

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

The Mayor
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MINUTES of the **Full Council Meeting** held on Monday 6th July 2020 at 7.00pm remotely through Zoom.

Present: Cllrs Simpson, Downe, Knight, Crane, Chicken, Lewis, Fyfe, Gaines and Alford.

Also: West Berks Council (WBC) District Cllrs James Cole and Dennis Benneyworth. District Cllr Claire Rowles entered for Item 5. Representatives from Penny Post, Newbury News and the Adviser, and three members of the public.

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

Police Report – (attached). The report had been circulated. Following an enquiry from District Cllr Benneyworth, Cllr Simpson advised she will raise the matter of antisocial driving at Kennedy Meadow roundabout with the local police team when she meets with them.

Cllr Simpson asked the members of the public to comment on the proposal, agreed at the Extra FC meeting on the 9th June, for parking restrictions outside the Town Hall with the potential loss of two parking spaces or the closure of the turning area. This was to enable a local café business to place tables and chairs in this area in order to serve customers. Local business owners are concerned that losing two spaces will have a negative impact on local businesses as the spaces are in an important location. They are also concerned about the safety aspect of closing off the turning area. They mentioned that they were not aware this issue was on the agenda of the meeting on the 9th June so were unable to attend to put their points of view. Cllr Chicken advised the reason for the proposal was to try and encourage more people into the town and this was only a temporary measure until the end of August. Cllr Simpson advised the proposal made at the Extra FC meeting on the 9th June had not been an easy decision, but as the Clerk has not received in writing from three councillors a request to overturn the proposal, the decision still stands. HTC has received nine letters objecting to this proposal and these will be forwarded to WBC who will make the ultimate decision. She thanked the members of the public for their comments.

The members of the public left the meeting at 7.23pm.

- 1. Note apologies for absence** – Cllrs Hudson, Winser and Hawkins.
- 2. Declarations of interest** – None.
- 3. Approval of Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 1st June 2020, and outcome of actions.** *Cllr Knight proposed the minutes as a true record, seconded by Cllr Downe, one abstention (Cllr Gaines), rest in favour.*
Approval of Minutes of the meeting of the Extra Full Council held on 9th June 2020, and outcome of actions. *Cllr Chicken proposed the minutes as a true record, seconded by Cllr Simpson, one abstention (Cllr Gaines), rest in favour.*
- 4. Mayor's Report – (attached).** The report had been circulated. A Members Bid has been submitted; the aim is to refresh the War Memorial garden area. *Cllr Gaines proposed, subject to the Members Bid being successful, match funding of £2,240 (total) will be made available with £1,000 from EMR (Bridge St War Memorial repairs) and £1,240 from CIL money. Seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.*

5. **District Councillor's Reports (taken after Item 3)** – WBC finances are in good shape although income from parking is down. The Local Outbreak Control Plan has been circulated and the Community Support Hub is still active. All three ward members have submitted Members Bids. The panel is due to sit around the 20th July – the exact date is unknown. The measures undertaken in the town to support the reopening of local businesses appear to have been successful and well observed. All three ward members called in the Salisbury Road planning application – there is no date for when this will be heard at present. The Riverbend, Upper Eddington planning application is scheduled to be heard at the Western Area Planning committee meeting on the 22nd July – HTC will ensure their submission is received at WBC in time for this meeting. Marsh Lane Allotments have been successfully registered as a Community Asset. The issue of blocked drains on the A4 has been resolved.

In response to questions, the District Councillors advised:

- WBC has produced a draft Environment Strategy Summary document following the recent Climate Emergency Survey, this will be made public in due course.
- The issue of recycling bins in Hungerford High Street is due to go on the agenda of the next Environment Advisory Group meeting.
- They will feed back HTC's request for WBC to communicate more regular and more recent numbers of Coronavirus infections in West Berkshire. It is felt that more updates will encourage confidence for members of the public.
- They were not aware of the decision by the WBC Planning Policy department to not complete HELAA-type assessments of additional sites submitted after the HELAA publication, despite WBC previously confirming to the H2036 project team that they would do so. Cllr Downe will email the District Councillors with more information so that they can address the relevant points with WBC.
- Cllr Benneyworth will chase progress of Cllr Fyfe's report on cleaning and maintenance of road signage in the town.

