

# Hungerford



Hungerford Town Council – representing your town

*Opening the conversation...*

“ *A warm welcome to all Hungerford residents from Hungerford Town Council. I hope you enjoy reading our newest publication, designed to recap and reflect the past year, but more importantly to share some of Hungerford Town Council’s exciting new projects and discussions. As the road map out of lockdown allows, we’re really looking forward to reconnecting, representing and celebrating our very special community. Please connect with us so we can ‘open the conversation....’* ”

Cllr Helen Simpson,  
Hungerford Town Mayor



Now the worst of the pandemic is hopefully behind us, all of us at Hungerford Town Council (HTC) are looking forward to seeing normal life resume. In our case, this will involve a welcome resumption of face-to-face engagement with you, the people we represent. So, this seemed like a good time to offer a quick summary of HTC's roles, its past achievements and its aspirations.

Covid has shown that local councils can respond effectively, efficiently and quickly to challenges. Our aim is to build on what we've learnt from this so as to be sure we're even better equipped to serve the town, in good times or in bad. Your input will be crucial to/for this – having read this brief summary, *please let us know if there are other things you think we should be doing or any ways in which you can help.*



Hungerford library and hub

## 'Roles' and 'working together'

HTC is one of 64 town and parish councils in West Berkshire. These are the most local and accessible level of local democracy and, as with all councils, their roles are defined by law. We are statutory consultees on planning applications although the final decisions lie with West Berkshire Council (WBC). A few examples of the roles we undertake are the running and maintenance of our playgrounds; we are responsible for St Saviour's cemetery and the Croft Field Activity Centre. For their part, among other roles, WBC provide parking and repair our roads.

There are also duties we are obliged to do including having an emergency plan and setting and managing our

budgets. Although there are projects we can initiate and deliver ourselves much of our work demands active collaboration with other organisations.

Much of what the town needs can only be accomplished with WBC's help. A few years ago, when working with the **Friends of Hungerford Library** on its plan for taking over the library building, HTC helped convince WBC about the idea. This was adopted and has since been followed elsewhere.

The current major project in cooperation with WBC is Hungerford's Neighbourhood Development Plan, "Hungerford 2036" to give the community a stronger voice in the town's future.

We also work closely with other local organisations like:

**The Town and Manor** (who own the Town Hall and hire it to us for Council meetings and events).

**The Police** (who report to our monthly Full Council where we can raise issues of local concern).



**The Chamber of Commerce** (with the Christmas Extravaganza).

**The Canal and River Trust** (such as with resurfacing works on the canal footpath).

New relationships need to be forged in the light of new challenges. Our role is often to bring different groups together to achieve what's needed: this we did, for example, in 2017-18 when we stepped in to help Hungerford keep its Post Office. This facility is now even more vital following the closing of many high street banks.

### **Empathy and reflection**

In these last 12 months, however, our main role has been one of understanding the challenges faced by the town and providing support. The Town Council endeavours to provide

residents with an accessible and useful point of contact, with help when we can provide it and with pointers in the right direction when other bodies are better equipped to do so.

The last year has been a time of sadness, frustration and loss but it has also shown how much we all have in common and the wonderful way we can come together. HTC will reflect on what the pandemic has taught us about how we can learn from both the good and the bad of what we've all been through and, as the phrase goes, "build back better" – or "even better" in Hungerford's case.

### **Meet our councillors...**

All the councillors live in the Town Council area and are committed to protecting Hungerford's appeal as a wonderful place to live whilst seeking to make it even better still.



Grant recipients





**Cllr Helen Simpson** "I'm currently serving my fourth term as Hungerford's Mayor, I take this hugely privileged position seriously, ensuring residents in the town have access to a local, familiar,

face who's approachable. I will always listen, champion your ideas and try to influence change when needed. My personal interests include building a dynamic team of Cllr's, to engage and communicate more with Hungerford residents, champion the town's youth and supporting the many groups and volunteers who work so hard within our community. Please do consider joining our team, we'd love to hear from you."

**Cllr Claire Winser** "As

a Councillor the role has been interesting, rewarding and varied and I am proud of the achievements which I have been involved with over the years. The future holds many more projects which will benefit the town and I look forward to contributing to these."



**Cllr John Downe** "The Hungerford Community and town punch well above their weight in terms of mutual support, local facilities, history and countryside. I became a town Councillor to try to help ensure

these characteristics can continue and thrive whilst adapting to change."

**Cllr Alistair Fyfe** "I have a keen interest in improving Hungerford's CCTV coverage for the town. Currently I'm focused on footpath maintenance,

signage and general infrastructure. It's important HTC raise concerns with WBC to ensure Hungerford residents receive good levels of service."



**Cllr Keith Knight** "I joined HTC to make a difference to our town... the public and time will tell if I'm right."

**Cllr Rob Chicken** "I'm trying to encourage people to not use their cars by improving Hungerford Railway Station facilities, improve cycle storage in the town, and hopefully install e-bike charging points."



**Cllr Derek Alford** "For most of my life I have worked with local communities, so when I moved to Hungerford it was only natural for me to become involved

with the Town Council. I am enjoying the experience working with others to improve the lives of local people and especially young people of the town."

**Cllr Rupert Mills** "I joined the council to help ensure wider representation of Hungerford's residents, and ensure accountability in decision making toward Hungerford's future. My particular focus will be on Hungerford's 2036 plan, which will

no doubt shape Hungerford's future as a town. I hope that my career experience in built environments and master planning will provide me with the knowledge to better progress the plan alongside my council peers."



**Cllr Nick Schlanker**

“Hungerford Town Council will continue to ensure that our community is not forgotten as the new houses are built, it is important that local views and needs are listened by the builders so that all Hungerford families have the opportunity to stay in the town.”



youth behaviour has been an issue at times in Hungerford and would be more than happy to explore how we can best deal with this. I have also done volunteer work in the past, at homeless shelters as well as supporting the elderly in the community at Christmas.”

**Cllr Richard Hudson**

“I’d recommend being a Councillor if you are interested in your community and you really can make a difference. Key



achievements that I’ve been heavily involved in include the pedestrian bridge over the canal and the Town Plan. Don’t be scared off by the process and formality as you soon get used to it.”



**Cllr Jon Shatford** “The education of Hungerford’s young people has always been important to me and I am keen to grow the connection between the schools and the Town Council.”

**Cllr Ellie Yakar-Wells**

“As a teenager I was part of ‘Youth Forum’ in Abingdon which worked with the local Council to give feedback on how the younger part of the community could be supported by the Council. I know that



**Cllr Daniel Lewis** “I’m passionate about supporting and encouraging the youth of the town. Positive mentors are essential in assisting them into making good choices, helping them into further education, apprenticeships and jobs.”





HTC works closely with our local authority, West Berkshire Council (WBC), often with support from our three district councillors. **James Cole, Claire Rowles** and **Dennis Benneyworth** pictured left to right. If you have any local issues that you are struggling to resolve you may wish to contact them on [dennis.benneyworth@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:dennis.benneyworth@westberks.gov.uk), [james.cole@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:james.cole@westberks.gov.uk) and [claire.rowles1@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:claire.rowles1@westberks.gov.uk)



resourcefulness of the last year and to celebrate the positive legacies achieved through the crisis. Much of the credit for this lies with our ever-willing and caring community and volunteer groups which we do our best to support. Hungerford is blessed to have so many – the Self-isolation Support group, Smarten Up Hungerford, HEAT (Hungerford Environmental Action Team), CHAIN, Youth & Community Centre and HAHA (Hungerford Allotment Holders Association) are just some, but we could have listed 20 more. HTC will continue to support all of them and any new ones that emerge.

### Thank you...

It's also good to reflect on and share the amazing achievements and

## Awards

In recognition of all the individuals who demonstrated outstanding service and commitment during the pandemic, the Mayor will be hosting an event during which she will be issuing special Covid Community Champion awards.

## Hopes and aspirations

Our main ambition is to continue to represent everyone in Hungerford to the best of our ability. We want to make ourselves even more accessible and responsive, so we'll soon be introducing regular councillors' surgeries at various locations around the town. Look out for details as these will start soon after the restrictions have lifted. We will be inviting the Police and District Councillors to join us at some of the surgeries.

## Our events...

We will continue to help promote Hungerford and its ambitions, doing our best to create or encourage events that bring people together. We organise our own events such as:



- The Christmas lights switch-on (and the video that replaced it in 2020)
- Hungerford in Bloom and Freedom of the Town awards
- Grant making ceremony
- Armed Forces Day
- Remembrance Day parade, (expertly co-ordinated by our Royal British Legion).

We hope to bring you more of these events in the future.

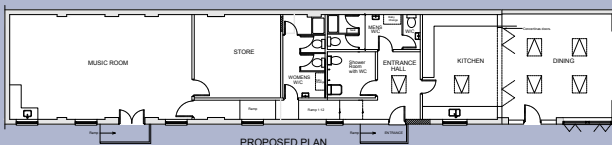
Next year is the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and celebrations could include a 'Big Lunch' and a beacon lighting.

## Our projects...

Finally, we have specific projects of our own which we intend to develop over the next few years. Here are a few along with some of our recent achievements:

**Leisure and well-being**  
Understanding the needs of the community by promoting activities and events that support

Croft Field Activities Centre plan





mental and physical well-being by:

**Upgrading our Croft Field Activities**

**Centre** – We have recently agreed a plan to make this facility accessible for all, including a new kitchen and washroom facilities, and installation of a hoist. We will look forward to progressing this exciting project.

**Pursuing grants to improve our sports**

**facilities** – One of our ambitions is to obtain an all-weather pitch.

**Resurfacing the car park** – Our Triangle Field sports ground car park has recently benefitted from a brand-new surface.

