

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the **Recreation, Amenities and War Memorials Committee** meeting held on Monday 15th January 2024 at 7.00pm, in the Library, Hungerford.

Present: Cllr Simpson, Cllr Winser, Cllr Alford, Cllr Schlanker, Cllr Keates, Cllr Cusack and Cllr Coulthurst

Also in attendance: Deputy Town Clerk

Cllr Simpson welcomed 2 prospective Cllrs to the proceedings

RA2024001 Apologies for absence – Cllr Knight & Cllr Fyfe

RA2024002 Declarations of Interest – None

RA2024003 Agreement of minutes of meeting held on 20th November 2023

Proposed: Cllr Winser

Seconded: Cllr Coulthurst

Resolution: To accept the minutes of 20th November 2023 as a true record

Update on outstanding actions:

RA2023073 Hungerford Tree Surgery has been appointed, work due to be carried out in January but is weather dependant.

RA2023074 Town Clerk has instructed work to be carried out

RA2023075 Gigaclear have not put the cable into the building. 3 failed installations to date, further installation booked 9th February 2024. Town Clerk has contacted MD to complain and raise concerns regarding service.

RA2024004 Receive updated summary of maintenance list. See attached

Cllr Simpson read through the maintenance report of actions completed by our maintenance man. Cllrs raised issue of the broken bonded slabs at the Croft Field and discussed possibly caused by a vehicle reversing. Cllrs noted they had been bonded back onto the wall but remained cracked. They are not currently posing a H&S issue but it was noted they would need replacing in due course. Cllrs raised the point that the hedge was cut lower than anticipated and Cllr Simpson confirmed she had asked for them to be reduced to 6ft 6". It was agreed that they are currently approximately 5ft. Cllrs questioned if perhaps the Nursery School had requested the hedge be reduced in height but noted that they would grow quickly and looked smart.

Action: Deputy Town Clerk to question whether the Nursery School had requested the hedge be lowered.

RA2024005 Receive update on ROSPA

We are awaiting receipt of the Jan 2024 ROSPA report so will need to defer this to the next R&A meeting.

RA2024006 Propose acceptance of LCRS Annual Risk Assessments for this comment. See attached reports.

Councillors agreed to accept the Annual Risk Assessments.

Cllr Schlanker queried if there is a Business Continuity Plan for Cemetery Record and questioned what would happen if the office was closed, with no access to it, for an extended period?

Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that we currently have access to information via:

Paper records in secure metal cabinet; Desktop access to Pear and Excel Spreadsheet

Laptop access to Pear and Excel Spreadsheet for remote working.

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Schlanker

Resolution: Councillors agreed to accept the LCRS Annual Risk Assessments

RA2024007 Discuss quotes for skatepark fence & ground improvements

Councillors agreed that the previous fence was of good quality and the new fence would need to match it. Cllr Simpson suggested decision on fencing be deferred until a 3rd quote is received.

Should an earlier decision be required this item should be taken to full council.

Cllr Schlanker asked if gates are necessary due to the high cost and questioned if they should be locked. Cllr Simpson confirmed that the cost has nearly been reached via fund match from The Good Exchange so was not an issue. Cllr Keates highlighted some antisocial behaviour which was confirmed by Cllr Simpson following letters from constituents highlighting concerns and felt a fence would help people feel more secure. It was agreed that summertime was more of an issue. Cllr Schlanker confirmed that the new CCTV will be useful in identifying any recent and future antisocial behaviour.

Action: Cllrs Schlanker and Coulthurst to review nighttime CCTV to identify any antisocial behaviour.

Action: Deputy Town Clerk to identify whether gates should be locked on a daily basis and if there is a contingency plan should this be the case and the maintenance man is not available.

Skatepark ground improvement – Cllr Fyfe has previously provided a presentation on options available and recommended Grass Reinforcement Mesh. Cllrs agreed Grass Reinforcement Mesh option should be sourced as it was agreed it would provide greater protection than the bonded rubber option as it allowed grass to grow. Cllr Simpson felt it would provide greater longevity and had no experience of rubber bonding but it was noted that it was used in Victoria Park Skatepark.

