HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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Draft MINUTES of the **Recreation, Amenities and War Memorials Committee** (R&A) meeting held on Monday 16th November 2026 at 7.00pm, in the Library, Hungerford

Present: Cllrs Brunning, Fyfe, Keates, Reeves, Day, Terry & Reed

Also in attendance: Deputy Town Clerk (DTC), Dean Banks & Roger Bainbridge from Hungerford Archers.

The minutes of the meeting are recorded in order they were discussed at committee meeting. Permission was obtained by the DTC to record the meeting; all present were in agreement.

Cllr Brunning welcomed Cllrs and Hungerford Archers to the meeting.

RA2026078 Proposal from Hungerford Archers, refer to report

The archery group explained that the existing tarpaulin covering for its targets is repeatedly displaced by the wind and requires replacement. It proposed a timber shelter approximately 4 metres long, no more than 2 metres deep and just over 2 metres high, with a back and two sides, and a removable/secured tarpaulin across the front. The group confirmed that the Rugby Club had been consulted and was content with the proposal.

Cllrs had no objection in principle, subject to receiving a drawing showing the proposed design and dimensions. The need for any planning permission from West Berkshire Council to be checked by the Archers but it was considered unlikely given it is a temporary wooden structure.

Action: Archery group to send a sketch/drawing and dimensions to the Council office for consideration.

Proposed: Cllr Brunning
Seconded: Cllr Reed
Resolution: Cllrs had no objection in principle, subject to receiving a drawing showing the proposed design and dimensions. AIF

RA2026073 Apologies for absence - none

RA2026074 Declarations of interest - none

RA2026075 Approval of Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 21ST September 2026 and update on actions

The minutes of 21 September 2026 were discussed. An amendment was requested on page 2: the reference should read “gravel grid”, not “gravel gates”. The minutes were otherwise agreed subject to this correction.

Update on Actions:

ACTION 1 - Salt bin at 'School Alley' has been returned to its original position. The remaining waste bin is the responsibility of West Berkshire Council; no further action was agreed by the Committee.

ACTION 2 - Great West Way signs: the item remains on Cllr Brunning's to-do list and will be covered under the signage item **RA2026085**.

ACTION 3 - Marsh Lane Allotments Pest control: Environmental Health and pest-control contractors have been involved following complaint of rats. Reports indicated evidence of field voles and some rats, particularly around the perimeter. Further monitoring/baiting was being undertaken.

ACTION 4 - TC to arrange a following up visit to Marsh Lane Allotment with HAHA and the complainant about the pest-control concerns and continue liaison with West Berkshire Council/Environmental Health so that the complainant can show where the rats/nests are.
UPDATE ACTION 4: Meeting to be arranged by TC.

ACTION 5
Newton Garden – TC confirmed that HTC paid for the grass cutting referred to in the previous minutes.

ACTIONS 6 & 7: The toddler swing at Bridge Road has been taken down. The table ties at Bulpit Road play park are to be included in the annual inspection list. - **Confirmed**

ACTION 8
Arboriculturist to be approved – **UPDATE** - TC is awaiting the report

ACTION 9: Re BIB – discussed under RA2026077 - BIB & H.E.L.P – updates

ACTION 10: Accessible / Kissing Gate
The accessible gate costings had been reviewed, and agreement had already been reached at the preceding Finance, Governance and Policy discussion. No further decision was required at this meeting

ACTION: RA2026063: St Saviours Cemetery – A previous resolution concerning the possibility of creating a circular vehicle access route and obtaining a quotation was reclassified as an outstanding action. Cllr Fyfe raised concerns regarding the significant costs involved and reviewed the proposed access works and route. Cllrs remained concerned regarding the gradients, bends, width of the route and suitability for larger vehicles e.g. long wheelbase hearse. A further site review was considered necessary, together with further consideration of alternative options.
UPDATE ACTION: Cllrs Fyfe & Keates to undertake a further site review of the proposed route/access works and consider practical alternatives before progressing a specification

RA2026076 Any Health & Safety issues or concerns

- ROSPA inspection is due in December
- Replacement junction boxes for the Christmas lights along both sides of the High Street have now been completed. The new boxes have an IP waterproof rating.

RA2026077 BIB & H.E.L.P – updates

Cllr Reeves confirmed he had spoken to the Chamber of Commerce (CofC)who advised that, while it recognised the promotional value of Britain in Bloom (BIB), it was not able to provide physical support in 2027. Cllrs discussed the workload involved in entering annually and the capacity of the existing group to continue. The 2026 BIB committee do not want to enter next year as it was so demanding and mentioned that Newbury will also not be taking part next year and that it was quite common for towns and cities not to enter yearly.
Cllr Reeve felt the decision should be agreed at Full Council and that HTC should keep up the momentum of having won Silver Gilt. Cllr Reeve confirmed he would be happy to complete the application forms and arrange for a final meeting, along similar lines to 2025 entry. However, Cllrs Brunning & Day confirmed that completing the forms was the easy part, the amount of preparation and amount of work undertaken was extension and preparation for the final presentation was both extensive and exhausting as they successfully had numerous organisation involvement which helped with the outcome.