**Beautifying open spaces** – Our war memorial gardens in Bridge Street underwent a recent revamp and two new raised flower beds have been built.

**Installing hanging baskets** – These are beginning to flourish around town.

**Granting donations** – We consider requests for financial support from various clubs, charities and organisations providing they benefit Hungerford residents. Applications can be made via the Good Exchange Website.

Annually we grant significant donations to our Leisure Centre and Youth & Community Centre.

**Assisting the Police** – We have purchased new cameras recently to increase our CCTV coverage and are looking to expand this further.

**Environment**

Leading by example to help achieve best environmental practice and to reduce the council's and the town's carbon footprint.

**5 new recycling bins** – You may already have spotted these. We are trialling them





around the town for bottles and cans. If this proves successful further locations will be considered. West Berks Council are trialling a plastic recycling bank in the station car park.

**Electric vehicles charge points** – Hungerford already has 8 of these, 4 located in the High Street, 2 in Charnham Street, 1 in Canal Walk and 1 in Park Street. There are plans for 4 more in the Station Road Council car park.



**LED streetlights** – A programme of upgrading our streetlights from energy hungry Sodium to LEDs is underway.

**Pigeons** – If you have seen the recent press coverage, please rest assured we are working on

establishing an on-going programme to keep numbers under control. Please help us by not feeding them or leaving food waste behind.

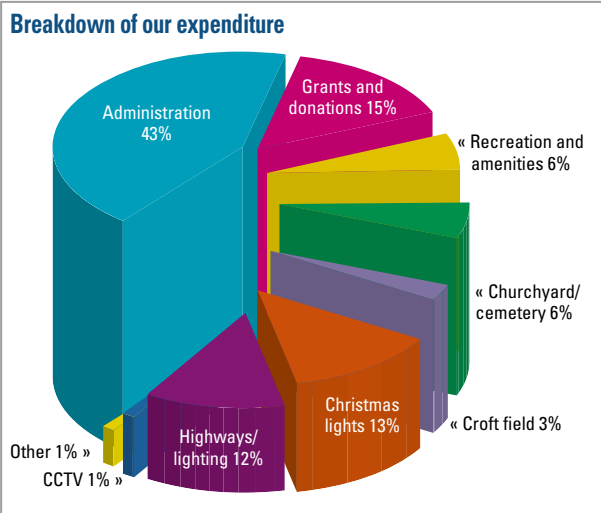
**Wildflower areas** – We have left the perimeter of our Triangle Field as a wildflower area to help the birds and bees. We are fully supportive of Hungerford Environmental Action Team. Our Mayor was present at the opening of Lockdown Wood (see below) which involved the planting of 1000 trees.

**Neighbourhood Development Plan** – We are holding public consultations from

the end of June on potential new housing sites for Hungerford. All the information and ability for residents to provide their feedback is also being made available on the [www.Hungerford2036.info](http://www.Hungerford2036.info) website. The supply of additional market and affordable homes is a key part of what the Hungerford Plan will need to cover and, in due course, seek approval for through a local referendum.

## Cost to taxpayers

Below is a breakdown of our expenditure for the last financial year. We were able to keep the precept requested from West Berks Council for 2021-22 at a very similar figure to the previous year showing only a 1.17% increase.



## Helping our finances

At the end of June, we say goodbye to our finance officer Jeff Ford who has worked for Hungerford Town Council



any way, please get in touch.

Contact Hungerford Town Council via email [admin@hungerford-tc.gov.uk](mailto:admin@hungerford-tc.gov.uk) or by phone 01488 686195. You can follow us on facebook or twitter.

Our office staff (pictured left) are happy to help.

## Finding out more about HTC's activities

HTC's website at [www.hungerford-tc.co.uk](http://www.hungerford-tc.co.uk)

is regularly updated and has a wide range of information on all HTC's activities, including the agendas and minutes of meetings and a list of all the councillors and officers with their contact details.

Lookout for our regular newsletter published by Penny Post Hungerford in the first week of each month which includes a summary of HTC's main activities. Subscription is free.

Approximately every quarter The Fortnightly Adviser (a free fortnightly printed publication) will feature our Hungerford Matters article about our work.

since 2012. We wish him well in his retirement and thank him for his sound advice and guidance over the years. We welcome Sharon Prance who joins us in his place.

## Your feedback

More challenges lie ahead. Some – like climate change are complex issues and will require collaborative working. Whatever we do will be guided and informed by what the town needs; so, if you have any feedback, if you think there's anything that you'd like to see done, or if you want to help our work in

## Vacancies

Currently we have two vacancies for councillors. If you are interested in joining please email [townclerk@hungerford-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@hungerford-tc.gov.uk). Our councillors are all from different walks of life and we are fortunate to have a mix of both young and old. We are keen for people to bring different views and skills to the table so don't hesitate to ring for a chat if you think you could help in any way.



Freedom of the Town Awards