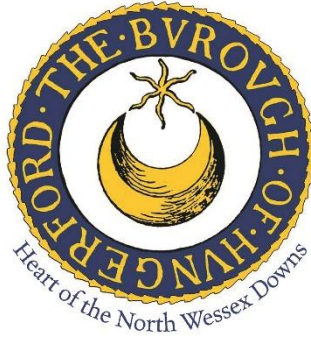


HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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DRAFT MINUTES of the **Full Council Meeting** held on Monday 1st September 2025 at 7.00pm in the Library, Hungerford.

Present: Cllrs, Simpson, Alford, Reeves, Cole, Fyfe, Keates, Brunning, Day, Mulholland, Hudson

Also present: Representative from Penny Post. District Cllr Dennis Benneyworth (DB) and a prospective new councillor.

In attendance: Town Clerk, (TC).

FC202500125 Note apologies for absence. Cllrs Winser and Carlson

Apologies also from, District Cllrs Tony Vickers (TV) and Denise Gaines (DG) from West Berks Council (WBC).

In the absence of the Police, the Mayor drew attention to the ASB mentioned in her Mayor's report and thanked all involved for their swift actions to fix the goal posts and gather the rubbish and glass. She added there had been a potential car break in which was not successful, and Police have carried out a partial house closure for a property in Southview.

FC202500126 Declarations of interest – None.

FC202500127 Consider co-option of new councillor

There were no questions for Chris and it was agreed to vote in an open ballot.

Chris expressed his interest in joining the E&P and H&T committees

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Keates

Resolution: Co-opt Chris Hall as a new councillor.

Chris signed his acceptance of office form and joined the table.

FC202500128 Approval of Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council of 4th August 2025 and outcome of actions

Proposed: Cllr Keates

Seconded: Cllr Cole

Resolution: Minutes of the meeting of 4th August 2025 were agreed as a true record. One abstention.

Outcome of actions: No actions outstanding.

FC202500129 Receive Mayor's Report – Refer to attached report.

The Mayor added that a meeting took place on 6th Aug between Philippa Venables, Laura Callan and Lee Goodall from WBC and several councillors and staff. It was an opening conversation to discuss how we can work better together on planning issues and application responses. We received a list of links to WBC's website/planning portal and were advised how to receive useful notifications. We are awaiting feedback on several questions asked.

In addition to the Mayor's report on the Resource centre it was noted that the building has a restriction/covenant on its use. HTC has already helped raised the profile of the centre and as a result

they are receiving more enquiries. This upward trend should continue as advertising is being improved. The centre is currently operating at 65% capacity. It was confirmed that the surgery does makes referrals and the facility is open to private patients. All were encouraged to continue to promote the centre.

During the recent visit, it was found a whole floor is not being used due to safeguarding and access issues. It was queried what the cost of a lift would be and if fundraising could be sought. Concern was voiced that WBC haven't produced a cost analysis of closure or impact on respite care or care homes.

DB expressed his support of the Resource Centre and said it would be a false economy to close it. He had hoped WBC would have decided by now as the uncertainty is having a detrimental effect on the patients.

Cllr Alford mentioned that the vicar is kindly sending in a team to smarten up the Resource Centre garden.

FC202500130 Receive District Councillor's Reports – DB highlighted the deadline for Member's Bids applications which is October 13th. HTC's application has been submitted for replacement defibrillators.

FC202500131 Health & Safety – Receive any complaints or concerns. None were raised.

FC202500132 Propose authorisation of payment run (circulated along with copies of invoices) for August. (refer to HTC website to view pay runs)

Proposed: Cllr Keates

Seconded: Cllr Cole

Resolution: Authorise payment run of £26,359.57. One abstention.

FC202500133 Note external audit - Council noted the outcome of the external audit '*On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met*'. The Mayor expressed thanks to all those involved.

FC202500134 Propose accounts to date – Refer to circulated Income/Expenditure Report.

Proposed: Cllr Winser

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

Resolution: Agree accounts to date with a positive variance of £89,353. One abstention.

