12. **Propose acceptance of the following: -**

- **Propose agreement of financial regulations** (refer to website) – These have been compared with the new version and no changes are recommended. *Cllr Winser proposed acceptance of financial regulations, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.*
- **Propose agreement of Standing Orders** (refer to website) – Consider adding an addendum noting the temporary overriding legislation. *Cllr Simpson proposed acceptance of the standing orders subject to addition of an addendum, seconded by Cllr Downe, all in favour.*
- **Propose agreement of Code of Conduct** (refer to website) - Consider adding temporary reference to virtual meetings. Town Clerk will draft a protocol for remote council meetings. *Cllr Simpson proposed this be deferred to F&GP committee, seconded by Cllr Gaines, all in favour.*
- **Propose agreement of Co-option Policy** (refer to website) – No changes recommended. *Cllr Simpson proposed acceptance of co-option policy, seconded by Cllr Winser, all in favour.*
- **Propose agreement of HTC or staff subscriptions to other bodies; NALC etc.** (circulated) – *Cllr Simpson proposed acceptance of subscriptions subject to the addition of the subscription to the GWW of £1,250 + VAT, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.*
- **Propose agreement of inventory of land and assets including buildings and office equipment** (updated and circulated) – *Cllr Simpson proposed acceptance of the inventory, seconded by Cllr Gaines, all in favour.*

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

The District Councillors and press left the meeting at this point at 8.32pm.

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.

14. **Retrospectively agree a 3-month rent payment holiday, subject to monthly review for two Organisations** – *Cllr Gaines proposed deferring this item pending Cllr Knight's further investigations into the requirements of both organisations and bringing back to F&GP committee, seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.*

15. **Agree new staff contract for employee no.12** – *Cllr Simpson proposed the new staff contract for employee no. 12, seconded by Cllr Gaines, all in favour.*

The meeting closed at 8.52 pm.

REPORTS

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL MAY UPDATE FROM THE POLICE

Due to COVID19 the last month has been a very different one for the Hungerford Neighbourhood Team. Not only are we having to make significant changes in our own personal/ family lives like the rest of the Country but we are also policing our community in ways which we have never done so before.

Since 23rd March the team have moved from Newbury Police Station and are temporarily based at Hungerford TRI Station. This is helping us to maintain social distance and limit the spread of COVID19 amongst our Police family, allowing us to maintain our resilience; keeping our communities safe and protecting the vulnerable

The Government made it very clear from the start:
STAY HOME. SAVE LIVES. PROTECT THE NHS.

As a team we have been out and about engaging with the public. Explaining the risk to health and encouraging compliance with the measures introduced by the Government to help reduce the transmission and spread of COVID19.

We have been given new powers under The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020, however where possible we want to achieve compliance without the need for enforcement. At the beginning we were providing support to our supermarkets during the panic buying of various essentials. This has now calmed and we have moved on to carrying out visits to those premises where breaches have been reported. We are also regularly conducting road checks in various locations to enquire as to whether drivers have reasonable excuse to leave home.

I am pleased to say that the majority of people are complying with the Governments restrictions. We know these are challenging times, but if we continue to work together we can beat this and get back to normal.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Helen and the Town Council for providing the team with much needed hand sanitiser and for their continuous ongoing support.

We also wish to extend our thanks and appreciation to the community of Hungerford. How quickly the Hungerford Support Hub mobilised was proof of how resilient Hungerford can be during this unprecedented time of crisis.

In addition thank you to those that responded to Helen's requests on social media on our behalf for PPE. I am pleased to report we now have good supplies.

We are proud of our town and take pride in serving our community.

Crime this month is very low, however 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.

REPORT FROM HUNGERFORD 2036

Public Report

Report to: Full Council meeting 4th May 2020.

Agenda Item No 9: Report from Hungerford 2036

Current Activities

Following the HELAA publication by WBC the H2036 project team has asked all site promoters to respond with further information. Initially this was requested by end April but then extended to end May due to the Covid-19 events. The promoters have been 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.

We have requested (and they have agreed) that WBC conduct HELAA-type assessments of the additional sites North of the A4 submitted after the HELAA publication – now known as HUNNDP A/B/C. Given Covid-19 we are enquiring when this will happen.

We had anticipated starting work with the external consultant on the site assessment work with a sites visit on 1st April but this was deferred until lockdown conditions allow.

WBC Local Plan to 2036 Progress

WBC have published a revised timetable for their 2036 Local Plan Review during April

This will mean that the H2036 Plan is unlikely to be able to be completed before the end of 2021 or later.

As far as we are aware there is still no firm guidance from central government on housing numbers for West Berkshire and as a result no information for WB Neighbourhood Plan groups.

Signed: John Downe, Joint Chair H2036, 30/4/2020.

ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING REPORT TO TOWN COUNCIL 4TH May 2020

There were Five planning applications in the E & P meeting on 14th April 2020

a) 20/00574/HOUSE

Eddington Mill House, Upper Eddington New oak framed store/workshop outbuilding.

No Objection.

b) 20/00612/FULD

Riverbend, Upper Eddington – Mr and Mrs Denny Section 73 Variation of condition (2) plans of approved 18/02374/FULD – Strongly Object to any changes to the original approved planning application

c) 20/00651/FUL

Plume of Feathers Inn, Hungerford - Proposed glazed pergola.

No Objection

d) 20/00564/HOUSE

1 Down View, Park Street, Hungerford – Proposed two storey rear extension.

No Objection.

e) 20/00731/HOUSE

13 Bridge Street, Hungerford – New timber frame garden building.

No Objection.

5. Case Officers Reports – These were read out and noted.

Before the meeting closed, Cllr Simpson asked for clarification from the District Councillors regarding the process for future Western Area Planning committee meetings. District Councillor Rowles advised that WBC is expecting to receive guidance this week and she will update us once the guidance has been received.

Cllr Gaines Chair E&P
28th April 2020

H&T Report For Main Town Council meeting

Keith Knight – Deputy Chairman 4th May 2020

Last Meeting held on 27th January 2020

No more meetings have taken place since the Covid 19 lockdown next scheduled meeting via Zoom will be held on 26th May.

Smarten Up Hungerford.

The committee agreed to re-visit their request for funding once John Wilmott had costed what was required. Still not been received from John Wilmott.

Update on Pigeons

The committee agreed to set up a working party comprised of Cllrs. Fyfe, Downe, Chicken and 1 member of the public. Will report back to full council later in the year.

Station Road Car Park

Barriers now installed ongoing issue with the access for the 3 Swans deliveries (disagreement with parties regarding access from Park St interpretation of the deeds as whether 3 Swans have access rights. Due to Covid 19 the barriers are permanently in the upright position situation to be reviewed once the 3 Swans opens again.

Additional parking bays in Atherton Crescent
Ongoing

Footpath improvement scheme in Station Road

Met with West Berkshire Highways department to discuss the plans which will see the widening of the footpath next to the former police station. The road will remain the same width so access by HGVs will not improve. Delayed due to Covid 19

Tennis Club Noticeboard

The tennis club would like to put up a sign under the Railway bridge. We approved at committee, subject to space being available.

Christmas Light Debrief and working party

It was agreed to set up a working party comprised of Cllrs Chicken, Hawkins, R Ballard and S Chatters

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE REPORT TO TOWN COUNCIL 4TH MAY 2020 APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020 ANNUAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT

At year end there was an underspend of £42,203 to budget, the most notable savings by Cost Centre are as follows;

Admin - £8,849 underbudget

Although overspent on Salaries by £1,665 we had the benefit of £5,000 Business Rates not paid and reversed by £2500 from last year.

Also unbudgeted income of £1,278 and professional fees underspent by £1,293 helped.

Contingency Budget - £3,074 underbudget
Underspent by £3,074.

E & P Budget – £2,000 underbudget
No expenditure

St Saviours - £7,244 Net underspend
Due to tariff increase and higher demand, income increased by £4,784 plus underspend on costs by £2,460.

Library Maintenance - £4,703 underbudget
Underspent by £4,703. Very few calls on us this year. I would like to suggest we transfer some of this underspend to Earmarked Reserves to build a contingency for future building works.

Christmas Lights - £3,501 Net overspend
Unforeseen events resulted in expenditure being over budget by £1,665 and donations fell short of budget by £1,836.

Highways - £8,051 Net underspend
£4,000 Bus Subsidy not requested, £2,376 Toilet underspend and additional £635 Hanging Basket donations.

Tourism & Economy - £2,883 underbudget
Underbudget by £2,883 as income received from external sources.

H2036

This Cost Centre does not show as I have, at John Downe's request, moved the balance of £4,609 to Earmarked Reserves. This amount is expected to be spent this year together with the 20/21 budget of £5,000.

Councillor Claire Winsor, Chair of F&GP
30th April 2020