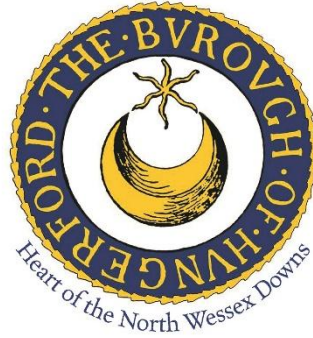


HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the **Highways and Transport Committee** meeting held on Monday 24th March 2025 at 7.00pm, in the Library, Hungerford

Present: Cllrs, Keates, Simpson, Fyfe, Reeves, Coulthurst, Cole, Hudson, Alford, Montgomery, Winser and Carlson. In attendance: Claire Barnes (Town Clerk)

HT20250019. Apologies for absence – Cllrs Knight and Armstrong.

HT20250020. Declarations of interest - None

HT20250021. Agreement of minutes of meeting held on Monday 27th January 2025

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Cole

Resolution: Agree minutes of 27th January 2025 as a true record. Three abstentions.

HT20250022. Update on actions from previous meetings, not on this agenda – Congratulations were expressed to Cllr Hudson on the success of achieving a 30mph speed limit through Sanham Green. Following discussion with WBC, H&T committee are not now considering black bags as an option in the high street, instead of wheelie bins, due to contamination and vermin concerns. The loose wire hanging down from a lamppost in Atherton Road is being fixed. WBC are updating their 'report a problem' system to show all parish owned lampposts with the correct contact for each. WBC have been advised that it is too late for bulbs to be planted on the ASDA roundabout. Other plans have been suggested to them by Smarten Up Hungerford. The overhanging trees in the river by Bridge St War memorial have been reported to the owner. Further overhanging trees/shrubbery opposite the Asda garage have been reported to WBC.

ACTION: Cllr Simpson has yet to mention to the vicar/church the possibility of ARMCO being installed to the canal bank.

ACTION: Chase up responses to our requests to cut back the overhanging trees.

ACTION: Wait to hear response from Liam at WBC about clearing back of the verge on the A338.

ACTION: Cllr Simpson will report a power line that is hanging down.
Other actions are complete or on the agenda.

HT20250023. Complaint concerning safety of Zebra Crossings – Charnham Street & Bridge Street

Receive the following feedback from West Berks Council (WBC). *'We have added a review of the zebra crossings onto our programme of works for the next financial year. The review will look at all aspects of the crossings from signage, lining and visibility to them on approach from both directions. Obviously, we will have to comply with Highway design standards and guidance, and we can't do anything not approved but there may be some scope to enhance their appearances.'*

Since the above concerns were reported to WBC, we have received a request for an additional pedestrian crossing outside Bearwater where elderly people are trying to cross the road. It was suggested this could go by the island where people are crossing and at that location it may be possible to build out so only one parking space is lost.

Proposed: Cllr Keates

Seconded: Cllr Cole

ACTION: **Resolution:** Support the suggestion of a crossing at this location and send this request to WBC Highways to consider when they do their review of zebra crossings next financial year.

HT20250024. Consider offer of cycle shelter in Church Street Car Park – Cllr Hudson has measured the space next to the Changing Places pod where there are already cycle racks in situ. It would fit nicely over these. However, to purchase a new shelter is not too expensive around £2k. Committee were not prepared to pay towards installation of a second-hand shelter. There was concern over the condition of the shelter and that it could look unsightly if the perspex is stained.

ACTION: It was agreed a site visit is required to consider the state of the shelter before accepting it.

HT20250025. Receive any updates on SIDs, speeding and purchase of equipment – Cllr Hudson advised it is not always easy to extract the data from the speed indicator devices (SIDs) particularly when batteries are low. It was queried if we can make them more reliant. Our requests to use an adaptor to trickle charge the SIDs from lampposts have been turned down by WBC. It was questioned if there is any need to move the SIDs around as they are located in ideal positions and having a good impact.

ACTION: Escalate to Stuart Gorley for permission to be reconsidered.

HT20250026. Receive any updates on our Britain in Bloom entry/projects. Cllr Coulthurst advised we have entered the Britain in Bloom competition. Letters need to go out to the volunteers but these need to be individually tailored. Concern over the impact on the office was mentioned. It was noted that we need to agree a 2 hour walk, a 15minute presentation and where to hold the reception. Cllr Keates can help with arranging the order and the Town & Manor can be involved to include the Corn Exchange and Wetland Reserve. A first it was suggested that sponsors should be obtained but then it was agreed this would not happen this year. Grant money has been promised of around £5k. It was pointed out that this did not include moving the welcome to Hungerford sign to include Lancaster Park. A call out in Penny Post for volunteers was suggested and writing to organisations rather than residents. Artwork on the ASDA roundabout is an aspiration and next year we can look at involving stakeholders. It was agreed a working party is needed to share the workload. Cllr Fyfe (to do presentation), Cllr Montgomery (organiser), Cllr Coulthurst (Chair), other members include Cllrs Keates and Winsor, Smarten Up Hungerford and the Clerk.