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Keates

Resolution: Councillors proposed the decision on the fencing should be deferred until the next meeting to allow for a 3rd quote to be obtained.

Cllrs agreed to opt for Grass Reinforcement Mesh an updated quote.

RA2024008 Discuss requirements and availability for Specialist cleaning of War Memorial

Cllrs discussed the cleaning of the memorial and concluded that someone had tried to clean it and used the wrong materials (it was noted that chemicals cannot be used).

Action: Cllrs proposed that the Office obtains quotes for a Specialist Clean Office Contact War Memorial Commission to seek advice on how to clean it properly Explore whether we could apply for a Grant from them or any other organisation?

Proposed: Cllr Keates

Seconded: Cllr Coulthurst

Resolution: Office to obtain necessary advice and quotes as outlined above.

RA2024009 Receive update on Youth Council – See attached report by Cllr Alford.

Action: Proposed by Cllr Simpson that the discussion be postponed until the next meeting.

Cllr Alford confirmed that Penny Post placed an advert for youth involvement and confirmed that a Youth Council meeting was being held on Wednesday 17th January 2024.

RA2024010 Consider request for financial help from Hungerford Football Club (HTF) for repair of potholes.

Councillors discussed this issue at length and noted that in addition to members and visitors to the Football Club, residents also used the car park. Cllrs agreed they would like to support HFC, however, it was agreed that the most appropriate option would be for HFC to apply for a grant via The Good Exchange. This would enable funds to be matched and would allow members and other interested parties to donate. Concern was raised over the poor state of repair of the car park and felt HFC needed to take urgent action to prevent any injuries and potential insurance claims. WBC has been contacted by a constituent via its 'Report a Problem' page and whilst the risk has apparently been assessed, no further action was deemed necessary.

Action: Office to contact HFC and flag the need for urgent repair work to be carried out in case injury caused and insurance claim made and further request they apply for a grant via The Good Exchange.

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Coulthurst

Resolution: Office to contact HFC and advise they apply for a grant Via The Good Exchange.

RA2024011 Health & Safety Checks by Councillors. See attached reports

War Memorial - Councillors discussed the memorial and noted that the same issues were reported as in previous years and remained outstanding. Overall, the Bridge Street War Memorial presented as well cared for but identified moss remained a significant slip/trip hazard. It was also agreed that the steps and canopy needed to be cleaned. The block paving remains uneven and requires attention along with the concrete buttress in the river. It was agreed that a budget was required.

St Saviours Cemetery noted by Councillors to be generally in good repair but concern raised regarding the two slabs (old gravestones) at the entrance of the St Lawrence's graveyard, which are shattered and fractured into multiple pieces and are a trip hazard. Some gravestones are precarious but wobble test are carried out and those at risk are laid flat. It was identified that one of the benches needs to be urgently removed (broken feet) and could be replaced with the one that is currently situated in another part of the cemetery that has become 'slimy' from being under the trees. It was agreed that should anyone wishing to donate a bench in Hungerford, St Lawrences should be considered the first option.

Croft Field Activity Centre: Cllr Cusack reported that a fridge needed to be removed.

Action: Cllr Coulthurst agreed to contact St Lawrence's Vicar to discuss what action can be taken with the slabs and the necessary process involved in repairing the two damaged slabs.

Town Clerk to instruct maintenance man to remove the bench and replace it with the alternative bench. Office to distribute Bench Cleaning Schedule to Councillors and the option of using money in the Contractors budget to improve the overall condition of the benches was proposed. Office to contact maintenance man to remove fridge.

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Winsor

Resolution: Actions to be taken as agreed by R&A members

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

R&A 20th January 2024 – UPDATES from Town Clerk

R&A 15th Jan 2024 – UPDATES from Town Clerk

RA202404 – Receive updated summary of maintenance list.

Some of the main works completed by our maintenance man are show below. Please note these are in addition to his routine checks of our assets and H&S checks.

