

## TOWN CENTRE STEERING GROUP

Suite A The Courtyard – offices of Marlborough Law Ltd.

Minutes of the meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024

**Present:** James Cole (JC, Chair), Alistair Fyfe (AF), Adrian Gilmour (AG), Ed Mills (EM), Karen Salmon (KS), Hugh Pihlens (HP), Helen Simpson (HS), Charlie Barr (CB).  
Also in attendance Stella Coulthurst (SC)

**On Teams:** Anna Doherty (AD), Jehona Hansell (JH), Simon Lee-Smith (SLS)

		ACTION POINT
1.	<p><b>Meeting opened</b> at 6.15pm and JC welcomed everyone.</p> <p><b>Apologies</b> were received from Julie Lloyd.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Actions from July meeting:</b></p> <p>a. <b>Minutes’ format:</b> The meeting discussed the preferred format of the Minutes, with the merits of “verbatim” (in keeping with T&amp;M) and key points/conclusion “concise” alternatives considered. TCSG does need to publish its minutes but as an advisory body does not need to retain them. It was noted that a full recording (via Microsoft Teams or iPhone Voice Memo) was an option for the full detail. There was a consensus in favour of concise minutes accompanied by a recording. The recording via Teams was started by AD [copy now also with SC and can be made available to all]. SC was asked to edit the May minutes into concise form.</p> <p>b. <b>Ownership and permitted uses of the land in front of the Town Hall:</b> AD confirmed that the matter was with WBC and was hopeful of a response ahead of TCGS’s September meeting.</p> <p>c. <b>Lights:</b> AF advised that some lights had been repaired or replaced in the car park; the discussion on clean/new/different lights was ongoing.</p> <p>d. <b>Cuttings and associated areas:</b> AF and HS had a meeting with Jon Winstanley, accompanied by a senior solicitor, following up on a less than adequate response to AF’s FOI request on queries relating to the station car park (e.g. a discrepancy between the indicated and actual number of spaces). They took away some action points.</p> <p>In the Cuttings area, we are not seeing any real action in floral/garden improvements.</p> <p>e. <b>Commercial Bins on High Street: Tasked to</b> HTC Councillor Claire Winsler, who has had time to progress this matter; possibly best described as “jogging on”.</p> <p><b>The Canal Project:</b> JH advised there was little to report, although the initial emphasis will be on the Newbury section-delivery subject to further funds. Note that this update is based on a separate district-wide canal towpath improvement scheme, a section of which includes the canal towpath that runs through Hungerford town centre. JC asked JH to give the group an update the</p>	<p>AD</p> <p>AF</p> <p>JC</p>

	<p>group on the smaller improvements (such as signage) that might help to push visitors towards the town.</p> <p>The meeting unanimously approved the Minutes (with an abstention from HS, who was away), with a correction requested by AG. The verbatim meeting would be circulated in final draft with a view to publishing.</p> <p>It was noted that WBC had reviewed the preferred option (AF's #2) but, in advertently, also the others in his presentation. This did give some insight on what may be feasible and options to make something similar work.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Proposed town square</b></p> <p>a. <b>Ownership:</b> It was again noted that a detailed review on ownership and “who can do what” is in progress, with the prospect of a response in September.</p> <p>b. <b>Next steps:</b> The key next step, assuming go ahead on a town square, was its use. There would appear to be a wide range of options (beer festival, summer evening book readings, theatre), suited to a smaller space (it was noted that for the big “set piece” events (Xmas lights, carnival &amp;c) we already had a working approach. It was noted that until the questions of money available for the works and highway ownership/use were resolved, consideration of “use” was only speculation. JH advised that she will advise the group as soon as a decision is made on money, which may be in August.</p> <p>The meeting agreed that WBC Highways should be invited to the next meeting to advise us on feasibility/options (notably, to preserve as much parking as possible), alongside Richard Hudson (local resident and also HTC) who is professionally qualified in this area.</p> <p>With answers to use and feasibility, with drawn concepts, we could look to go to public consultation.</p>	<p>JH</p> <p>JC/JH</p> <p>JC</p>
4.	<p><b>Parking:</b> The meeting engaged in several aspects of Hungerford parking, as follows:</p> <p>a. <b>Parking survey:</b> We have requested WBC carry out a parking survey but they are not keen. We do have AF's informal survey [copy attached], which indicates no significant shortage of available parking, except at peak times on Wednesdays (market) and occasional Saturdays). Attention was drawn to WBC's draft Parking Strategy which finds that Hungerford currently has sufficient parking but notes a hypothetical risk of shortage in the event that the rail station or Tesco were to close.</p> <p>b. <b>Charges:</b> It was noted that HTC had challenged the recently announced parking charges and was seeking to understand the basis for the changes (up and down). Feedback from WBC parking was that permitting free parking periods for the first 30 min encourages short visits to the town centre, therefore WBC proposed and now approved parking charges aim to encourage visitors to stay longer in the town centre by lowering parking charges for longer stays. JH will seek clarification.</p>	<p>JH</p>