No decision was made by R&A on whether the Town Council should enter in 2027.

It was agreed that the matter should be referred to Full Council for a decision on whether to enter Britain in Bloom in 2027. Cllr Day to produce a separate written proposal to set out the ongoing/legacy projects, including their aims, scope, responsibilities, timescales and potential funding. The discussion also covered the work of **H.E.L.P** (Hungerford Environment and Local Projects) and the distinction between its work and that of Smarten Up Hungerford (SUH).

The Resource Centre Project was highlighted as a success and Cllrs confirmed that volunteers are still offering support to keep the gardens in good condition.

Cllr Brunning raised the option of Match Funding from The Good Exchange for HELP. Cllr Reeves stated he did not feel HTC had allocated enough funds to BIB and felt HTC should decide:

- If they want to enter BIB again
- If not, what do we do with the legacy projects e.g. Resource Centre Garden
- There needs to be a clear definition of HELP, its projects, scope and funding and whether CofC would provide any financial support to HTC.

Proposed: Cllr Reeves
Seconded: Cllr Brunning
Resolution: Cllrs Day & Brunning to prepare a written report/proposal for Full Council covering the 2027 BIB decision and the future management, scope, responsibilities, timescales and funding of continuing projects under **H.E.L.P** if that was agreed to be the agreed route.

RA2026079 H&S Walkabouts

Health and safety walkabouts are to be completed ideally by the end of January, with an end-of-February deadline also referred to as a possible extension.

Councillors volunteered to undertake walkabouts at allocated locations, including play areas, allotments, cemeteries, benches, Memorial Avenue, the library, the Croft Activity Centre, Triangle Field, the HTC office and public conveniences.

ACTION: DTC to send blank forms for 2027 walkabouts and last year's completed reports to identify the current situation and save the updated Schedule to Cllr Share drive.

RA2026080 Review Terms of Reserving a Plot in the Garden of Remembrance – are fees refundable?

A plot had been purchased approximately six years ago by a person who has since moved out of the area and no longer wished to retain it. The current regulations do not cover refunds. Comparable cemeteries in Newbury & Thatcham were reported to refund the purchase price less an administration fee.
The Committee agreed that the purchase price should be refunded less the Council's administration fee (currently £50). The regulations are to be updated to reflect this approach.

Proposed: Cllr Keates
Seconded: Cllr Brunning
Resolution: Cemetery regulations to be updated to provide for refunds of plot purchases less the applicable administration fee. Refund to be issued.

RA2026081 Planting of rose bush and small memorial at St Saviour's

A request had been received for a rose bush and a memorial sign in relation to a burial recorded in historic records as **F33/7.** Following examination of the archive and the current layout, the precise grave location could not be confirmed. The Committee discussed the lack of space and the maintenance implications of planting the rose bush and memorial within the grave area. A site visit was agreed to identify whether a suitable location exists. Members favoured a simple cross/name memorial rather than the proposed robin metal memorial and questioned who would maintain the rosebush. No final approval for a rose bush or memorial location was given pending the site visit.

Cllr Fyfe raised the condition and referencing of older gravestones at St Saviours, including whether cleaning or recording inscriptions required permission. The charity 'Caring for God's Acre', which supports the recording and conservation of burial grounds, was discussed.

Action: HTC Office to make enquiries about the requirements and process for both cleaning & recording gravestones and contact the charity of 'Caring for God's Acre to see if they could carry out the required work.

Proposed: Cllr Fyfe
Seconded: Cllr Brunning
Resolution: Cllrs Fyfe & Keates to attend site visit with either TC / DTC to determine a suitable location for a simple cross/name memorial and decide whether a rose bush was appropriate rather than the proposed metal robin memorial prior to approval.

RA2026082 Cycle Rack at St Lawrences, refer to report

The Committee considered a request for a cycle rack at St Lawrence's Church to allow church visitors to secure bicycles. The proposal was approved, with one vote against. It was suggested that the rack should be positioned at the side of the church to reduce its visibility from the main approach to the church rather than the position agreed by West Berkshire Council.

Proposed: Cllr Brunning
Seconded: Cllr Fyfe
Resolution: Cllrs approved the request and location from WBC (with one objection).

RA2026083 Planting of new trees

Cllrs considered trees that had been removed or identified as unsafe at Triangle Field, St Saviour's and St Lawrence's. Councillors discussed the constraints affecting replacement planting, including existing vegetation, proximity to graves and the suitability of potential planting locations.

St Saviour's - Councillors considered that it was too early to undertake further planting, as the number of large established trees would make it difficult for new saplings to thrive. It was suggested that HTC wait a few years before considering further planting, at which point a number of suitable trees could be selected for the area. British Sweet Gum was suggested as a possible species, rather than American Sweet Gum, which can grow too large.