- Adjusted automatic locking system in public toilets so disabled toilet locks properly.
- Zip slide – Filled hole and tightened bolt.
- Put up projector/blind in Library.
- Filled shrinkage around yellow gym at Bulpit with sand.
- PAT tested Office and Croft Field.
- Installed acrylic logo at Croft Field.
- Bonded broken slabs at Croft Field (possibly damaged by a vehicle)
- Installed new shute, provided FOC, on existing dog waste bin.

RA202405 – Receive update on ROSPA. We are awaiting receipt of the Jan 2024 ROSPA report. Items on the Oct ROSPA yet to be addressed are mentioned below.

Smitham PP

- Gate to bridge has violent action – *RB is installing a stop, so the gate doesn't open so widely.*
- Both sets of swings' paintwork are in poor condition – *On RB's list to paint in the summer.*
- Roundabout safety surface has worn and needs repair (low risk) and is not of recommended size (very low risk) – *Committee decided this could wait until 2024.*

Bulpit PP

- Bulpit Play Park new seesaw. The seesaw height was reset and safety surface redone. This is currently being assessed by the contractor as a small patch of the surface is still wearing. ROSPA have picked up on this and say it has less than the required 230mm clearance and there is no damping. This has been reported to GB Sport who received the following response from the manufacturer. ***The product is certainly safe for use, otherwise it would not have passed the tests and obtained the certificate. The Tulip is a regular seesaw. This model does not have a rubber shock absorber inside. Some installers install a rubber bumper or tire under the seat, but mainly to prevent damage to the surface.*** R&A decided not to take further action.
- Side gate bent with trip points underneath – *RB to do.*
- Pod walk – Paintwork in poor condition. Repairs maybe necessary where corrosion is bad.
- Metal exposed on Carousel – RB advised it is not a safety concern.

Skate Park

- **Ground erosion present. Consider adding grass matting to prevent wear.** *We agreed to consider in new year.*
- Rear gate - There is a crushing or shearing point on the side of the gate. *We are seeking funds for replacement. RB is looking to temporarily fix.*
- Fence - Mesh missing behind tree. Mesh damage near goal posts. *We are seeking funds for replacement.*

Claire, Happy New Year

As discussed before Christmas a couple of points, we would appreciate our officer's / councillors views.

1. Town & Manor have had a complaint about the carpark from a Hungerford resident as they tripped in one of the worn-out tarmac areas.

Solution :- Repair with tarmac and get some help from Hungerford Council by way of small funding or if you have a tarmac job in the pipe line already budgeted we could ask them to assist and we cover the cost as we would like to expect they could do it cost effectively as they are in Hungerford.

It would be a shame to limit the carpark to just Football traffic on every other Saturday / evening game as the general public find it very convenient using it for the play park the skate park and entering the common 24hrs a day.

2. Living in the new Lancaster park estate the right of way from Priory Road to Jethro Tull lane needs a halfway light between the older house and the new estate, there is one at each end although with the trees and the walls and the undulating bend in the walkway it is extremely dangerous to walk through at night. I would have thought that if you contacted Bewley homes they would facilitate before someone falls over and injures themselves. If they haven't already??

Our Councillors views on both safety issues would be appreciated.

Regards Norman
Norman Matthews

RA2024007 Skate Park Fence

Hungerford Town Council

Public Report to: Recreation & Amenities 15th Jan 2024

Agenda Item No: RA2024007 Discuss quotes for Skatepark fence and ground improvements.

Background 3 sides of Skate Park perimeter fence have panels missing and is in a poor state. There is some ground erosion from banks around new ramps. Both issues highlighted by ROSPA.

Ability to lock skate park would prevent antisocial behaviour out of hours. Self-closing gate protects small children from running out to road. Double gate access is required for grounds maintenance.

Objective 1 To consider quotes to secure the eroding banks/ protect grass.

