

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the **Full Council Meeting** held on Monday 6 January 2020 at 7.00pm in the Corn Exchange Complex, Hungerford.

Present: Cllrs Simpson (Chair), Alford, Crane, Downe, Fyfe, Knight, Winser, Crane, Chicken and Hawkins. Also: The RFO, representatives from Penny Post and Newbury Weekly News. District Cllrs Cole, Rowles and Bennyworth.

Police Report – Cllr Simpson presented the report. (Appendix 1)

The Twinning Association presented their report.

Public Participation – There were no questions from the public.

The meeting opened at 19.30 pm

1. **Apologies for absence** – Cllr Gaines, Cllr Hudson, Cllr Lewis
2. **Declarations of interest** – Cllrs Crane & Winser item 10. Cllrs Crane & Alford item 9.
3. **Approval of Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 2 December 2019** – The minutes were approved and were subsequently signed as a true record. Proposed Cllr Winser, Seconded Cllr Chicken, Abstained Cllr Hawkins.
4. **Mayor's Diary** – The Mayor presented her report. (Appendix 2)
5. **District Councillor's Report** – Cllrs Cole, Rowles & Bennyworth reported on West Berkshire Council's activities. Cllr Simpson asked the District Councillors if refuse collection day could be changed to a non-market day – Cllr Bennyworth agreed to action the request. Cllr Bennyworth also agreed to action the blocked drains outside the Shell Garage and to investigate a claim for the damaged sun-dial on behalf of the Twinning Association. (Appendix 3)
6. **Actions from previous meetings** – Cllr Simpson reminded the Council it needs to think about the Freedom of the Town and to start planning for the Town Meeting.
7. **Co-option of new councillors** – there were no applications for the three vacancies.
8. **Budget setting 2020/21** –
 - a. The Council received the budget report and passed a resolution to agree the proposed budget. Proposed Cllr Simpson, Seconded Cllr Winser.
 - b. The Council passed a resolution to adjust the precept request in line with the agreed budget at £293912. Proposed Cllr. Simpson, Seconded Cllr. Downe.

- 9. To agree and sign lease for the Marsh Lane Allotments** – The Council agreed the lease for the allotments. The lease was signed by Cllr Simpson and the Town Clerk. Proposed Cllr. Winser, Seconded Cllr Knight.
- 10. Twinning Association** – The Council discussed the Twinning Association’s proposal to re-site their sundial on the Hungerford Hub building and agreed to their request. Proposed Cllr Simpson, Seconded Cllr. Knight. Cllr Crane and Winser not voted. One objection.
- 11. Street names Salisbury Road development** – The Council discussed potential street names and it was agreed that Councillors should submit their ideas for themes/names to the Deputy Clerk by 5.00pm on Tuesday 7 January 2020 and the office, with the help of the Mayor, will submit three of these proposals to West Berkshire Council, as requested.
- 12. Committee Reports** – The following committees presented their reports:
- a. R & A – Cllr Simpson reported on the Plane Tree site visit.
 - b. F&GP – Nothing to report.
 - c. T & E – Cllr Crane reported that donations of £600 have been pledged for Great West Way.
 - d. E & P – Cllr Simpson presented the report on behalf of Cllr Gaines. (Appendix 4)
 - e. H & T – Nothing to report.
- 13. Finance** –
- a. Cheque run of £50617.80 (Gross of VAT) was approved. Proposed Cllr. Winser, Seconded Cllr Simpson
 - b. The Council reviewed and approved the year to date accounts. Proposed Cllr. Winser. Seconded Cllr Alford.
- 14.** The Council, using the powers granted to it in under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, passed a resolution to exclude the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media from the meeting during the consideration of agenda item 14 as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the business to be transacted. Reason for taking the item in private: Information relating to an employee. Proposed Cllr Knight, Seconded Cllr Winser.
- a) The report of the Staff sub-committee meeting held on 5 December was received.
 - b) The 3 month contract was discussed and agreed. Proposed Cllr Simpson, Seconded Cllr Downe.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm

Appendix 1

Hungerford Town Council Police Report 1 January 2020

Inspector Hawkett has already updated the Mayor regarding our current resources and the recent rise in burglary dwellings in the area. As he stated there have been three burglaries in December in the Hungerford AND Lambourn area. Only one of these occurred in Hungerford town itself. This was on the 10th December the same evening that an attempt was made to break in to one of our Antique shops

As a team we thoroughly enjoyed policing the Christmas light switch on and the Extravaganza. Both of which passed without incident.