FC202500135 Britain in Bloom –

ACTION: Cllrs Day and Keates volunteered to attend the Awards ceremony on 25th Sept to find out the results of our entry and to pick up any feedback. They will liaise with Cllr Winser.

Going forward we need to understand the objective, budget and cost. This year we had short timescales so weren't as prepared as we could have been. If we decide to enter in the future we would look for the support of local business and the Chamber of Commerce.

FC202500136 Update on Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) – Cllr Hudson reported that we have answered the examiners questions and proposed modifications have been received. The draft report needed to be fact checked. The tone of the draft report was very complementary and the HNP will go straight to a referendum not to an Examination in Public. We were slightly disappointed that we can't extend the primary retail area on the eastside of the high street from the railway bridge to Naked Grape, and it can only be extended as far as Park St. The basis of this is that the HNP needs to be consistent with the WBC Local Plan Review. The other modifications are minor. We can carry out a refresh on the HNP in the future after adoption but this wouldn't usually happen until after 5 years. The Mayor expressed her thanks to Cllr Hudson, the Clerk and to all team members for their work on the HNP.

Proposed: Cllr Hudson

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

Resolution: Accept the Examiner's recommendations and modifications.

Proposed: Cllr Hudson

Seconded: Cllr Cole

Resolution: Agree an extension to the deadline so the Decision Statement can be published on Friday 17 October 2025 by WBC.

The WBC meeting on 16th October should be a rubber stamp for the HNP to proceed. DB suggested Cllr Hudson and others may wish to attend that meeting to see it agreed.

FC202500137 Recieve any reports (no more than 3 minutes per report which cannot contain any proposals). North Wessex Downs (NWD) are holding their Annual forum on 12th November at Herongate. This will cover their new Management Plan. Tickets will be available soon.

ACTION: Cllrs Cole, Simson, Keates and Fyfe expressed interest in attending.

A briefing will take place at 9.30am on Thursday 4th Sept at the Cuttings for volunteers who are helping cut back and clear the vegetation at the WBC Station car park. Volunteers should wear appropriate clothing and bring basic garden equipment.

Members of public left the meeting 8.07pm

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.

FC202500138 Ratify decision of Freedom of the Town Panel for nomination of awardees. Three awardees have been selected by the panel. The choice of the panel was ratified by Town Council. It was suggested the protocol may wish to be reviewed.

FC202500139 Church lane Allotments –

○ **Receive update on wall repair** – Cllr Keates presented a powerpoint showing the progress.

○ **Consider acceptance of transfer of freehold to Hungerford Town Council**

ACTION: Clerk to appoint a structural engineer to check works.

Proposed: Cllr Keates

Seconded: Cllr Fyfe

Resolution: Following the result of the structural engineer's report, the decision on whether to proceed with the transfer of the freehold to HTC is delegated to the Mayor, Clerk and Deputy Mayor.

Council was keen to name the allotments after the person that gifted them.

FC202500140 Hungerford Archery – Propose terms of annual hire of section of Triangle Field. Details are awaited before terms can be agreed such as dates of hire and permission for placement of a container.

Meeting closed 8.37pm

Mayor's Report - Full Council Meeting – August Report

Welcome back, everyone. I hope you've all enjoyed a restful and refreshing summer break.

Resource Centre Visit – 14th August

Cllr Reeves and I had the opportunity to visit the Resource Centre on August 14th. You may have seen the recent press coverage regarding the ongoing consultation by West Berkshire Council (WBC), which includes the possibility of closure.

Our visit was deeply humbling. The centre provides truly invaluable support to many vulnerable members of our community, including those living with severe disabilities and dementia. In some cases, the service simply offers vital general care and a hot meal—small things that make a big difference.

The prospect of losing this facility would be devastating for our town. The staff are providing exceptional levels of care, something that was clearly evident from conversations with both service users and carers alike. I will be writing to WBC with our observations and the impact this closure could have. In the meantime, I encourage us all to continue raising the centre's profile within the community.

VJ Day Service – Hungerford Royal British Legion, 15th August

Thank you to the Royal British Legion for organising a moving and memorable VJ Day service at sunset. The timing gave the ceremony an especially poignant and reflective atmosphere.

