

# HERE AND NOW in HUNGERFORD

No. 39 in a series of regular briefings from the Council

SEPTEMBER 2016

## TESTING TIME AHEAD

After a better than usual Summer, I hope that we approach Autumn re-energised to face the inevitable challenges set by WBC as they continue to struggle to balance their books. Perhaps they should take another look at the need to have 6 Authorities in Berkshire and take a leaf out Buckinghamshire to revisit a major amalgamation that would save millions of £s?

## LIBRARY

We are due to review the Red Quadrant's Needs Assessment early next month when HTC will be working with the 'Friends' to develop a new model to maintain this essential amenity. We have no doubt that local funding will be required and we are working on our Budget and Reserves to establish what can be afforded.

## HOUSING

The final HTC comments of the housing proposals have been submitted and we now await the Planning Inspector's decision after a 6 week period of deliberation. You will recall that HTC oppose the Salisbury Road proposal in favour of 'pepper pot' sites within the town boundary.

## JOHN O'GAUNT SCHOOL

As of 1st October, J.O'G will become an Academy in association with St Johns in Marlborough. Whilst we have yet to see the final details, HTC has learned that the re-establishment of 6th form education will be one of their main priorities. This is likely to evolve over time. With significant success in this year's GCSE's, they are off to a great start.

## UNIVERSITY OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup> AGE

I am delighted to see that arrangements are well in hand to establish a U3A organisation in Hungerford; the inaugural meeting is scheduled for 17 November in the Corn Exchange at 2pm.

## HIDDEN ASSETS

As I have visited many of our major employers over the past months, I have been amazed at the high level of technology used by our major employers and global sales running into multi-millions. So much so that we have been working with the Chamber of Commerce to hold an Exposition at JO'G school later this year to demonstrate to students and parents alike, just what skills are required by our local companies. I am sure you will be surprised

and hopefully welcome the potential employment opportunities that exist in our town.

## CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Planning for this year's stunning display, is well underway and we expect to select the main contractor within weeks. However the cost of producing still absorbs over 10% of our Budget. But we are committed to maintain the standard of our Christmas Lights that brings so many to our town to admire.

In the past we have relied on generous Donations made after the event to offset such expenditure. This year, we shall be seeking Pledges ahead of the display that will allow your Council to manage the Budget in a more professional way. I shall be sending letters out to potential commercial contributors shortly but if individuals wish to make a Pledge, please contact our office to register.

## CENTRALISATION OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Fire Station is being adapted to house both Police and Ambulance services and they have found that they have a spare room for Community use. This has a kitchen attached and can take 12 – 15 persons. Any group interested in using this, should contact the Town Clerk in the first instance.



- Cllr Martin Crane, OBE, Town Mayor of Hungerford