Overnight 20th- 21st December there were several reported incidents of vehicle crime in the town. Vehicles including one works van were broken into. These incidents occurred in Moores Place, Chilton Way, Westbrook Close and Cherry Grove. A shed was also broken into in Cherry Grove and a bike was stolen. If anyone has any information regarding this recent spate of vehicle crime please contact us.

The team have carried out two successful Tool marking events in the last month. One in Lambourn and one recently (4th Jan) at John O Gaunt school. In total we've marked approximately 100 tools. We are currently planning future dates to offer Bike and Tack marking as well as tools. These will be advertised and also posted on our social media platforms in due course.

There has been one shoplifting for December in the town.

At the beginning of December we finally took delivery of our new marked 4x4 vehicle. This will allow us to patrol the rural areas we have been struggling to reach, and better serve our most rural communities with a visible presence.

Please keep reporting stuff to us – We sometimes find that news travels fast round a community, especially via various social media channels but if no one tells us, we don't know about it.

You can report online at <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk> , but if it is urgent please continue to call on 101 (non-emergency) and 999 in an emergency.

Our team email address is: hungerfordanddownlandsnhpt@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk. Please be aware this is not monitored 24/7 and should not be used to report a crime.

Police Report 2

There was a significant rise in burglary dwellings in the Hungerford area particularly in October and November of this year. The rise was acknowledged by the senior management team at Newbury and additional resources were allocated to the Hungerford area. Officers from the ICRT (Incident Crime & Response Teams) were allocated to patrol the Hungerford area and their activity was recorded on our tasking document which is reviewed by an Inspector or above every day to ensure compliance.

The rise in burglary dwellings was not isolated to Hungerford, other towns in West Berkshire also suffered a rise in these types of offences as well as other police area's across the Thames Valley. Our 101 waiting times have massively improved with the average waiting time of December being 6.2 minutes and as I type this e-mail at 0928hrs, there is currently no one waiting on 101. Clearly the waiting times do depend on the time of day and the demand being placed upon the force.

I am pleased to report that there has only been three burglary dwellings in the Hungerford / Lambourn area during the month of December, which is considerably less (but still three more than we would like) I still suspect that there is some offences that go unreported in the Hungerford area and our message needs to remain the same, that reporting each and every time is vital to ensure that the crime picture in Hungerford is fairly represented.

We have successfully recruited a new officer to join the Hungerford / Downlands police team and are awaiting confirmation of their start date which will be within the next month or so and I'm also going to merge two part time positions on the team, to recruit another full time officer for Hungerford. Once again this is likely to happen within the next few months, so hopefully you will see a greater presence in the town.

Appendix 2

Mayors activity for December 2019

- 2nd full council meeting
- 3rd Meeting with Twinning Association – Sun Dial
- 5th Staff Meeting
- 8th Santa Fun Run
- 9th E&P meeting
- 10th Tuesday Club Xmas Party
- 10th Y&CC – gift of cookies presented
- 11th Blind Club Meeting
- 11th Hungerford Care Home party
- 12th JOG Senior Citizen Xmas party
- 13th Home visit and presentation of framed photo with Col Simon Brown - detail to follow
- 13th Hungerford Extravaganza
- 14th Town Band Concert – Cllr Knight attended
- 15th Mayors Community Carol Service
- 17th Site visit with DC's & WBC relating to tree management at War Memorial
- 19th Nursery Nativity – Sadly unable to attend

Appendix 3

Report for Hungerford Town Council, January 2020 Cllr Dennis Benneyworth, Cllr James Cole, Cllr Claire Rowles West Berkshire Council

Reflections on 2019

Despite the run up to the Christmas and New Year break, December has been a busy period within the Council timetable, complicated by the calling of the General Election which utilised a considerable amount of Council strategic resource. 2020 looks equally demanding with a very full forward plan.

