

# HERE AND NOW in HUNGERFORD

No. 31 in a series of regular briefings from the Council

DECEMBER 2015

## CHRISTMAS GIFTS FROM WBC

The financial storm clouds have been gathering in District Councils for the past three years. During that time budgets have been under scrutiny and operating costs have been reduced. But it will come as no surprise that further cuts forced upon them by central government are bound to become more painful across the board.

The latest tsunami of announcements from West Berks Council will affect many sectors of our society with Buses, Bins and Beating crime in line for some savage reductions.

## BUSES

Funding for bus services across the county are in line for reduction or even cut out completely. The Route 90 to and from Lambourn looks the most at risk with Route 3 to Newbury could have the timetable stripped down to the bare minimum. The H1 service is also under threat but your Council will seek to enforce the WBC contractual obligation to maintain this, with a subvention from HTC, for at least two years.

Representations from many quarters will seek to lower the impact of these changes as much as possible but nothing is likely to stop them altogether.

## BINS

Lower down the impact scale will be the shift of cost for refills in our Salt bins at £80 per time. HTC is hoping that we have a mild winter.

## BEATING CRIME

More controversial is the prospect of funding being withdrawn for all CCTV cameras. Coming only 3 years after the centralisation of monitoring screens in Windsor seems to be a wild card played by WBC. Please note that CCTV cameras are the responsibility of District Councils and not the police. If such a change is implemented, HTC would be facing a charge of £26,000 p.a. which is more than 10% of our total budget. Clearly this not feasible and we are exploring many other options other than switching off the cameras and will be reporting back to WBC with our resolution next month. In the meantime Police Authorities are coming out of the woodwork

to implore Councils to maintain this service at a time when the terrorist risk is high.



## HOUSING ALLOCATION

The WBC plan to have 100 houses placed to the south of town requires a response by the 24<sup>th</sup> December and your Council is working on this maintaining our original stance to have these spread across the town. However we are encouraging residents to make their own comments known and included in this Edition (see page 14), is a summary of our approach (copies available in the HTC office) and the contact details for you to use to make your personal views known to the Planning Inspector. The choice is yours.

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

In spite of these heavy financial challenges ahead of us, your Council is cheered by our magnificent Christmas Lights and hope that they also help you make your Festive plans amongst them using our local shops to purchase your gifts.

*Have a great time and let's all hope for a more cheery New Year*



*- Cllr Martin Crane, OBE, Town Mayor of Hungerford*