Thanks were extended to the District Councillors and they left the meeting at 7.56pm.

6. **Hungerford 2036 – See attached report.** The report had been circulated; there was nothing further to add following the discussions above.
7. **Committee reports (no more than 3 minutes per report)**
R&A (Cllr Simpson) – See attached report
E&P (Cllr Gaines) – See attached report. If anyone has any comments they wish to make regarding the Riverbend application, please send them to Cllr Gaines for inclusion in our submission.
F&GP (Cllr Winsor) – See attached report
H&T (Cllr Chicken) – Cllrs Fyfe and Downe recently deployed a Speed Indicator Device at three locations in the town and hope to receive the data from WBC next week. A decision will then be taken on future usage.
8. **Finance**
- a) **Propose authorisation of cheque run payments (circulated along with copies of invoices) for June** - *Cllr Simpson proposed the cheque run for June of £19,985.06, seconded by Cllr Downe, all in favour.*
- b) **Propose Year to date accounts – refer to circulated Income/Expenditure Report** – *Cllr Simpson proposed the year to date accounts, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.*
- c) **Propose approval of Barclaycard limit of £3,000** – *Cllr Simpson proposed limit remains at £3,000, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.*
- d) **Update on charging of special expenses – See attached report** – *Cllr Gaines proposed asking WBC, and subject to their agreement, that the running costs for the HTC owned streetlights be invoiced direct to HTC and not charged as a supplementary charge on the annual council rates. Seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.*
- e) **Consider and agree allocation of CIL funds – See attached report.**
Cllr Simpson proposed moving £2,000 from General Planning Professional Fees to EMR (CCTV New Camera), seconded by Cllr Gaines, all in favour.
Cllr Simpson proposed moving £180 from Local Development Framework Fund to Project H2036

Fund, seconded by Cllr Crane, 2 abstentions, rest in favour.

Cllr Gaines proposed moving £11,993.46 and £5,076.38 from CIL Funds, £3,000 from General Planning Professional Fees and £1,300.63 from Welcome Signs Fund (£21,370.47 total) to EMR (Lamppost Replacement), seconded by Cllr Chicken, all in favour.

- f) Consider quotes and options to improve security at Triangle Field** – This will be passed to R&A for consideration at their next meeting.

9. Health & Safety – Impact of Coronavirus

a) Any issues arising from the opening of the hospitality sector, shops, public toilets

b) Consider any changes to government guidelines and associated costs

The Town Clerk has looked at the costs of cleaning the Croft Field Activity Centre to ensure it is viable to reopen the building. This will be looked at further at the next R&A meeting.

Cllr Downe asked whether there were any plans to reopen the office. Cllr Simpson advised staff are working in the office – one on Monday morning and one on Friday morning. Government guidance is to still work from home if possible, so the situation will remain as it is currently.

10. Any other Reports (3 minutes each) not to include any proposals – e.g. Pigeon Working Party, War Memorial Working Party.

Two members of the Pigeon Working Party have done an audit of the central part of the High Street and produced a spreadsheet detailing the extent of the problem. This will be discussed further at the next H&T meeting.

The War Memorial Working Party has met and quotes are being obtained for work to refresh this area. They will await the decision regarding the Members Bid before any further discussions take place.

Cllr Crane observed it would be good for the town if pavements could be widened in the High Street to enable more seating areas outside cafes etc which would make the town more attractive to passing traffic.

Cllr Simpson wished to record the council's thanks to Roger Ballard for all the hard work he has done at the play parks during the lockdown period. They are now looking very smart and lots of positive comments have been received.

