

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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**DRAFT Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on
Wednesday 18th March 2015 at 7 pm in the Corn Exchange, Hungerford
(Approx 90 people present)**

1. Welcome and Mayor's Report – The Mayor welcomed our newest Councillor Shaun Wood. The Mayor spoke about various events that occurred throughout the year including the raising of Commonwealth Flag, parade involving 150 REME soldiers, Twinning events, the special Town Local Development Framework meeting, the Xmas lights switch on and Victorian Evening. He congratulated Town & Manor on their acquisition of land. He has enjoyed meeting many unsung volunteers and it has been an honour to be Mayor.

2. Thanks and intro to Thames Valley Police was given by the Mayor. Apologies from A Stansfeld.

3. Thames Valley Police - Inspector Warren advised he has been in the role covering this area for 3 months. Crime has reduced in Hungerford/Lambourn and has now plateaued. Figures were quoted:-

	2013/14	2014/15
Burglary	14	23
- non dwelling	104	68 (shops/sheds etc. vast decrease)
Assaults	116	101
Criminal damage	115	114
Domestic violence	50	43
Drug offences	34	52
Public order offence	12	11
Robbery	1	1
Sex offences	16	14
Theft from vehicles	77	79

The police have been carrying out operations of rural crime and dealing with child sexual exploitation.

Qu. From Paul Hewer – 40 car aerials were stolen. Were these reported as individual offences? **Ans.** Yes

Qu. From Rachel Furr – Please provide an update on future land for police station – **Ans.** Police are likely to have a shop front closer to the town centre which will happen 2015/16.

Qu. Car parking needed? – **Ans.** Yes, parking for police cars will be needed

Qu. From Janette Kersey – It is worrying drug numbers have gone up – **Ans.** The Team did welfare/drugs training recently and are carrying out operations.

Qu. What are the increases/decreases on response times? – **Ans.** Immediate – 15 mins, unless rural location then 20 mins; Urgent – 1 hour; By arrangement – 4+ hours. West Berks are good on response times.

4. The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 13th March 2014 were proposed by Cllr Crane, seconded by Cllr Wilson, majority in favour.

5. Reports by Committee Chairmen.

i) Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) - Cllr Colin Bumbieris showed the cost to the public on a Band D property. West Berkshire Council (WBC) has not increased their council tax bill but Hungerford Town Council (HTC) has. Our precept is going up from £213K to £224K. This is to fund the H1 bus service and public toilets costing £18.5k that WBC used to fund and because the grant from WBC is going down £3k, HTC are taking on the lease for Croft Field from WBC and it needs work - another £3k. £5k has been put in the budget to improve the Triangle Field car park. F&GP committee budget covers £22k of salaries, the grant for leisure centre and other organisations. H&T budget consists of xmas lights/toilets costs. R&A budget covers the cemetery, St Lawrence

churchyard, playgrounds/memorials. Details are on the web or are available in the office.

ii) Environment & Planning - Cllr Margaret Wilson. HTC has mainly granted planning applications. E&P believe rent to buy should be offered to Hungerford residents first. The Garden Art application has been passed but they are waiting for WBC and hope to begin building by spring. Cobbs persevered to get planning for a soft play area and work has begun. Plans for a new marina were submitted including 120 berth and single storey building with café. They will negotiate with Cobbs regarding the opening hours of their café. HTC supported JOG school plans and closure of 6th form. Plans were refused for Hungerford Care Home due to a dangerous corner. Co-op building work has begun. Bow House application has been refused but new plan submitted. WBC decision is awaited for the building next to Furr & Co.' Anthreas' is not an asset to the High Street. Hungerford in Bloom Competition date is Saturday 18th July for Gardens and Sunday 19th July for Allotments.