As we move towards to the second year of this session of Council, many of the 2019 Conservative Manifesto pledges are being translated into strategy consultations and delivery plans.

The budget for the coming year, whilst still under pressure, has been considerably less painful to build in comparison to previous years – for the first time in a long while West Berkshire Council (“WBC”) will not have to consult externally on service reductions or changes. Rather, with announcements about additional funding for Adult and Children’s Social Care, and Education, proposed changes to the budget have avoided major public facing savings.

As referenced in previous reports, with a wider political representation in the Council Chamber we have seen some vibrant exchanges and debate (you are of course very welcome to attend meetings as observers).

The environment was probably the most talked about issue in 2019 and this will also be a very significant topic going in to 2020 and beyond. The Climate Conference in October 2019 was the first stage in a series of conversations relating to the Council’s response to the declaration of a climate emergency. We can expect this conversation to continue as we will all need to play our part in delivering the route to carbon zero over the coming decades.

This district, like many others also has issues of the delivering the right housing solutions for people of all ages, as well as caring for our growing elderly populations and vulnerable residents. Having said this, West Berkshire is a vibrant and economically active area within a beautiful location, with excellent transport links and very strong employment.

All these things make West Berkshire a place to be proud of and we can all look forward to 2020 positively.

Council Meetings

As reported last month, the next Council meetings will take place on 9 January (a special meeting to appoint honorary alderman, followed by an ordinary meeting to consider various items including the draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan (more below) and a Revised Statement of Community Involvement). Papers relating to the agenda items for the main meeting discussed further below can be found at <http://decisionmaking.westberks.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=116&MIId=5159&Ver=4>.

Honorary Alderman

At the special meeting referred to above, we will be conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on some of the district’s long serving former Councillors including Paul Bryant, Keith Chopping, Adrian Edwards, Graham Jones, Anthony Stansfeld, Quentin Webb, Emma Webster and Mollie Lock. The title will also be bestowed on Pamela Bale but she is unfortunately unable to attend the meeting.

Minerals and Waste Local Plan

The proposed Minerals and Waste Local Plan will be discussed at the ordinary meeting. The draft plan sets out the policies to guide minerals and waste development across the district, and includes site allocations for mineral extraction. These documents and supporting papers can be found in the Council Agenda.

Plastics Recycling petition

We will also debate a petition seeking that WBC recycles more types of plastic than currently.

The background paper in the agenda pack makes interesting reading – to quote from it:

- *It will cost the Council up to £1m in capital investment to make necessary modifications at the Council's materials recovery facility at Padworth, so that additional plastic stream can be sorted, plus ongoing annual revenue cost of c £100k to collect this material;*
- *Collecting the materials is relatively easy compared to securing a viable recycling destination for the materials in the UK. If exported overseas as done by many of the UK authorities who collect these additional plastics, then the Council will have limited control over what happens to the waste (whether it is effectively recycled or ends up in landfills/rivers).*

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

At the main extraordinary Executive meeting the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-25 was adopted. It articulates the core priorities for the next five years with a focus on enhanced prevention and early intervention to address homelessness and rough sleeping and an increased range of housing options and even stronger partnership working (https://citizen.westberks.gov.uk/media/48320/Preventing-Homelessness-and-Rough-Sleeping-Strategy-2020-2025/pdf/Homelessness_Strategy_Delivery_Plan_v2.pdf?m=637124412041870000).

Climate Change Investment Bonds

We also agreed this scheme, subject to due diligence.

