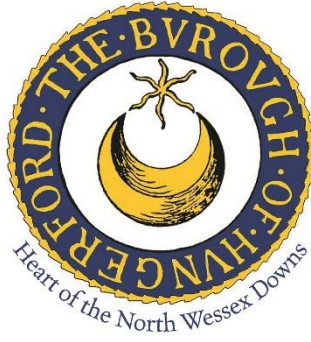


HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the **Full Council Meeting** held on Monday 7th April 2025 at 7.00pm in the Library, Hungerford.

Present: Cllrs, Simpson, Winser, Reeves. Cole, Fyfe, Keates, Alford, Hudson, Carlson, and Montgomery.

Also present: Representative from Penny Post, District Cllr Denise Gaines (DG) from West Berks Council (WBC), and two members of public.

In attendance: Town Clerk, (TC).

The Resource Centre was due to present this evening but have cancelled due to sickness. They are rescheduled to attend the Full Council on 2nd June.

Councillors were invited to join the 100th monthly celebration of Penny Post's Hungerford Newsletter in the Magistrates room of the Town Hall on 20th May 2025 from 12pm to 2pm.

FC20250046 **Note apologies for absence.** Cllr Armstrong
Apologies also from, District Cllrs Dennis Benneyworth (DB) and Vickers (TV) from West Berks Council

FC20250047 **Declarations of interest** – None

FC20250048 **Approval of Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council of 3rd March 2025 and outcome of actions**

Proposed: Cllr Keates

Seconded: Cllr Hudson

Resolution: Minutes of the meeting of 3rd March 2025 were agreed as a true record, three abstentions.

The Mayor thanked the Deputy for chairing the last Full Council meeting in her absence.

Outcome of actions:

DB was not present. There has been no progress on the cleaning of the high street footway.

ACTION: Clerk to chase DB about the above cleaning and the ownership of the garages in Park Way.

Cllr Fyfe has not heard back from DG about getting a working party together to cut back vegetation at the WBC station car park.

ACTION: Clerk to arrange a date for a working party/Smarten Up Hungerford to meet as above and will liaise with WBC over collection of rubbish some of which will be too large for the blue sacks.
Representative from Newbury News entered.

ACTION: Clerk to chase WBC and District Councillors about clearing back of the A338 verge.
WBC have agreed to make the bay outside 5 High St an official loading bay/drop off point. This should be done this financial year.

ACTION: Clerk to check progress with obtaining CCTV footage for the police on parking issues.

Members of staff have been offered the option of a cycle to work scheme.

FC20250049 Receive Mayor's Report – The Mayor added that following her meeting with our MP he has responded with the information requested and the matters are in hand. Refer to the **attached** Mayor's report for more details.

FC20250050 Receive District Councillor's Reports – *This item was taken after item FC20250053 when DG arrived.*

FC20250051 Health & Safety – Receive any complaints or concerns. It was mentioned that there is a lamppost outside the town hall that has its front panel pulled off.

ACTION: Clerk to report to maintenance.

FC20250052 Propose authorisation of payment run (circulated along with copies of invoices) for March.

Proposed: Cllr Winsor

Seconded: Cllr Carlson

Resolution: Authorise payment run of £89,276.59 for March.

FC20250053 Propose year to date accounts – Refer to circulated Income/Expenditure Report.

Proposed: Cllr Winsor

Seconded: Cllr Keates

Resolution: Agree accounts, with a positive variance of £57,253. It was noted this is not fully accurate as there are still items to be entered before year end.

The Mayor welcomed two potential new councillors to the meeting. Simon Mulholland introduced himself as semi retired having worked high up in the private sector and believes he would add some value to the Council. Nia Day is currently chair of HABA (Hungerford Allotment Holders Association) so already attends some of the R&A committee meetings and she would like to help with others. Both candidates were invited to attend further council and committee meetings and HTC will look to co-opt to fill its vacancies at Full Council in June.

(FC20250050)

DG advised she attended the Joint Advisory Committee that has been re-established at the Hungerford Leisure Centre and Callum from Everyone Active is busy working together with charities to make exercise accessible. The new exercise studio is now open and can also be used when the school is shut.

The Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) received positive feedback at the West Berks Council meeting and may be used as a template for others. The HNP was approved for the next stage, Regulation 16.

The Waste Strategy went through exec last week including the change to collections of general rubbish to every three weeks and an increase in the range of recycling.

ACTION: DG will check what info is available on the WBC website with reference to recycling. She will see how awareness of what/how to recycle can be improved, including emptying out contents and washing before recycling. This could be using FAQs, video promotions or regular/seasonal notices. It was mentioned that more local recycling facilities including green waste may help reduce fly tipping.

The Local Plan has come back from the inspector and will be found sound if WBC adopt all the main modifications. The document will be issued this week and will be in the public domain. It will then be considered by WBC for adoption.

It was questioned if central government will split counties when the changes are made to amalgamate smaller authorities. DG advised they will not necessarily be keeping counties together e.g. the proposed joining of WBC with SOC (South Oxfordshire) and VALE (Vale of White Horse). She added there is no guarantee the detailed info submitted in November will be chosen.

FC20250054 Consider response to North Wessex Downs (NWD) Draft Management Consultation plan for 2025-30. Deadline midnight 30 April 2025 - Please see link below to survey and refer to attachment for main changes. <https://surveys.wiltshire.gov.uk/Interview/cad4fd88-3ffa-4a67-ba6d-5163d2ea9a2e>

Cllr Fyfe advised he had written to Henry Oliver the CEO of North Wessex Downs and asked for his comment on the recent solar panel farm application. TV replied as vice chair. The Consultation plan doesn't have much detail on solar. Cllr Fyfe urged other councillors to respond to the consultation as it only happens every 5 years. DG was surprised NWD is not a statutory consultee on applications in the AONB. It was pointed out NWD only have one planning officer. It was thought a briefing from Henry Oliver would be useful.

ACTION: Clerk to set up meeting with Henry Oliver.

ACTION: Councillors to send comments to the Clerk to compile as a draft to agree at E&P on Monday.

FC20250055 Policies: Propose draft amendments, as circulated, to:

- Financial Regulations (following NALC release of new model regulations)
Proposed: Cllr Simpson
Seconded: Cllr Cole
Resolution: Agree draft changes to Financial Regulations as required by NALC.
- Standing Orders (to include Deputy to attend in place of a chair for F&GP)
Proposed: Cllr Winser
Seconded: Cllr Reeves
Resolution: Agree a deputy can attend F&GP committee in place of a chair.
- Propose amendments to Bench Policy (following preference of composite benches)
Proposed: Cllr Simpson
Seconded: Cllr Keates
Resolution: Agree draft changes. It was noted the maintenance costs will reduce for composite benches as they should only require cleaning.
- St Saviour's Regulations and wording for new sign for Section F.
Proposed: Cllr Carlson
Seconded: Cllr Alford
Resolution: Agree wording and new sign to help make terms as clear as possible.

FC20250056 Propose support for transfer of Ramsbury Drive Play Park to HTC – refer to email. Cllr Simpson had a meeting with Paul Hendry (WBC - Countryside) explaining HTC felt the park had been neglected and whilst we couldn't afford to take on the green surrounding area we would take on the maintenance of the play park. It was noted that the climbing frame needs rubbing down and repainting as it is splintering. WBC has installed two new pieces of equipment, a slide and a rocker. HTC would also be responsible for the quarterly ROSPA, emptying of the bin and grass cutting. WBC has offered HTC £15k as a one off payment to help cover costs. HTC already looks after the other playparks in Hungerford apart from the two looked after by the management companies at Kennedy Meadows and Lancaster Park. Discussion took place over ideas for the surrounding green area which included a community orchard or garden or it could remain a grass area for kids to kick a ball around.

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Fyfe

Resolution: Agree transfer of Ramsbury Play Park to HTC on receipt of a one-off £15k budget.

FC20250057 Consider transfer of solar panels on Hub to HTC – details supplied. HTC haven't been included in the discussion so far however we are advised that there will be no maintenance contract to pay. The insurance cost is only £20 annually.

ACTION: Clerk to arrange a meeting with the Hub before F&GP in May.

FC20250058 Receive feedback from Talent show at Primary School – The winner of the show also sang at the Mayor's Reception. The Mayor thanked Cllrs Winser and Armstrong for their work in arranging of the event. It is thought that next year the school may take it on as they are keen to work with the Town Council. The Mayor added it was an absolute pleasure to be a judge and the children were outstanding.

- FC20250059 Volunteers needed to dress tree for Hocktide** – Cllr Winser had laminated HTC logos for decorating the tree. She handed these out to other councillors for cutting out and returning to the office for ribbon tying. Volunteers were requested for decorating the tree on the 25th April.
- FC20250060 Receive feedback from Great West Way event** – A report from K Salmon was read out. See attached. Karen as Chair of the Chamber of Commerce has offered to take on future GWW tourism events and will keep us informed. The Clerk will remain the editor for articles.
Proposed: Cllr Montgomery
Seconded: Cllr Cole
Resolution: Agree Chamber take on responsibility for future GWW tourism events.
- FC20250061 Update on Britain in Bloom** – The Councillor leading the project has left. If the project is to happen this year it will need a proper working party. We need to be mindful that all existing planters are being replaced at the end of May and need time to be established. Also the High St will be dug up in May due to gas works. Photos are needed of Hungerford all year around. The idea is to showcase the town. Judging takes place in July.
ACTIONS: Cllr Reeves offered to do the walkaround with the judges and to speak to HAAHA, and Cllr Fyfe is happy to do the powerpoint. Cllr Montgomery will run the working party. Cllr Keates will liaise with Smarten up Hungerford. Town & Manor should be consulted.
Proposed: Cllr Cole
Seconded: Cllr Reeves
Resolution: Proceed with Britain in Bloom. Office can provide limited support.
- FC20250062 Receive any reports (no more than 3 minutes per report which cannot contain any proposals).**
Cllr Keates reported that he had been challenged recently with a diagnosis of prostate cancer. He urged any male aged over 50 to get checked (aged over 45 with a family history). The check consists of a simple blood test to measure the amount of PSA and if the level is raised it will be followed up by a scan/further investigation and if caught early it is easier to treat. He asked everyone to encourage others to get themselves checked. Cllr Montgomery added that he had been affected and stressed the importance of yearly checkups.
Cllr Hudson announced the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan is now undergoing Regulation 16.

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.

- FC20250063 Consider liability of Church lane Allotments** – A discussion took place.

ACTION: Clerk to revert back to the landowner for next steps.

Meeting closed 9.20pm

Mayors Report April 2025

Meeting with the MP on Local Concerns

Recently, I had the opportunity to meet our Member of Parliament (MP) to discuss several pressing local issues, alongside Cllrs, Cole and Fyfe. A key topic of conversation was the ongoing concerns regarding anti-social

behaviour in housing association properties within our community. We addressed the challenges residents are facing, particularly in terms of the lack of effective support and responsiveness from the relevant authorities. Many residents have voiced their frustration, feeling that their concerns are not being adequately addressed. The MP was able to share valuable contacts that will help raise these concerns more directly and facilitate better communication between residents, housing associations, and local authorities. We are committed to working together to find practical solutions to these issues, ensuring that everyone feels supported and heard. We also talked about the recent police announcement that Hungerford will lose its local neighbourhood sergeant, we are all frustrated by the new reorganisation on the neighbourhood policing team. Officially I have not heard back from TVP following my call to them, stressing the importance of having a Sgt based in the town.

Thank you for visiting Lee, HTC, look forward to our next meeting and continuing the valuable communication between our organisations.

Ramsbury Play Park Visit

Councillor Fyfe and I recently visited the Ramsbury Play Park, where we met with the Countryside Manager, Paul Hendry, to discuss the future of the park. Currently, the play park is not under Hungerford Town Council's (HTC) domain, and we explored the possibility of HTC taking over the running of the park. During the meeting, we discussed the outstanding maintenance work that needs to be completed before the park can be transferred. Paul Hendry agreed to request that the remaining maintenance be carried out, after which the park will be handed over to HTC with a £15,000 one-off budget transfer to support works required. HTC want to ensure the playpark remains a safe and enjoyable space for the community.

Hungerford Has Talent

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Councillors Winser and Armstrong for their dedication in making Hungerford Has Talent a resounding success. The event featured eight fantastic acts from local primary school children, showcasing an array of talents, including singing, dancing, and even a magic act. The performances were judged by local actor Nicholas Lumley, Cllr Winser and me. It was evident that Hungerford truly does have talent, and we were thoroughly impressed by the confidence and quality of the performances. Although it was a tough decision, we

chose Albie, a talented singer, as the overall winner. We were delighted to see Albie perform once again at the Mayor's Reception, and I look forward to seeing more young talents shine in the future. Thank you to Hungerford Primary school for working with us

Hungerford Town Meeting

This year, we were pleased to welcome around 100 residents to our annual Town Meeting. It was encouraging to see such strong community involvement, and it was a fantastic opportunity to hear from local groups and organisations who were on hand to share news and information. We were also fortunate to have representatives from West Berkshire Council, as well as the police, fire, and South-Central Ambulance Service, present to update residents on their work and share best practices. A special thank you goes to all the groups and charities who took the time to contribute, ensuring the evening was both informative and engaging for the local community. It was a great reminder of how much we can achieve when we come together as a town.

Hungerford's Neighbourhood Plan

I am pleased to report that Hungerford's Neighbourhood Plan was officially approved at a recent West Berkshire Council meeting. This marks a significant milestone, as it means the Regulation 16, six-week consultation process is now underway. The council was extremely complimentary about the content of the plan, which is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the councillors and local volunteers involved in its creation. I would like to extend a special thank you to the Neighbourhood Plan Team, particularly Councillor Hudson and Town Clerk Claire Barnes,

for their tireless efforts in bringing the plan to this stage. This plan will help shape the future of our town, ensuring that it continues to grow in a way that reflects the needs and aspirations of our community. Please complete the on-line consultation which is now live.

Hungerford Leisure Centre Management and JAC Meeting

Hungerford's leisure centre is operating under the management of *Everyone Active*. Last week, I had the opportunity to attend a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) meeting alongside Councillors Winsor and Reeves. This marked the first JAC meeting in many years, and while I will leave the specifics of the discussion to my colleagues, I wanted to emphasize the importance of these meetings. It was universally agreed that they were long overdue, and everyone involved expressed a renewed sense of enthusiasm in working together to ensure the ongoing success of the leisure centre for our community. A schedule of meeting dates will be forwarded for the year.

Hungerford Town Council contributes nearly £40,000 to help with the running costs of the centre, making it crucial for us to have a seat at the table. This ensures that the community's needs and expectations are being met effectively. The collaborative effort between all parties is essential to ensure that the centre continues to thrive and serve the local population well.

New Multifunctional Fitness Studio The new multifunctional fitness studio at Hungerford Leisure Centre is now complete and open for use. This expansion enables the centre to offer a broader range of exercise classes, catering to more users. Classes available include popular options such as yoga, Pilates, and various other fitness programs. The new studio is equipped with mirrors and is a fantastic addition to the centre. We are hopeful that this space will evolve further, potentially incorporating a ballet bar in the future to accommodate additional classes and activities.

This new facility is an asset for the community, and we are excited about the expanded opportunities for fitness and wellbeing that it provides. The collaboration between *Everyone Active*, West Berkshire Council and Hungerford Town Council, is proving to be a vital part of ensuring the continued success of the leisure centre. The new fitness studio is just one of many positive developments that will help enhance the services provided to our community. With ongoing dialogue and cooperation, we look forward to the leisure centre continuing to thrive.

Cllr Helen Simpson Town Mayor

HTC and HCC joint adventure

The Great West Way Media Discovery event took place in Reading on March 23 and 24, 2025, coinciding with English Tourism Week. This inaugural event brought together approximately 45 travel media professionals—including editors, freelancers, content creators, and influencers—with tourism businesses and destinations along the Great West Way route. The goal was to foster networking opportunities and enhance the visibility of the region's tourism offerings.

The event also marked the unveiling of the 2025 edition of the Great West Way Travel Magazine and introduced the Jane Austen 250 campaign, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the author's life.

Hungerford was indeed represented at the Great West Way Media Discovery event. Stella Coulthurst from Hungerford Town Council and Karen Salmon from Hungerford Chamber of Commerce attended as an ambassador, showcasing what Hungerford has to offer along the Great West Way route. Our preparation included a PR sent out and inviting 18 journalists and media people to come to our table to discover more about Hungerford. All 18 accepted our invitation so off we went early on the Monday armed with our glorious display board with lots of beautiful pictures of the common, the canal and the town. We had had printed copies of the Heritage Trail in full colour.

Unfortunately, the event highlighted various destinations along the route, but their presentation video did not include Hungerford which was pointed out at every opportunity by Karen.

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES REPORT FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON 7TH APRIL 2025
MONTH 12 INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT FOR MARCH 2025

101 FINANCE:

Full Precept received.

102 ADMINISTRATION:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £507 positive variance.

103 GRANTS & DONATIONS:

Net Expenditure is a £1,645 negative variance. The Leisure Centre grant was £1.923 less than budgeted and there was a total grant of £2,694 given to the Rugby Club and Croft Hall to maximise Good Exchange grants.

104 POOL HOUSE:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £114 positive variance due to the annual rent increase.

105 CONTINGENCY:

Net Expenditure is a £662 negative variance due to external maintenance of £1,200 for the Library Lightning Conductor this month, see Nominal 4255.

106 TOURISM SUPPORT BUDGET:

Net Expenditure is a £660 negative variance this month, Great West Way event shared with the Chamber of Commerce, see Nominal 1118 a £300 contribution from CofC.

107 ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING:

Net Expenditure is a £147 negative variance this month, Land Registry fee for the offered Newton allotments.

109 HUNGERFORD 2036 PROJECT:

Net Expenditure is a £65 negative variance this month.

201 RECREATION & AMENITIES:

Net Income over Expenditure is an £1,026 positive variance.

202 WAR MEMORIAL GROUND:

Net Expenditure was a £509 negative variance this month.

203 ST SAVIOURS:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £180 positive variance.

204 CROFT FIELD:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £373 positive variance. Income was up by £1,396.

205 LIBRARY MAINTENANCE COSTS:

Net Expenditure was a £1,156 negative variance this month, Lightning Conductor maintenance re Nominal 4099.

206 TRIANGLE FIELD:

Net Income over Expenditure is an £22 positive variance.

301 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS:

Net Income or Expenditure is a £100 positive variance. £100 was received via the Good Exchange.

302 HIGHWAYS:

Net Income over Expenditure is an £11,319 positive variance. WBC have not invoiced yet for the annual Streetlight charge.

303 CCTV:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £151 positive variance.

9001 RESERVES

A total of £3,518 was moved from EMR for tree works and HRFC & Croft Hall grants.

March's Net Income over Expenditure is an £8,083 positive variance.

The Year to Date Net Income over Expenditure is a £57,253 positive variance.

The final Income and Expenditure report will be provided once the RFO has closed the annual 2024/2025 accounts.

Claire Winser, Chair of F&GP, 5th April 2025