

# HERE AND NOW in HUNGERFORD

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JULY 2015

## “NEW LAMPS FOR OLD”

I seem to recall that in the pantomime Aladdin, there was a slippery character making this offer as a means of getting his hands on the magic lantern. Presently contractors on behalf of WBC, are converting many of our street lights from the friendly yellow glow of sodium lighting to shiny white light emanating from the latest in LED technology. The detail that these lights give is quite amazing and will afford better protection in those areas covered by CCTV cameras. However those who have one of the new lamps directly outside their homes, may find this ‘benefit’ not to their liking.

Some 5 years ago, I approached WBC advocating the installation of LED street lights as the energy costs saved could be used to replace the hideous lighting columns in the High Street to a design more in keeping with this designated Conservation area. Can we rely on our District Councillors to press for such a most suitable investment? Perhaps through a Member’s Bid?

## HADCAF

You could not have missed the wonderful variety of events that the organisers gave us for our now much celebrated Arts Festival. The choices were such that there were days when it was difficult to decide which to attend. It seemed that there was something for everyone and once again demonstrated that Hungerford can compete with the best and attract top class performers.

## THE WAITING GAME

It is said that “patience is a virtue” and it certainly has to be extended when seeking planning approval from WBC for local projects.

It would seem that target dates for clearance is more aspirational than realistic. We appreciate that along with all departments in the Council they are under severe pressure to cut costs, but delays in decisions do not help our town progress many of those projects that would benefit many such as the pedestrian crossing in Bridge Street.

## RAILWAY STATION REGENERATION



Your Council has been seeking to bring the owners of the various sites that are on the south side of the station together with a view to create a comprehensive redevelopment plan for this Brown Field area. It seemed even more feasible when Thames Valley Police announced their intention to sell the Police station. Developers have expressed considerable interest in building housing for which there is both a good return on the investment and would help ease the shortage of affordable accommodation in the town.

However WBC continues to stubbornly resist a change of status from Employment area to housing and yet have approved a plan to build flats on the St John site. At the same time, they have allowed the Oakes site to be converted into a car park, albeit on a temporary basis. But it is difficult to see how much employment that this car park generates.

Surely we have seen the whole of this area in an almost derelict state for long enough. It is now time to provide Hungerford with a well-designed entrance that our town deserves.



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