St Lawrence's - Councillors felt that trees that had been taken down should not be replaced. The importance of the annual tree surveys was discussed, with Councillors considering these to be vital in identifying potential safety concerns. Questions were raised as to why the arboriculturist had not identified and flagged the three trees with significant holes and hollow trunks during the survey.

Triangle Field - Councillors acknowledged that Triangle Field was a difficult site to manage, with challenges surrounding the suitability of locations for replacement planting.

There was no agreement to undertake immediate replacement planting at Triangle Field or St Lawrence's. Further inspection and assessment were considered necessary, particularly at St Saviours before any decisions on future planting were made.

Proposed: Cllr Keates
Seconded: Cllr Reeves
Acton / Resolution: Clarify the tree inspection information for St Lawrence's and arrange/undertake site visit at St Saviours before making recommendations on replacement planting.

RA2026084 Vending Machine for Ducks Food, refer to report

Cllrs considered a proposal for a vending machine dispensing duck food. Concerns were raised about attracting pigeons and rats, responsibility for maintenance/refilling, and the practicalities of installation. Cllrs decided not to proceed with the vending machine proposal. Instead, Cllrs supported investigating signs advising the public not to feed bread to ducks and directing people to suitable duck food available locally. The possibility of publicising the advice was also discussed.

Proposed: Cllr Brunning
Seconded: Cllr Terry
Action / Resolution: Cllr Brunning to check where suitable duck food is available locally and to discuss promoting awareness. HTC Office to investigate sign wording and costs.

RA2026085 Town signage, update, Cllr Brunning

Cllrs reviewed existing heritage signage and QR code information and considered that existing signs at The Cuttings should be removed. A suitable location to be identified for the new Heritage Trail sign. The deteriorated sign outside the library was also discussed. Cllrs supported removing the old sign and developing a replacement information sign, with suggestions including a town map and information about the library's history and environmental credentials. The final content and design are to be agreed.

Action: Cllr Brunning to continue the outstanding work on the West Way signs and develop a proposal for replacement library signage, including proposed content/design.

Proposed: Cllr Reeves
Seconded: Cllr Brunning
Resolution: Remove the old sign at The Cuttings and find a suitable location for the Heritage Trail sign.

PART TWO

'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'.

RA2026086 Budget Requirements

The committee reviewed the draft revenue budgets and earmarked reserves. The distinction between annual nominal budgets and earmarked reserves was explained.

Additions to the EMRs were discussed:

- A provisional £3,000 allocation was discussed for Britain in Bloom/HELP, with the final amount dependent on the Full Council decision about the project's future.
- Ramsbury Park, HTC to receive £20,000 if we and when we take it over.
- An additional £5,000 was discussed for the relevant heritage repair reserve, in connection with the longer-term work to the War Memorial gates/fencing and other heritage repairs.
- The Triangle Field adding an additional £5,000 provision.
- An additional £4000 for tree maintenance was suggested.
- A provision of up to £5,000 for rugby club lease consultancy/legal support was raised.
- A £3,000 provision for the skate park.

Cllrs requested that future budget papers include a short covering report explaining the figures, significant variances and key items requiring attention. The budget figures are to be updated by the Finance Officer and reviewed by F&GP Committee before submission to Full Council for ratification in December.

Cllrs thanked the RFO for going through the budget.

Proposed: Cllr Reeves
Seconded: Cllr Reed
Resolution: Budget agreed with the additional increases. Proposal to go to F&GP prior to being ratified by Full Council.

RA2026087 Oaklands School proposal to Full Council, update

Cllrs considered the proposed lease of Newton's Garden by Oaklands School and agreed the following in principle:

- A five-year lease
- Rent of £1,000 per annum after the first year, with the first year rent-free on the condition that Oaklands School install a water supply during that first year at their cost.
- Mutually acceptable break clauses to be included.
- The lease is to be renewable after the five-year period.
- It would be the responsibility of Oaklands School to pay the costs of the water meter and water supply.
- Should the land be returned at the end of the term, there will be no reimbursement of the cost of Oaklands School installing the water supply by HTC.
- The lease should also require a portion of the land to be used to grow fruit or vegetables for human consumption, reflecting the land-registration requirement discussed by Cllrs and the Allotments Act 1922.

The water connection route and access rights would need to be checked before commitments were made. The possibility of community assistance with establishing the garden was discussed, including support from HELP and Smarten Up Hungerford.

The Committee agreed ‘in principle’ that the proposal outlined above to be submitted to Full Council to be ratified. The proposal can then be sent to Oaklands School.

Oaklands School suggested a possible Grant from HTC should the cost of installing the water supply be extensive.

Proposed: Cllr Keates
Seconded: Cllr Terry
Resolution: TC to prepare the written lease proposal, incorporating the agreed terms, and submit it for Full Council consideration. Check the feasibility and permissions for installing the water supply and confirm the access arrangements.

Meeting concluded 9.03pm.