A Community Municipal Bond (CMB) is a bond or loan mechanism issued by a Council directly to the public via a Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) regulated crowdfunding platform (WBC is considering Abundance Investment as a provider). CMBs can be used to supplement, diversify or replace sources of borrowing to fund specific infrastructure projects, or to refinance existing debt. They can also be earmarked for specific suitable projects.

Although the bonds could be used to deliver a wide variety of infrastructure projects, WBC intends to prioritise projects which support its recent declaration of a climate emergency, and the Environment Strategy referred to above.

Individuals (whether West Berkshire residents or not) will be able to invest from £5.00 upwards to support specific projects such as solar panels or tree planting. In return, they will receive Climate Change Bonds and a yield on their investment. This scheme has great potential and could enable the Council to take on important green projects – if our communities invest, it would provide the Council with a cheaper alternative to conventional sources of funds and reduce the overall cost of borrowing to all taxpayers across the district. Keeping the administration as simple as possible is why the Council is seeking to pilot this scheme with an outside organisation.

Subject to completing due diligence on the scheme, which will be funded through the pilot by external funding, the Council hope to launch the scheme to investors in the middle of 2020.

Environment Strategy consultation (from 9 January to 21 February)

As reported last month, following the declaration of a climate emergency in July and the Climate Conference in the autumn, which was the next step in the public engagement process, WBC has been working on a draft Environment Strategy with input from the Environment Board and Environment Advisory Group.

The draft strategy covering the period 2020-30 goes out to public consultation on 9 January and provides six weeks for responses. The consultation will be published on the Council's website as well as being highlighted via email and through media and social media channels to those groups and individuals who are particularly engaged in the district's consultation process. Comments on the strategy are welcomed from a wide range of respondents so please do highlight this consultation amongst residents.

This is a significant consultation and the Council also intends to hold a short series of community conversations and focus groups in February before the consultation period closes. **It is anticipated that, early in the new year, towns and parishes will be invited to send a delegate to discuss how Parish Councils and Town Councils can get involved in the delivery of the strategy and help motivate communities to play their part in the district working towards carbon-zero by 2030 (these groups will be held at Shaw House).**

Representatives from the district's other interested parties such as our young people, environmental lobbyists, climate conference participants, residents and West Berkshire Council staff will also be invited to discuss the draft strategy in a variety of conversations held across the district. We also intend holding meetings with representatives from neighbouring Councils to engage in the wider conversation about how we can work together for the best results for our region.

Adult Social Care Budget 2019/20

Further to comments about the budget in the introduction, the ASC budget is currently predicting an underspend for 2019/20, which is hugely encouraging considering the relentless financial pressures on this demand led service. Although it is the single biggest Council service budget, the enhanced financial modelling is proving reliable and provides us with useful data to help predict the spending requirement for service users in both the immediate and mid to longer terms.

Having said this, to highlight how a very small change in numbers can have a massive effect on the end result, after much argument five ASC clients are now having their needs paid for by the NHS through the Continuing Health Care system with a total saving to the ASC budget of £0.6m. To put this into perspective, £0.6m is approximate to a 0.5% increase on council tax.

Housing in West Berkshire

WBC's commitment is to make sure that there are homes available in West Berkshire for all stages of our resident's lives. The focus will continue to be on the delivery of affordable housing in the district and is carried through to the new Council Strategy 2019-23 'Building on Our Strengths.'

One of the six priorities for improvement in the strategy relates to housing to 'Develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support and grow the local economy.' Additionally, the West Berkshire Vision 2036, specifically commits to delivering a West Berkshire Housing mix with something for everyone.

Items of note include:

- Key regeneration schemes such as Market Street, Newbury which is currently under development for completion by 2021;
- Our Local Plan to 2026 which sets out our planning policies based on 551 dwellings per annum. We are delivering 109% of our target according to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government;
- We currently have a seven year housing land supply which has been accepted by planning inspectors at appeal (this will be tested again in the Land at junction of Clayhill Road and Sulhamstead Road appeal);
- Our development programme currently has over 800 affordable homes approved with additional units on the horizon;
- Our Equity Loan Scheme, First Steps Next Steps, has enabled 35 homes to be purchased by local residents;
- We have launched the Housing Service Improvement Plan that will secure more private rented accommodation through a rent incentive scheme, develop a Landlord Forum and an Registered Provider Forum to increase opportunities for growth in housing;
- WBC is nearing completion on a joint venture with Sovereign Housing that will increase the number of homes in the district;

- We are we are investigating setting up a Local Housing company;
- Our housing team has also done some outstanding work with both families and rough sleepers:
 - We have purchased 18 units of temporary accommodation with a further two under offer. As a result there are no longer any families in B&B accommodation;
 - 33 rough sleepers have been supported to move on from sleeping rough, with current numbers down to 10

Future consultations

There are a number of consultations and delivery plans coming forward in the next quarter which you may wish to respond to:

- Council Strategy Delivery Plan;
- Playing Pitch Strategy;
- West Berkshire Cultural Heritage Strategy;
- Housing Strategy;
- Local Transport Plan review.

Other WBC news

London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE)

Regeneration of the London Road Industrial Estate in Newbury is a long held ambition and important project for the Council which will introduce a new northern gateway into the town by delivering new amenities and improving the vicinity.

Consultants, Avison Young were appointed just before the Christmas break to produce a new development brief and masterplan for the area. Subject to contracts being signed, the consultants will begin work on the masterplan in the coming weeks. In coming up with a new masterplan Avison Young will meet with key stakeholders locally to help inform their report. Proposals will seek to both make best use of the area for the town and ensure on behalf of residents to maximise the Council's financial position as a landowner.

The work will set out key details about future development including the principles for redevelopment, planning policy and how the land might be used. The masterplan will guide all development within the regeneration area and not just on land owned by West Berkshire Council.

The brief and associated work will take around five months to complete in draft form. Once received, the Council will review the options and then over the next six months or so agree the type and number of partnerships the Council might wish to enter into to progress with regeneration of the area.

Thirty year transport strategy consultation

People and businesses in West Berkshire are being urged to have their say on a proposed thirty-year transport strategy for the South East which aims to improve journeys, boost the economy and protect the environment.

The strategy outlines how, with the right investment in our region's transport network, the South East's economy will more than double by 2050 to between £450bn and £500bn per year – creating an additional 500,000 jobs, boosting quality of life and access to opportunities for all and helping cut the South East's carbon emissions to net-zero.

It has been produced by Transport for the South East, a unique partnership bringing together local authorities, business leaders and transport organisations to speak with one voice on our region's transport priorities. A major focus of the strategy is reducing the region's reliance on private cars to reduce congestion, cut carbon emissions and improve air quality. Today, cars account for 70% of all journeys in the South East compared to just 4% by rail and 5% by bus. It also highlights how better transport links can support economic growth around our key international gateways, such as Port of Southampton, which are vital to the local, regional and national economy.

To read the draft transport strategy and take part in the consultation, go to tfse.org.uk/transport-strategy.

The deadline for responses is Friday, 10 January 2020.

The final transport strategy is due for publication in April 2020, with a strategic investment plan planned for publication in 2021.

Peer Challenge Review

The Challenge is overseen by the Local Government Association who bring a senior team of officers and Members together from around the country for a week. We had quite a large team come to Newbury, led by the Chief Executive of Southend on Sea Council. She was supported by the Leader of Shropshire Council and the Deputy Leader of Cornwall Council. The team was further supported by a number of other senior officers from around the country each with particular specialisms.

The initial feedback has been very encouraging and we will get the full report in the New Year along with a number of recommendations. In the meantime here is a flavour of what they reported back to us before they left:

- we are a strong performing authority that manages its finances well
- we are modest and tend to 'hide our light under a bushel'

The underlying message was 'we are good and should be more proud of it.'

Pod

A great new learning space known as the 'Pod' will create six additional places for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities at the Intervention iCollege in Newbury.

Children who have and an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) for Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties will benefit from these extra places. They will be able to access support more promptly and within their local area. It will also benefit children who will remain with the iCollege as it will assist with the transition between primary and secondary school.