iii) Recreation, Amenities & War Memorials - Cllr Dennis Benneyworth thanked all the contactors. The Triangle Field changing room project is now finished and is connected to mains drainage - many thanks to funders, Englefield, GCT, Chilton Farms Ltd etc. Bridge Street War Memorial paving has been redone and looks smart. HTC purchase of Triangle Field freehold is being agreed and HTC are about to sign a 99 year lease for the Croft Field.

iv) Highways & Transport – Cllr Rob Brookman explained H&T works on improving road and pedestrian safety, transport links and its remit includes the xmas lights. There is a perceived issue with speeding in the town. H&T has lobbied to enforce speeding limits and to introduce new speed limits at Radley Bottom Road 60mph to 40mph (possible 30mph). Inconsiderate parking and illegal (if causing an obstruction) is a problem. HTC have lobbied WBC and the police. New parking restrictions outside Catholic Church will come into force soon and a new pedestrian crossing is due in April. Charnham crossing has not enough warnings and new lighting technology is being explored. Trip hazards in High St around trees need attention - Can T&M make these safe? Cllr Crane is pursuing decluttering of signs. HTC are supporting the H1 bus service. Barnes can't support continue to support the 222 route and HTC are not able to finance it. Electrification – HTC have been lobbying MPs and Transport Secretary for an all through route. HTC are pushing FGW for 2 taxi rank spaces at the station. Thanks to Rod and helpers with the Xmas lights. A new contractor was used this year and improvements have been made to electrical installations that should give savings in future.

v) Tourism & Economy - Cllr Martin Crane. This new committee acts as conduit to TTH. Leaflets are available. T&E works closely with North Wessex Downs AONB. Hungerford has been rebranded as the Heart of the North Wessex Downs. We attract many visitors and want them to stay and visit all NWD attractions. A lot of litter will be removed by Network Rail by spring. More investment in industry is needed. HTC want Hungerford put on the 'Inward Investment map'. Triteq a hi-tech industry will promote Hungerford. Electrification would be an attraction for visitors to the Thames Valley and to Hungerford.

vii) LDF and Station - Cllr Richard Hudson. Hungerford will need to have another 250 houses by 2026. HTC set up a working group and employed a planning consultant to consider options. WBC DPD wanted development either North or South. HTC wanted to find sites within town such as railway and wish to minimise impact on AONB. The consultation went back but WBC is not responding until autumn 2015 and then the EIP will follow in spring 2016. With no plan in place developers could come and try their luck. The facilities on the railway platforms are bad. HTC is trying to improve the area. In 2012 a development brief was produced but meetings with WBC have made no progress. The main problem is access is needed over Network Rail land and they want a large amount of money. R Benyon MP is working on this. The Police station building will become available?

6. Recruitment and Election - Cllr Thompson advised training is available and recruits will be briefed on the standing orders. Office staff will provide support to Councillors who are expected to attend Full Council meetings and to join 2 committees. There are further working parties to which you can contribute. The Youth & Community Centre need a Chairman and publicity agent. You must be 18 +, live or work in Hungerford or in 3 mile radius of. Councillors are from a wide spectrum of backgrounds and of all ages. We are not involved in political decisions. We need 5 new councillors. The Clerk/WBC have forms. A hustings for all parliamentary candidates will be held 26th March 7pm for 7.30pm start.

7. John O Gaunt School (Reported after item 4). Matt Davies, Assistant Headteacher reported that JOG School

wants to raise its profile in the community. A new library is being built funded by WBC, but £10k further funds are required to furnish and stock it. All the Senior Leadership Team are doing challenges to raise the money – please support them. £3k of the £10k target has already been raised. A new head of maths has been recruited and will start in September. JOG is happy with intake numbers for September. Student voice and prefects will be in place in June. Humanutopia visited the school – topic was recruiting heroes. They raised £938 for comic relief. Mr Davies will be singing in the JOG X-Factor to raise money for the library. Money can be donated through findmeagrant and donations will be doubled. Apologies were given for a misspelt sign. He couldn't advise what the new signs cost. Due to low pupil numbers and lack of funding the 6th form will be closed. If numbers increase 6th form can re-open. Tickets are available for X Factor.