ACTION: First meeting to take place 3rd April at 4pm to 5.30pm. Venue to be confirmed. (*meeting since cancelled*)

HT20250027. Await revised plan for safety improvements at The Croft from WBC. Cllr Hudson has emailed chasing Gareth Dowding at WBC who is putting together a simplified scheme hopefully for next H&T.

ACTION: Continue to chase and add to May H&T agenda for update.

HT20250028. Receive complaint about the poor state of Denford Canal bridge – The bridge keeps being hit and it is not being repaired. As sign to state that the road is not suitable for HGVs was suggested however it is thought that the tanker lorries need to get to the sewage works.

Proposed: Cllr Reeves

Seconded: Cllr Keates

ACTION: Write to WBC again requesting that they review the problem.

HT20250029. Receive any feedback from West Berks Council on devolution of services e.g. gully and ditch clearing, sign cleaning, overhanging trees. Cllr Fyfe advised from the information we have received from WBC there are no statutory levels (*refer to info attached below*)

ACTION: Cllr Fyfe will produce a letter in response to WBC's emails. Keep this item on the agenda for May H&T.

It was noted that the gas pipes will be re-laid in the high Street which could cause 3 to 4 weeks of disruption with traffic lights. WBC have details of our contact for York Stone so they can have supplies ready if needed.

HT20250030. Consider quotes for -

Improvements required to existing CCTV system –Our CCTV provider has advised, *due to the proliferation of 5Ghz Wi-Fi in homes and businesses there is less available space in the wireless spectrum, resulting in system disruption and disconnection. Unfortunately, they are seeing this more and more with customers. They can arrange to set our device to auto-reboot if connections drop (site visit required) or look to replace with 60Ghz Link.* Please see attached.

An additional camera for the top (south) end of the high street – refer to quote attached.

Proposed: Cllr Fyfe

Seconded: Cllr Hudson

ACTION: Resolution: Proceed with options 1 and 2 on the attached report. Appoint SMART to replace two sets of links costing £3,000. It was agreed to carry out needed improvements to the current CCTV network and not to install any new cameras at this time.

HT20250031. Any H&S issues of concern including;

- **Safety of high street footway due to cracked slabs.** Cllrs Keates explained that he and Cllr Hudson have put together a spreadsheet listing every defect. He also mentioned that the state of the tarmac from the Borough Arms up the high street is in very poor condition.

ACTION: Cllr Hudson will forward the spreadsheet including photos to the Clerk.

- **Update following observations from smarten up team** – WBC will be replacing the rotting posts on the bridge over the canal next financial year with new ones on a like for like basis.
- **A338/Hungerford Newtown verge** – Receive any update from WBC. (*discussed under item HT20250022 above*)
- **Poor state of garage in Park Way and Orchard View Close** – Cllr Fyfe has some information on which garages are owned by Sovereign.

ACTION: Add this item to the next H&T agenda.

Meeting closed at 8.47pm

Ref: HT20250029

See below questions sent to West Berks Council (WBC), with their responses. We also are in receipt of two spreadsheets detailing 27 Grips and Ditches and 1658 Gully and Nodes.

1. **Gully Cleaning.** Please provide a map or list showing the gully's WBC clears in the Parish of Hungerford. Please confirm the basic statutory level of gully clearance for the Parish of Hungerford. Please also confirm when the last gully clearance was done. Was the Parish of Hungerford's gullies cleared in a concentrated period of a week or is the work timetabled differently?

There's isn't a statutory level of gully clearance. The frequency of inspection and clearing is highlighted based on the field "cycle length". This is determined based on risk and site observations reflecting how full the gullies are, logistics and economic constraints. All relevant information is in the spreadsheet.

The gully cleansing programme is subject to a major overhaul FY 25/26 following the first 4 years of data collection therefore all cycles are subject to change.

There are 1,520 gullies in the Parish of Hungerford. It would not be possible or practical to cleanse everything in a concentrated period of one week. As noted above work is phased, whilst it is exceptionally challenging to determine effective roots for more than 34,000 assets attempts are made to try and tie together routes with similar cycles in the same area.

We hope to be able to provide this information soon in a more accessible format, but work on the website is indefinitely delayed due to exceptionally high number of enquiries, and requests for information from members, parish councils, members of the public, etc.

2. **Ditch Clearance.** Please provide a map detailing the ditches WBC clears in the Parish of Hungerford. Please provide a document stating the statutory level of ditch clearance the Parish of Hungerford can expect? When was the last statutory ditch clearance completed?

Please see [Responsibilities: ditches and riparian owners - West Berkshire Council](#) and [Ditch responsibilities explained - West Berkshire Council](#)

There isn't a statutory level of ditch clearance. WBC has not historically proactively cleansed ditches due to insufficient maintenance budgets, opting instead to rely on reactive maintenance. We launched a grip and ditch programme in FY24/25 to pivot towards a proactive approach, but work is ongoing to map ditches and grips across the district.

WBC does try to put pressure on landowners to maintain adjacent ditches as they are often assumed to have responsibility for them under common law.

I've attached a list of recorded ditches and grips in Hungerford parish. Third party ditches are rarely recorded.

Regards,

Paul Bacchus

Principal Engineer (Drainage and Flood Risk)

Environment Department West Berkshire Council Market Street Newbury Berkshire RG14 5LD