The West Berkshire Council project to create the Pod cost almost £208,000 and was funded by a Government grant.

Highwood Copse School

Following the collapse of builder Dawnus in to administration earlier in the year, the contract was reissued to local firm Feltham Construction. As a result of the delay caused by this, rectification work needed to restart the build due to weather damage and some defective work issues, the cost of building the new school has increased by £1.7m. The additional money is coming from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a contribution paid by local developers to deliver improvements in our communities.

The build is progressing well and is planned for completion in summer 2020 and will welcome up to 30 Reception pupils, with a new intake each year and all year groups in place by 2026. Parents and children interested in attending the school will have the opportunity to visit the site and watch the building evolve; entering the completed school as founder members in September 2020.

M4 junctions 3 to 12 smart motorway

There are two full weekend closures of the M4 coming up early in the new year, between junctions 6 and 8/9 over the weekend of 17-20 January 2020 and between junctions 4b and 5 over the weekend of 14-17 February 2020. You can find out more in the attached bulletin, or at websites:

<http://www.highwaysengland.co.uk/m4j3to12> and <https://m4j3to12smartmotorway.commonplace.is>

Royal Berkshire NHS Trust – Governor Elections

The Royal Berkshire NHS Trust has announced elections for Public Governors, including two for West Berkshire & Borders, one to July 2021 and the other to July 2022. Nominations close at 17:00 on 16 January 2020 and information for prospective applicants and the nomination forms are/will be available on the Trust website - <https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/open-elections.htm>.

Appraisal of Conservation Areas

WBC is intending to manage a programme of appraisal of Conservation Areas over the next few years. WBC is looking for interested parties – such as local heritage or historical groups – to help with this. A template (at least) will be provided by WBC. Timings are to be confirmed (the unpublished, unofficial proposed timings indicate that the first batch is due to be completed in July 2022). If anyone is interested in getting involved with this and working within the guidelines, Cllr James Cole is the main point of contact.

6 January 2020

Appendix 4

Environment and Planning Committee Report – 9th December 2019

Item 4 19/01406/RESMAJ. Report back from WAP Committee Review Meeting 27 November 2019. Both Cllr Gaines and Cllr Simpson attended the meeting with a number of residents. Cllr Gaines spoke on behalf of HTC and Cllr Simpson on behalf of the residents. Our district councillors also express their objections to the site going ahead in its present form. Unfortunately the WAP committee did not agree and supported the application.

There were Four applications considered at the meeting

a) 19/02823/ADV. 4 Tealgate, Hungerford. Three elevation signs. It was understood that these signs are already on the building. **No objections**

b) 19/02541/HOUSE. 93 Priory Road, Hungerford. Single storey rear extension, two storey side extension, attached garage. **No objections**

c) 19/02921/FULD. Riverbend, Upper Eddington, Hungerford. Section 73A - Application to vary Condition (4) Finished floor levels of planning permission 18/02374/FULD - Demolition of 2-bed dwelling house and erection of new 3-bed dwelling house. Variation of condition 4 – **no objections I abstention as per the original application.**

d) 19/02637/FULD. Oak Lodge, 8 Salisbury Road, Hungerford. Erection of three detached dwellings, one with an integral garage, two detached garages and a revised highway access. Retention of the engine shed and demolition of the existing dwelling and garage. This application was deferred at the previous planning meeting. **We were informed late in the process that this application is to have the current plans amended. However we could only comment on the plans currently available. The committee objected on a number of grounds with one abstention.**

There are still a number of planning issues currently outstanding. At the time of this report the latest WAP agenda has not been released. So I have no knowledge as to whether the following application is to be included.

19/02042/COMIND Allotments Upper Eddington. Erection of agricultural barn with plant store in support of farming operation has been called in. it also now has eleven letters of objection.

The amended plans for 19/02637/FULD Oak Lodge are not currently on the website. I have queried this with the planning officer concerned.

Cllr Gaines

3rd January 2020