Objective 2 To consider quotes to replace 3 sides of the perimeter fencing. The right-hand fence as you enter the skate park from the roadside is to remain. It is already of the required construction. New fencing is required to match. A double gate is to replace the existing gate at the rear of the park and a

single self-closing gate to be installed at the front. This would be placed central of the path. **The spec is as follows: -**

- Take down, remove and dispose of existing weld mesh fencing cutting posts below ground level and make good.
- Break out, remove and dispose of existing gates.
- Cut back tree and scrub growth to enable fence construction, remove and dispose of all arisings.
- Supply and erect 1800mm high 8-6-8 weld mesh panel system of full-length clamp bar posts set into a concrete foundation generally at 2500mm centres. RAL6005 (green).
- Include 2 x corner posts.
- Supply and hang single leaf gate 1800mm x 1200mm, posts set into a concrete foundation, construction and finish to match the above, gate complete with slip latch for padlock and drop bolt.
- Include hinge mounted self-closer.
- Supply and hang double leaf gate 1800mm x 3000mm, posts set into a concrete foundation, construction and finish to match the above, gate complete with slip latch for padlock and drop bolt.

Options

Quotes obtained for Objective 1: -

	Contractor	Price
A	To go under the yellow bench to protect the grass. Grassmats Ltd (See image below) Grass Reinforcement Mesh Medium (13mm) - 2m x 20m - Grassmats –	£1,000
B	To reinforce the crumbling bank near the new ramps Infinity Playgrounds (see image below) Price to supply and install 11m ² of Bonded rubber mulch in autumn blend or green on a weed membrane, with the edges dug into the ground for a smooth transition between rubber and soil/grassed areas. Supply and install soil and seed around edges to dress.	£1,279.50
C		

Quotes obtained for Objective 2: -

	Contractor	Price
A	Ware Fence (installed original fence on RHS)	£19,012
B	Total Fencing (installed goal posts & fence at St Saviours)	£15,000
C	Sovereign - Site visit arranged for 17th Jan	Obtaining third quote

Financial and Legal implications

EMR £11,878.58

Member's Bid £4,000

Potentially £5k of matched funding The Good Exchange

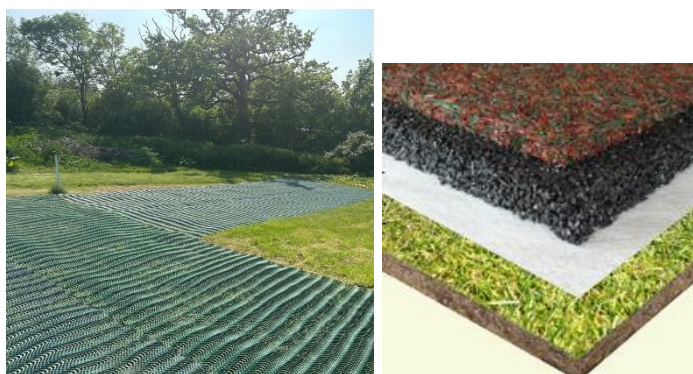
Reference to Council Strategy, where relevant

Aim – Ensure public open spaces are well maintained.

Recommendation(s)

The best option, based on the above information

Signed: Town Clerk 11/1/24



Grassmats

Health and Safety report for Hungerford War Memorial (Bridge Street)

initial inspection 6th December 2022 – follow up inspection conducted 7th December 2023.

Please note 2023 observations in Red

Cllrs Jerry Keates, Stella Coulthurst, Nick Schlanker.

Overall appearance - memorial area presents as being well cared for but starting to show its age. **The main issue with the appearance is the significant moss growth on the block paving. This should be removed as it is a slip / trip hazard. (see suggestion for remedy at end of report)**

Memorial-would benefit from cleaning of the steps and canopy above the name plates. **Still outstanding but plate areas seem to be recently cleaned see pic below.**

This would also keep the plate areas clean for longer.



Half a job!

Benches (x5) - are safe to use but a couple are looking tired especially the 2 on the northern edge as they appeared to have been painted and this is now coming off. **Difficult to see paint due to rain but appear better / been oiled.**