8. District Councillor's Reports - District Cllrs James Podger (JP) & Paul Hewer (PH) hope for a democratic Town Council election. HTC will be custodians of the Croft Field land and member's bid money of £7,500 will help with repairs. The road resurfacing for 2015-16 will include Upper Eddington to Tally Ho, Sanden Close and Homefield Way. £1k has been given to the Hungerford Resource Centre. Bridge Street crossing will happen and no parking will be lost. The DPD plan is important to stop aggressive planners. JP & PH supported Cobbs plan. Bollards and new flag stones are in outside The 3 Swans. Grass verges are in the programme to be resurfaced at Cold Harbour Road to allow parking. PH & JP met with the Marina development applicants today. The existing planning application was won on appeal. Double yellow lines installed by Catholic Church will allow some parking and traffic calming. Lindley Lodge is a fantastic facility. Fairfields/Northview Heights are being developed. Fire training was carried out at Northview Heights. The Railway station is protected as an employment site and first step will be in 2 years when WBC will be deciding where employment sites will be. Hungerford Education Dialogue is ongoing. £2½mill to £3mill funding (additional to the £1.5mill received) should be coming to Hungerford schools soon. Thanks were expressed to Cllr Small for work done on lease.

9. Questions and suggestions from the floor

From Tim Bevan: *The DPD plan document needs to be re-written – bland. JP:* Not final draft. By September we will know everything. Burghfield development appeal was won by WBC due to plan.

From Robert James: *Regards High Street trees and trip areas. WBC only is allowed to dig holes. Trustees paid for 2 replacement trees. Refer to Andrew Reynolds WBC to fix trip hazards.*

From Ted Angell – HAHA, *Wanted to make everyone aware; allotments don't cost HTC anything, both sites are leased by HTC, Marsh Lane (200 plots) are leased from private landlord and lease runs out 31st March next year. We won't have response on DPD till September. Mayor:* Thanks to HAHA. HTC will do best to ensure allotments lease is continued.

From Brian Fisher – *Hungerford Town Band is a main user of Croft Field. When will change over happen?*

Cllr Small – 1 month but £18k of immediate work is required first and that will take place as soon as possible.

From Rod – *HTC don't do a litter pick as they use the community payback team. He would like the annual litter pick restored. Mayor –* He will put this on the agenda.

From Neale Marney – *Defibrillator cases are going up around town. 5 are going in. First locations are the Town Council office, JOG, Texaco. Mayor -* Thanks were expressed to Neale and GCT.

From Janette Kersey (CHAIN) *She has received no update on a bus route to Lindley Lodge? Cllr Brookman* responded that WBC agreed there should be a couple of bus stops there but it comes down to money. He will chase WBC. **Janette –** *WBC promised a minibus and people are isolated. PH –* Promise was made by Sovereign but was not a planning condition. **Janette –** *DCs have not been in touch. PH* will make sure there is a bus stop.

From Bruce Mayhew – *That bus was promised. It is a priority. Also there is a litter pick on the Common on 12th April meeting at 10am at the Downgate.*

From Susan Hofgartner – *Thanks to Tony Bartlett for photos. He has had photos accepted for the Ordinance Survey competition, so please vote for them! It would be great to see Hungerford on the front of the map.*

Susan thinks we should switch on Xmas lights earlier to maximise benefit and have 5 weekends of lights. `

From John Willmott – *Hungerford needs a European style piazza with a statue right in centre of Hungerford.*

From Cllr Crane – *Yes - Get transport hub at station so we can have a piazza outside Town Hall.*

10. Announcing of Freedom Award Nominations – Cllr Benneyworth announced 1st recipient – Roger Beard and 2nd recipient, John Newton. Date will be confirmed for presentation. He thanked all staff his family for their support. Particular thanks to his Deputy Roger Thompson.

Rod – congratulated Jack Williams on his BE Award.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm