

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 5th March 2018 at 7.00pm in the Corn Exchange Complex, Hungerford.

Present: Cllrs Knight, Simpson, Crane, Farrell, Winser, Hudson, Small, Cusack, Downe, Brookman, Benneyworth and Finlay

Also: Brian Quinn (Penny Post), John Garvey (Newbury News), PCSO Lee Bremner, Paul Hewer (District Councillor), Jenny Booth, Geoff Greenland (HABA Chair and possible member of new Steering Group), Anthony Drewer-Trump and John Willmot (both possible members of new Steering Group) and several members of the public.

Police Report: PCSO Lee Bremner reported there have been a total of 18 incidents between the 1st February and 22nd February involving vans being broken into and tools stolen, or attempted van break ins. On the 22nd February there were 8 incidents reported to the police. The police have heavily increased patrols in the town and are encouraging owners to put security signs on their vans and not to keep tools in vehicles overnight. They have reviewed CCTV footage and shared information with Wiltshire Police HQ but have been unable to obtain registration plate information from CCTV or ANPR.

No other crimes to report. Following a burglary in January, an arrest has been made and investigations are ongoing.

The next 'Have your say' meeting is on Wednesday 21st March 10.00am – 1.00pm in Tesco's car park. These have been very successful and will increase to fortnightly sessions. There will now be a session on the first Tuesday of every month in the Wyevale Garden Centre and this will start on Tuesday 3rd April 12.00 – 4.00pm. These sessions are booked up until December.

Cllr Finlay asked if the police would consider leaving a police vehicle overnight in the town but was advised that the police do not have spare cars anymore. The people carrying out the van break ins are not easily scared off even after knowing they have been disturbed, cul-de-sacs have been targeted and they are using false number plates. Cllr Hewer asked where the stolen tools are being sold and was advised the police are checking this as part of the investigation and they are taking these incidents seriously.

Cllr Farrell asked if HTC should discuss providing extra CCTV cameras to cover all the town's exit routes with the police. She said it isn't practical to remove tools from vehicles every night; the police are advising owners to paint their postcode on their tools in bright gloss paint as this is the best deterrent.

(Cllr Small entered).

1. **Apologies:** Noted from Cllr Whiting and Cllr Chicken.
2. **Declaration of Interests:** Cllrs Winser, Knight and Small – Triangle Field Management Committee (TFMC), Cllrs Cusack, Knight and Simpson (Library)
3. **Approval of Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council meeting of 5th February 2018 and outcome of actions** - *Cllr Crane proposed the minutes as a true record, seconded by Cllr Brookman, all in favour.*
Approval of Minutes of the Extra Full Council meeting of 26th February 2018 and outcome of actions – *Cllr Brookman proposed the minutes as a true record, seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.*

4. **Neighbourhood plan** – It was suggested the ‘area for designation’ should be the Parish Boundary not the Settlement Boundary as the Parish Boundary covers the electorate for Hungerford. The Clerk advised this decision is the very first to be made in the process. *Cllr Crane proposed the ‘area for designation’ is the Parish Boundary, seconded by Cllr Hudson, 1 abstention, rest in favour.*
It was suggested that the date for the first meeting of the Steering Group should be on Monday 19th March at 7.00pm. Terms of Reference for the Steering Group, which will be a working party, need to be drawn up. It was suggested that representatives from the Steering Group should talk to WBC to clearly understand how the Steering Group can interact with WBC who are looking to publish their Local Plan in September 2019. Could Brian Lyttle from WBC come to the first meeting of the Steering Group or if he isn’t available, then could 2 members of the Steering Group speak to him in advance and report back. Cllr Hewer will set up an appointment with Brian Lyttle.
The Steering Group currently consists of the following volunteers: Geoff Greenland, Tony Drewer-Trump and John Willmott (possibly), Cllrs Knight, Downe, Hudson and Cusack. We may add to these members at a later date. *Cllr Farrell proposed Cllr Knight and other volunteers meet with Bryan Little from WBC before the first meeting of the Steering Group (if B Lyttle can’t attend the steering meeting itself), seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.*
5. **Mayor’s report** – Cllr Knight has been on holiday so the report will follow.
6. **District Councillor’s Reports** – District Cllrs Hewer and Podger have met with Cllr Knight and looked at the HTC action plan. District Cllr Podger is meeting with Clive Tombs from WBC regarding buses and drop off points in the town.
A meeting was arranged for Wednesday 7th March at 10.00am at Fairview Road to discuss a residents’ parking area. Cllr Brookman agreed to meet with the District Cllrs also any other Councillors were welcome to attend.
28th April is the closing date for members’ bids money. This is matched funding and is for capital projects. If anyone has any requests, they were advised to let the District Councillors know. The limit is approximately £10k. The issue of CCTVs will be discussed at committee level. **Action:** Add Member’s Bids to the next FC agenda.
DC Hewer and Glyn Davis are to meet at Great Grooms on Tuesday 27th March to discuss clearing the back of Hungerford Care Home.
7. **Liaison with outside bodies** – The set of rules needs to be looked at regarding Councillor representational roles. **Action:** Clerk to add a column to differentiate between council representatives and councillors that are members of a group and bring this back to next FC meeting.
Cllr Cusack advised GWR has agreed to a meeting with Network Rail to discuss issues including parking, development around the station, the Neighbourhood Plan and station adoption. Cllr Downe commented the H&T committee covers these issues. John Willmott’s hard work has ensured some improvements have been carried out at the station. Cllr Hudson commented the previous development brief, the NP and adoption of the station may make some progress on the above. Cllr Farrell said it was good to obtain information and suggested Cllr Cusack keeps herself and Cllr Brookman (Chair of H&T) updated.
- (Cllr Benneyworth entered).
8. **Councillor attendance – Consider request to publish attendance on the web** – Cllr Simpson proposed all attendance is published on the website, seconded by Cllr Winsor. Cllr Crane objected asking why this was necessary as the information is already in the minutes. Councillors are volunteers and become involved in other ways apart from meetings; policing this might put people off volunteering. After some discussion, *Cllr Downe proposed the Clerk maintains a tally of Councillors attendance from April and this should be made available at the end of the year prior to the election, seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.*
9. **Councillor vacancy – one position remains and can now be filled by co-option** – J Booth has expressed an interest in returning to the council and her resume has been circulated. She came onto the council in 2007 but left in 2011 when a total of 8 Councillors also left. She left the room while a written ballot was undertaken.
6 votes against, 5 votes for, with 1 abstention.

J Booth re-entered the room and was informed of the decision. She then left the room. There was some discussion but Cllr Knight advised that was the result and the meeting should move on.

10. Committee reports (no more than 3 minutes per report)

R&A – Cllr Small – Committee met on 20th February and minutes have been circulated. Only 4 Councillors were present at the meeting, with 5 apologies. Cllr Small queried whether the Terms of Reference need to be reviewed and because of the large agenda, whether the committee should be split into 2 separate committees, for example, R&A and War Memorials.

F&GP – Cllr Benneyworth – A meeting is due to be held next week.

E&P – Cllr Farrell – Few applications have been received and minutes have been circulated.

H&T – Cllr Brookman – Report has been circulated (see attached).

T&E – Cllr Crane – Committee met on 12th February and minutes have been circulated. Cllr Downe has now joined this committee. The committee heard a presentation from i3web who could help with the visitor guide. This sector needs to have involvement with the Neighbourhood Plan. A meeting will be held with NWD soon. They are continuing to support the building up of the Chamber of Commerce.

11. Finance – Cllr Benneyworth

a) Propose authorisation of cheque run payments (circulated) for last month – *Cllr Benneyworth proposed authorisation of cheque run of £21,734.19 plus VAT, seconded by Cllr Simpson, all in favour.*

b) Propose Year to date accounts – refer to circulated Income/Expenditure Report – *Cllr Benneyworth proposed acceptance of the year to date accounts, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.*

12. Library – The working party had met that morning and spent 2 hours going through the lease. Certain points which had already been agreed were not included in the lease. Also, staff will need to move out of the office for one week while it is being redecorated. It is hoped to speed up the process by doing work on the lease ahead of getting a solicitor involved and Cllr Small has already agreed to help with this work on a pro-bono basis. A vote of thanks was given to Cllr Small for his work. Two quotes have been received from solicitors and a third quote is on its way. F&GP will consider whether to approach WBC to ask if they can help with the cost of a solicitor.