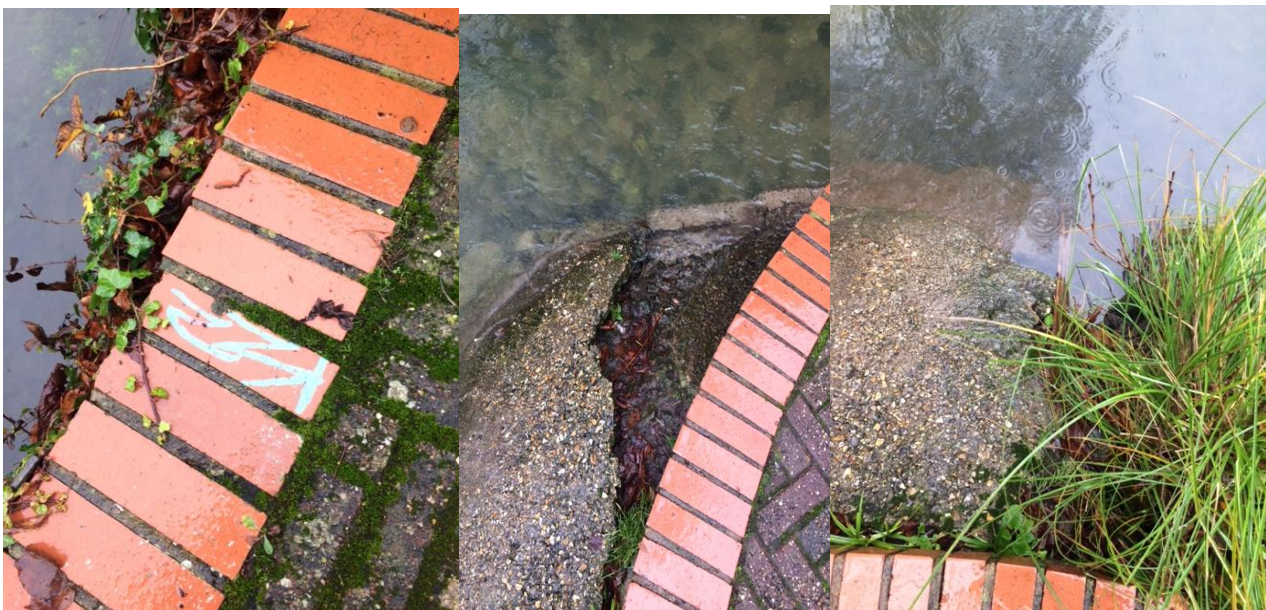
Flagpole - is in good order.

Entrance Bollards – The 3 one from the left facing the memorial is loose and **needs to be re secured Still loose see pics below.**

Block paving – Paving is uneven and lifting in three areas of the main site (listed below 7 pics) and sinking in one area. The slope leading down to the seating area next to the river has lifting blocks at the transition point. **Still in same condition has not worsened significantly.**

This has been previously noted but will only deteriorate if not addressed.

River seating area banking- the concrete buttress at the river confluence is coming apart. Whilst this does not present a H&S issue it would be better to address it at the same time the paving is sorted. **Same condition but has not worsened. The brick edging appears to have been tagged (See 2023 pics)**



Suggestion – consider low impact lighting for the memorial when the paving is fixed one light should be sufficient (casting onto the memorial) Alternatively, tree up lighting.



Block paving faults (note blue book as indicator)





Suggestion regarding moss is to ask WBC if a small ride on street cleaner can be sent to Hungerford to scrub and vacuum block paving at memorial to remove moss. It is not advisable to use a pressure washer as this will blast out the locking sand of the blocks and make situation worse. Also the runoff from this would enter the chalk stream.

Once the memorial was scrubbed then it would be good to get the scrubber to do both sides of the high street pavements.

Inspection Checklist for St Saviours Cemetery

Area: Saint Saviours Cemetery

Date of walk round: 13/01/24

Carried out by: Cllr Nick Schlanker

Areas	Questions	Comments	Further action required (please tick)
Site	Are the boundaries secure & complete?	Yes, All secure	No Action Required
	Are the walls in good condition?	Yes, all in good condition.	No Action Required
	Are pathways undamaged & free from obstructions?	Yes, all undamaged and free from obstructions.	No Action Required
	Is the site free of litter and animal fouling?	Yes	No Action Required
	Are seats/benches in good condition?	Yes, all in good condition	No Action Required
	Are litter bins secure and emptied?	All are free standing, but all in good condition.	No Action Required
	Is the grass cut regularly?	Yes	No Action Required
	Is the grass in good condition?	Condition is good	No Action Required
Condition of structures	Are there any leaning head stones?	Yes, but all secure	No Action Required

