

HERE AND NOW in HUNGERFORD

No. 29 in a series of regular briefings from the Council

OCTOBER 2015

EXPECT SOME FIREWORKS!

Is an expression you would understand when talking about **November 5th** but when it is spoken by a senior member of West Berks Council about the forthcoming announcement on the Housing allocation, it must raise some concern.

It seems eons ago that we were discussing the impact of the Government's diktat over the number of new houses that must be built in West Berks by 2026 i.e. 10,500. Their problem was not just how that might fit within the Core Strategic - an exercise that took them over 6 years to complete - but how they might be accommodated when such a large proportion of the land is protected under the auspices of the North Wessex Downs.

Landowners and prospective developers have submitted their ideas of the land that could be used and this has been under WBC scrutiny for the past year. The announcement on November 5 will indicate for the first time, where building approval might be given. However there will be a period of consultation and it will be at this point that **your Council will present the full defensive case** based very much on the Town Plan Refresh document that was adopted by WBC in 2013.

This shows that having regard to the number of housing units built since the inception of the strategic plan, the balance of just under 100 new houses, would be acceptable.

Nevertheless, more recent announcements from Central Government, add even more pressure on local Authorities to reach their target numbers or be over-ridden.

In these circumstances, I would not be surprised that Hungerford will be faced with an uphill task to maintain our ground over the numbers allocated to our town.

OK so I have lit the blue touch paper; let's hope that it is a damp squib that goes off rather than a rocket!

AMBER LIGHT FOR THE STATION REDEVELOPMENT?

With increased Government pressure on WBC to find locations for housing, perhaps they will bow down to common sense and allow housing to be built on this site, deemed by them as an Employment zone. After all we

see redundant offices in Newbury being converted into apartments.

CROFT FIELD CENTRE

Work continues on this newly acquired asset for your Council, to provide a perfect base for a variety of social activities. When complete, there will be a central facility for potential users to the benefit of our town.

But can you rename the property to avoid confusion with the Croft Hall? Ideas please.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

After so many years of orchestrating our fabulous Christmas lights, we believe Rod "Mr Lights" Desmeules, deserves a rest from the responsibility he has shouldered for years. So the contractor, schooled by him last year, will be undertaking the task. However I am delighted to report that he has accepted my invitation to be Quality Controller, reporting directly to me, of any issues that might arise during the installation process.

Switch-on with be at 6pm on Sunday 29 November by local England soccer hero, Charlie Austin. Full details to follow.



- Cllr Martin Crane, OBE, Town Mayor of Hungerford



You can contact the council by letter: **The Library, Church Street, Hungerford, RG17 0JG**
phone: **01488 686195** e-mail: **martincrane41@sky.com** or visit the office.