Cllr Crane and the press left the meeting at 8.45pm.

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.

- 11. Consider change to job specification for employee no. 1** – *Cllr Simpson proposed that, subject to acceptance of a new agreement between HTC and Hungerford Rugby Club, HTC will terminate employee no. 1's cleaning contract and offer the equivalent hours under the maintenance contract, seconded by Cllr Gaines, all in favour.*

This situation will be reviewed when new budgets are set in November.

- 12. Consider any staff issues with working from home and future return to office** – As mentioned above, two members of staff have been working in the office; the office is being cleaned in between these visits. It is planned to continue with this current situation. We are not aware of any adverse comments from the public due to the closure of the office.

The meeting closed at 9.08pm.

REPORTS

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL UPDATE – JULY 2020 – POLICE REPORT

Dear Mayor,

As the Covid-19 lockdown continues to ease, I think it is fair to say we will see an increase in demand of the Police, along with other sectors and services. As you will know, non-essential shops have been open again now for some time, with some restrictions in place. As of Saturday 4th July, further sectors will be re-opening, which includes pubs and restaurants, again, with restrictions in place.

While Social Distancing measures remain in place, I am happy to report I am not aware of any regular breaches of these measures and that the majority of people continue to observe the guidelines and laws.

In terms of recorded crime for the month of June, we have seen a slight increase in shoplifting reports from the town – We have 5 recorded compared to 2 from the previous monthly report.

We have had 7 reports of Criminal Damage offences while we have had 1 report of a theft of a motor vehicle, and 1 theft from a vehicle.

We have seen a recent spike in reports of Poaching/Theft of fish type offences. I have asked the local Wildlife Officer and Rural Crime Officer to work together in investigating these offences.

In addition to this, the team are in the process of arranging a future meeting in relation to these matters with local estate owners, river keepers and will extend an invitation to the Environmental Health Water Bailiffs. This is still a work in progress and will clearly have to be Covid compliant but I am confident that some good joint working with stakeholders and partners will help to reduce these type of offences.

As always, I would like to encourage the community to report incidents directly 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 do not 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.

Kind Regards

The Hungerford and Downlands NHPT

Mayors Report - Full Council July 2020

Members Bid

I mentioned the opportunity of a members bid to refresh the War Memorial gardens in Bridge Street. HTC's Town Clerk worked fast to draw up a quote specification (from Cllr Hawkins plans and following discussions from a recent working party meeting.) The deadline for the members bid was the 3rd July. We managed to achieve this very tight deadline and the bid has been submitted by ward members. We have £1K in earmarked reserved and will propose the remainder is from CIL money held at HTC. Agreement of allocations of funds for £2,240 will be sought at FC. We hope our bid will be successful to allow refurbishment of this much-loved community asset in such an important military anniversary year.

Re-opening of shops & businesses

Nick Lumley, David Small Julian Tubb and I met up to welcome the reopening of the town's shops and businesses. We were able to talk to the retailers and learn what measures they had adopted to encourage and reassure their customers venturing out following 3 months in lockdown. We were extremely impressed with the response to new guidelines and offered an opportunity to address any concerns with the new safety measures placed throughout the town. The retailers were very happy to be back and thanked us for the warm welcome. I would like to wish them all every success over the coming months and urge the community to shop local and support the businesses wherever possible.

Penny Post kindly spent the afternoon following us around, videoing and interviewing as we went, thank you for your commitment and time Penny. I know the businesses were grateful for the publicity. Pubs and Restaurants have also re-opened and I fully intend to support these at the end of my shielding period. My son turned 18 last month and he's very much looking forward to his first legal drink.

Grants & Hungerford In Bloom

Our Deputy Town Clerk has been busy collating all the pictures we requested from those groups and charities who were supported with a grant from HTC. We normally hold a little presentation, sadly we were unable to proceed this year, we decided to publish the pictures of the groups and charities represented, proudly holding their certificates. We have printed these in the centre of this week's Hungerford Adviser. Cllr's are now looking forward to judging the Hungerford in Bloom virtual competition which closed on Sunday. I have a feeling they will be pretty spectacular as we've all enjoyed the extra time at home, my own garden is looking nicer than usual with some extra TLC.

Letter of Condolence

I wrote to the Mayor of Reading offering the Town's condolences following the terrorist attack in Reading. Hungerford's tribute will be included in the book of condolence opened in Reading.

Laptops for Hungerford Primary

Following a request from the Self-Isolation group, championed by Myself and ward members, we were delighted to see the request to WBC for additional funding to purchase extra laptops realised. The new laptops will support the learning of Hungerford pupils, leaving no child left disadvantaged. Great result!

Requested next steps information

A letter was sent to WBC requesting information and details should West Berkshire have a local outbreak of Covid-19. HTC wanted to be confident we had the information and knowledge to assist the community and also understand the expectation of the council's involvement. WBC has now published a 'Local Outbreak Control Plan'

Camburn Education Foundation

Cllr Knight, Cllr Rowles and I served as trustees for the annual education awards. This year's candidates attended interviews using Zoom and Facetime. We are very lucky to have this trust fund, it really helps Hungerford children with costs associated with higher education through apprenticeships and university. I have also requested a meeting with police to discuss extra resources in Hungerford over the summer holidays, this meeting has been requested following rising incidents of criminal damage and littering. HTC will also discuss further CCTV cameras at key HTC owned assets.

Report from Hungerford 2036

Current Activities

On 18th June the external planning consultant who is assisting us with the development site assessments visited Hungerford. The joint project team chairmen accompanied him around and on to the sites put forward through the HELAA process plus the additional sites that have been promoted subsequently.

The visit enabled him to familiarise himself with Hungerford generally and with the sites to be assessed by H2036.

As a result of the visit the project team have received his commentary on the information gathering on which we should focus. He can construct an initial matrix of site assessments for our further discussion and later public consultations. On July 8th the project team will be meeting to agree the data collection we need to do.

Last month we reported that we had requested (and it had been agreed) that WBC would conduct HELAA-type assessments of the additional sites submitted after the HELAA publication—sites now known as HUNNDP_A/B/C. We had understood back in early May that the WBC portfolio holder and Head of Planning had not decided what the charge to HTC for the assessments would be despite the request originally made following the HELAA briefings in Hungerford by WBC on 13th February 2020.

We have now been told (July 3rd) by the WBC Planning Policy department that due to human and financial resource constraints they are not able to complete this for us until the new Local Plan has been issued for consultation at the end of 2020. This was completely unexpected news given the earlier statements and will now seriously impact our ability to make progress as we had hoped.

Furthermore, this revelation by the Council fails to deliver on the expectations that were set by the WBC portfolio holder and Head of Planning on 5th February 2018 about their commitment and support of Hungerford initiating the Neighbourhood Development Plan project. We therefore call on our District Council representatives urgently to seek an acceptable resolution.

Signed: John Downe, Joint Chair H2036, 4/7/2020.

R&A Report - full council meeting July 2020 – Cllr Helen Simpson

Triangle Field

Following the R&A meeting in May a working party met to discuss the management agreement. This was a very productive meeting and the group were united on amendments to form a new arrangement to be presented to R&A in July for discussion.

HAHA

The allotment association has now been successfully registered as a 'Community Asset'. I know HAHA are really happy to achieve this status.

A project has been listed on the good exchange to allow repair/replacement for a water supply at Marsh Lane, HTC has supported through a grant.

Allotments are at 100% occupancy with a waiting list of 17 - congratulations!

Covid-19 government guidance has been successfully implemented throughout the site and they have remained open throughout lockdown.

Playparks

R&A committee has proposed an annual clean of the wetpour surfaces Our Maintenance employee has been cleaning and repainting the play park equipment which is now looking really smart ready for reopening on the 4th July. HTC needed to adhere to government guidelines and write risk assessments and guidance for display around the sites. This has been a huge amount of work for the office and I would like to extend my thanks for managing such a huge task as well as your normal workload. Well done!

Croft Field

The Covid-19 guidance is more complicated at this location, HTC need to address multiple site hire's and ensure management and cleaning between bookings is achievable. This will take time and HTC will ask for a rent reduction from WBC to ensure this facility can reopen. Currently with all additional cleaning measures needed, we would be running at a loss to fully reopen this facility. We will honour the bookings we have to date and work towards longer term viability for onward hire. We are also looking at refurbishment of this site with our S106 fund allocation. A keyless entry system and CCTV will be discussed at our next R&A committee meeting.

War Memorial

Cllr Cole has requested a member's bid to enable HTC to refurbish the War Memorial grounds and garden.

A virtual Meeting of Environment and Planning Committee Monday 8th June.

Planning Applications -

a) Planning Appeal Ref APP/W0340/Y/20/3245847

19/02046/LBC2 – Hopgrass Open Barn, Hungerford WBC refused planning permission. HTC proposed No Objection. The committee had no comments to make on this appeal.

b) 20/01023/MDOPO

Land South of Priory Road, Hungerford Modification of planning obligations on affordable homes mix. HTC objected (strongly on a number of grounds) all in favour. See minutes for more information.

District Councillors advised this application has been called-in to the Western Area Planning Committee; they offered their support to HTC in this matter and suggested if anyone had any comments on the proposal, to respond to WBC via the planning portal.

c) 20/00612/FULD

Riverbend, Upper Eddington, Hungerford Additional drawings / amended plans

District Councillors advised this application is due to be heard at the Western Area Planning Committee as there are more than 10 objections on the planning portal.

HTC strongly object all in favour. See minutes for details of the objections.

d) 20/01132/TELE56

Telecommunications Mast, Adjacent former pig farm, Bath Road, Hungerford

There were two proposals. One for support and One for no Objections. HTC agreed on no Objections.

e) 20/00620/COMIND

Hungerford Town Football Club, Hungerford – Hungerford Town Football Club

Extension to both sides of north stand.

HTC proposed Strong Support, all in favour.

Land South of Priory Road, Hungerford

Following receipt of some email complaints regarding the starting times of work at the site, Cllr Gaines advised the working hours set out in the original planning application are 7.30am-6pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am-1pm on Saturday.

Meeting closed at 8.06.

Denise Gaines E&P Chair 2nd July 2020

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSE REPORT FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON 6TH JULY 2020 MONTH 3 INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT: JUNE 2020

101 FINANCE:

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

102 ADMINISTRATION:

Net Income over Expenditure £3,903 below Budget. Annual Insurance budgeted this month but paid in month 2.

103 GRANTS & DONATIONS:

£15,469 above Budget. Phasing issue, £18,273 Council Grants paid this month.

104 POOL HOUSE:

£383 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 £478 above Budget. Phasing issue with Playground repairs.

202 WAR MEMORIAL GROUND:

£76 below Budget.

203 ST SAVIOURS:

Net Income over Expenditure £693 above Budget. Burial Fee Income £593 below Budget.

204 CROFT FIELD:

Net Income over Expenditure £471 below Budget. No Income this month.

205 LIBRARY MAINTENANCE COSTS:

No Expenditure to date.

301 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS:

£1,650 Donations received. No Expenditure to date.

302 HIGHWAYS:

Net Income over Expenditure £953 below Budget.

303 CCTV:

Net Income over Expenditure £150 below Budget.

304 TOURISM & ECONOMY:

No expenditure this month.

Annual Net Income over Expenditure £2,486 above Budget.

Claire Winser Chair of F&GP 3rd July 2020

Item 8 (d) Streetlights Budget – The way forward

Background

Replacement lights

The Council originally owned 105 streetlights around the town. When West Berkshire Council (WBC) upgraded the lights 3 years ago these lights were excluded from that process.

HTC have agreed to begin the process of upgrading these lights over a period of time and WBC have agreed to adopt them upon completion.

So far 14 lights in Park Way & Coldharbour Road costing £13,227 have been upgraded with a further 8 lights in Tarrant Hill/ Atherton Road having been agreed at a cost of £7,253 in 2020/21.

The Council has been putting funds aside to funds to cover these upgrades in the annual budgets.

Running cost & repairs undertaken by WBC

In addition, the residents have also been charged a supplementary charge on the annual Council rates to cover the electrical / minor repair costs of these lights. This was highlighted by the Internal Auditor and confirmed by WBC

| Year | Amount | Band D rate per household |
|---------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 2018/19 | £5,270 | £2.17 |
| 2019/20 | £7,970 | £3.32 |
| 2020/21 | £9,600 (Estimated) | £4.01(Estimated) |

These costs have varied in relation to actual repairs needed and the increasing cost of electric. Also, back in 2017 there was a number of invoices not charged at the time, so there has been an increase between these dates.

Options

Running Costs

HTC residents are therefore having to fund both running and upgrade costs at this time members are asked to consider: -

- If it could be agreed with WBC, that the running costs are invoiced directly to us and not charged as a supplement to the rates invoice.

Advantages

- HTC would have some scrutiny over the invoices although we would not have full control.

Disadvantages

- Residents would see a once only major jump in our precept although the other supplement charge would stop.

Capital Costs re replacement of Streetlights

At this rate of replacement, it will be at least 12 years before all the old lights will be replaced and the question will have to be faced if these lights can last this long. A separate report is being produced considering use of Community Infrastructure Funds (CIL) received £17,069 which members may wish to consider

Financial and Legal implications

See above

Recommendation(s)

- It maybe if WBC agreed it maybe better for us to be invoiced for these running cost invoices.
 - The other consideration could be if we really wish to have all streetlights replaced and not just removed.
- Jeff Ford – Responsible Financial Officer 18th June 2020

Item 8 (e) Consideration of Relocation of Earmark Reserves

Background

Earmark reserves are held by Council to achieve long aims and provide for longer term liabilities such as major repairs/replacement of assets.

Attached is the present position listed by Committee and we presently have £234,368 allocated.

In addition we hold a further £50,000 as General Reserves in case of need, any surplus above this amount is used to offset the next years Precept request.

Earmark Funds Identified

I have identified the following sums held in Earmark Reserves that Members may wish to consider relocating

| Heading | Amount | Why originally held | Suggestions |
|---|-------------------------|---|--|
| Community Infrastructure Levy CIL Funds Nov 2019 CIL Funds April 20 | £11,993.46 £5,076.38 | Paid to us by WBC re planning application. | To be spend on Infrastructure projects. We have to report use every 6 months to WBC |
| General Planning – Professional Fees | £5,000 | Originally allocated re Legal challenge re Land North of Salisbury Road ??? | As this issue has moved on members may consider that these funds can be reallocated |
| Welcome Signs | £1,300.63 | Held to help with cost for new welcome signs to the town | As Cllr Crane was successful in obtaining third party funding members may consider these funds can be reallocated. |
| Local Development Framework | £180 | Funds have been held for number of years | Suggest transferred to Project H2036 |

Possible Use of above Earmarked Funds

The following project :-

| Project | Background | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Streetlight replacement | Please see prevoir report on this subject | Council may wish to speed up greater coverage |
| CCTV increase in Town | We have put aside £1500 this year to increase coverage | Council may wish to speed up greater coverage |
| Croft Field Upgrade | We have received £26,137 S106 funds for this project. However we have yet to flesh out in detail what is required | Council may wish to alloct part of CIL funds for this project |

There maybe further projects that maybe worth considering. This report

Financial and Legal implications

None

Recommendation(s)

To be decided at Full Council

Jeff Ford – Responsible Financial Officer 18th June 2020