13. Street-lighting – Cllr Brookman's report (see attached) will go to F&GP and then be considered at FC in May.

14. Town Meeting (Wed 21st March 7pm) – A draft agenda was read out and various comments were made. The Clerk will send out a revised agenda.

15. Triangle Field – The outstanding hirer fees have been paid. The extra floodlighting is not being progressed until September.

16. Any other Reports (3 minutes each) not to include any proposals – None.

17. Part 2 – Ratify the nominations of the Freedom of the Town Awards 2018 as recommended by the selection panel – This was deferred to an Extra FC meeting – date to be advised.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm.

REPORTS

Highways and Transport Committee Report for March 2018

Railway Station

I understand that we have been short listed for grant from GWR to extend the Up line passenger shelter. I do not know when the final decision will be made.

Cllr. Chicken has agreed to take the lead on adopting the railway station. He is currently on extended holiday and so he has no further information.

Street Lights

I have produced a discussion paper regarding the future replacement of HTC owned street lights. I am still waiting information from WBC over possible funding arrangements.

Pigeons

I was invited to a meeting on 7 February with the T&M, WBC Environmental Health and Chamber of Commerce to discuss how we could reduce the pigeon population in Hungerford.

The actions arising from this meeting have been circulated.

CCTV

The CCTV camera installation at the skateboard park is now complete. We will consider further CCTV cameras in Bridge Street later in the year.

Christmas Lights

The switch on date has been set for Sunday, 2 December

As I have stated previously, this year (2018) will be my last organising this event and we need at least one, if not two Councillors, to assist me this year so that there will be a smooth transition to Christmas 2019.

Cllr. Finlay has volunteered to look at future funding for the lights.

RB

5/3/18

HTC Owned Street Lights

Background

HTC inherited a number of street lights when Hungerford Rural District Council was absorbed into what was then Newbury District Council, now West Berkshire Council (WBC), in 1974. The lights comprise of 36 lighting columns and 71 lights mounted on brackets fixed to wood poles. Since the lights are now at least 44 years old their condition is deteriorating rapidly.

WBC carry out the maintenance and repair of our lighting assets and a sum is added to our precept for 'Hungerford Footway Lighting Requirement'. In the current financial year, 2017/18 this amounts to £5,600 which amounts to £2.34 for a Band D property. However, the replacement of the assets is the responsibility of HTC. In the last 2 years 3 brackets have failed and 2 columns needed to be replaced. The cost of replacement of a bracket was in the order of £748 and a column £1,142 ie a total cost of around £4,528. In 2016 I asked WBC to give HTC a very simple condition rating ie 1-4 during their annual inspection, 1 being the best condition and 4 indicating dangerous condition. The results of the January 2018 inspection were:

Condition 3: 49 brackets and 7 columns

Condition 4: 2 brackets which had to be dismantled immediately

The results above show that there is likely to be a significant increase in the cost of replacing our street lighting assets in the not too distant future.

Options

1. Carry on as we are and replace equipment at HTC expense as and when it fails. This would mean that we have failed in our duty of care in the event of an accident as is, therefore, unacceptable.
2. Have a long term plan to replace the equipment in the worst condition. This is possible for columns which can be inspected at ground level but impossible for brackets.
3. Ask WBC to take over the assets from HTC at no cost to them. However, WBC will only take over the assets if they are brought up to their current lighting standards (pun unintentional) AND most importantly they will not do this on a piecemeal basis. They would only take over our lights once the whole street has been brought up to their standard. WBC have identified 4 streets that could be easily brought up to their standard and the condition report indicates that these should be prioritised.

Decision time: which option do we choose in what is going to be a long term project?

Future Finance Options

1. Continue funding replacement on an ad hoc basis and taken from H&T budget based on the condition reports.
2. The cost of replacement can be included in the annual precept applied by WBC based on the previous year's actual replacement cost.
3. Have a programme to upgrade a whole street or streets in one financial year and fund these from our reserves. Top up our reserves from the precept so that residents do not see a change in the precept until our reserves are up to where they should be. RFO Jeff Ford can explain this concept better than I and will discuss the concept at the next F&GP. If accepted this will be taken to Full Council for ratification.

Decision time: Which method of funding do we prefer?

R Brookman
22/02/18