You may recall that Hungerford donated funds from the D-Day 80 events to the local RBL branch. In a generous gesture, the branch has now gifted the town a memorial bench using some of those funds. This thoughtful addition offers residents a lasting space for remembrance and reflection.

Policing & Anti-Social Behaviour

I have written to our local policing team to request an update covering the summer period and will circulate their response once received.

I am aware of recent incidents of anti-social behaviour at the Marsh Lane playground. On two occasions, the goalposts were removed and thrown into the hedge, and litter bins were displaced. HTC has requested increased police patrols in the area, and we hope that our next CCTV camera installation will be prioritised for this location. A big thank you to HTC's maintenance staff and contractors for their prompt and effective response in reinstating the equipment.

There have also been a few reports of shoplifting, most recently at Cooper and Cooper. I have encouraged local businesses to ensure all crimes are reported to the police to help build a more accurate picture.

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

Richard will provide a more detailed update shortly, but I would like to take a moment to express how proud I am of the progress made. The feedback received from WBC, and the Inspector has been very positive.

We're hopeful the NDP will go to referendum before the end of the year. I want to extend sincere thanks and congratulations to Richard Hudson and Claire Barnes for their recent leadership on the plan, and to the entire team who have worked so diligently to bring it to this stage.

Cyber Crime/ crime prevention initiative

My name is Chris White, and I'm a Police Detective working with the Police Cyber Resilience Centre for the Southeast, a Home Office, and policing initiative set up to help organisations protect themselves from cyber-crime.

We're seeing a growing number of online threats disrupting small organisations, especially email and social media account takeovers, ransomware attacks, and network breaches. These threats can have consequences for finances, data protection, and public trust. To support local organisations, we are offering practical tools, guidance, and resources to help identify and reduce vulnerabilities. This support is aimed at any organisation using email, websites, social media, or internet-connected devices, including parish councils, charities, and small businesses.

You can gain immediate access to funded security awareness training to help meet ICO guidance on data protection, regular threat updates and actionable guidance, and a direct link to police cyber security expertise. You can join the centre at www.secrc.police.uk, or simply reply to this email and I'll be happy to help.

As a key community partner, I would also be grateful if you could share this government opportunity with organisations in your parish, particularly smaller charities and businesses that often lack the resources to access cyber security support on their own.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with any questions or to assure yourself of this police crime prevention project.

Chris White

Police Detective Inspector

chris.white@secrc.police.uk

Thank you all for your continued commitment and support

Cllr Helen Simpson

Mayor of Hungerford

**FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES REPORT FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON 1ST SEPTEMBER
2025
MONTH 5 INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT FOR AUGUST 2025**

101 FINANCE:

The first Precept instalment of £191,970 has been received.

102 ADMINISTRATION:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £589 positive variance.

103 GRANTS & DONATIONS:

NET Expenditure is a £6,500 positive variance this month.

104 POOL HOUSE:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £69 positive variance due to the rental increase.

105 CONTINGENCY:

No Expenditure this month.

107 ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £9 negative variance. £21 expenditure on Land Registry Fees.

109 HUNGERFORD 2036 PROJECT:

No Expenditure this month.

201 RECREATION & AMENITIES:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £1,231 positive variance.

202 WAR MEMORIAL GROUND:

Net Expenditure is a £150 positive variance this month.

203 ST SAVIOURS:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £1,118 positive variance.

204 CROFT FIELD:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £575 negative variance. Croft Income was £432 below budget.

205 LIBRARY MAINTENANCE COSTS:

No Expenditure this month.

206 TRIANGLE FIELD:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £470 positive variance.

301 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS:

No Expenditure this month.

302 HIGHWAYS:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £119 positive variance. £470 was received as Hanging Basket Donations.

303 CCTV:

Net Income over Expenditure is an £415 positive variance.

901 RESERVES:

Transfer of £227 from EMR for Bench cleaning and removal of trees to clear CCTV views.

August's Net Income over Expenditure is a £9,850 positive variance.

Year to date Net Income over Expenditure is a £89,353 positive variance.

Claire Winser

Chair of F&GP

29th August 2025