	Are there any faults or cracks in the head stones?	Yes, but all secure	No Action Required
	Is there damage to the burial surrounds?	Yes, but all secure	No Action Required
	Are the tombs intact?	Yes	No Action Required
	Does the vegetation intrude into the burial area?	No	No Action Required

Inspection Checklist for St Lawrence's church yard

Area: **St Lawrence's Churchyard**
Date of walk round: **9th January 2024**
Carried out by: **Cllrs Jerry Keates and Stella Coulthurst**

Areas	Questions	Comments	Further action required (please tick)
Site	Are fences secure & complete?	YES	
	Are gates in working order?	YES. However, main gate pathway (south) entrance slabs (appear to be old gravestones) left hand stone smashed and sunken with significant step to tarmac on northern edge. Trip hazard.	✓
	Are pathways undamaged & free from obstructions?	YES	
	Is the site free of litter and animal fouling?	YES. Obviously, significantly impacted by ongoing building works, with some general detritus.	
Ancillary items	Are seats/benches in good condition?	No. All seats need cleaning and treating. Bench adjacent to the path (midway along on the grass front eastern area) has rotted legs that have completely detached from the base mounts and could topple if sat on. The last bench before the Canal entrance requires cleaning as it is completely covered in green slime. The base also has a raised edge, presenting a trip hazard.	✓

		There is also a bench just outside the entrance on the canal bank that is completely unusable due to leaning so close to the ground.	
	Are litter bins secure and emptied?	No litter bins on site.	
Surface	IS the grass cut regularly	YES	
	Is the site well drained?	YES	
	Is the grass in good condition?	YES but could use moss treatment at appropriate time of the year	✓
Other	Are paths cleared of leaves?	YES	
	Evidence for the last memorial inspection programme		
	Seats	See comments above	✓
	Gravestones / graves	Several gravestones are leaning at considerable / precarious angle. They are solid but will continue lean at ever increasing angles. One gravestone partially hidden in a yew tree stand towards eastern side of cemetery has completely fallen over. Also, some tombs are showing considerable wear (e.g. on wrought iron surrounds).	✓
	Boundary walls should be checked	Good condition	
	Maintenance programme for wall		
	Identify any rabbit warrens, fox holes and badger sets as they can create tunnels creating holes.	None seen	
	Trees/Branches	Main avenue pollarded. Looks OK but not possible to judge if all the trees are alive. As per last year, down the west path is a tree where the ivy has been killed by cutting a gap. The upper 10m of dead ivy should be removed. Coming loose.	✓

	Compost heap	Not the neatest part of the site and, as noted last year, beginning to encroach. Would benefit from being reduced in size.	✓
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See below for general comments and photos.

General comments and photos:

Overall general appearance / impression is looked after and well cared for. Boundary wall and clapper gate in good order:



Clapper gate – a very rare feature and in good order:



Walls in good condition:

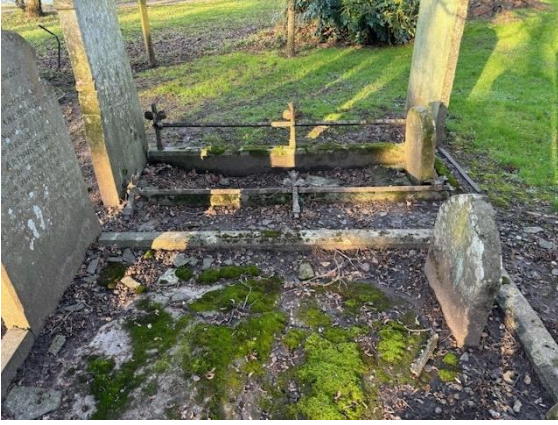


Entrance gate – trip hazard (on left as enter; RH side of photo):



Leaning gravestones / broken tomb surrounds:





Benches generally not in good condition and some dangerously decayed/unusable:
Trip hazard – see RH side of photo



Slime and foot-rot!





Canel bench – not ours?



Trees generally OK – but some hanging ivy, also noted last year:

