

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

The Mayor
Cllr Helen Simpson
57 Fairview Road
Hungerford
Berkshire
RG17 0BP
Tel: 07920 110380
Cllr.helen.simpson@hungerford-tc.gov.uk



The Town Clerk
Mrs Claire Barnes
The Library
Church Street
Hungerford
Berkshire RG17 0JG
Tel: 01488 686195
townclerk@hungerford-tc.gov.uk
www.hungerford-tc.gov.uk

MINUTES of the **Full Council Meeting** held on Monday 1st November 2021 at 7.00pm in the Corn Exchange Complex.

Present: Cllrs Simpson, Winsor, Fyfe, Downe, Alford, Lewis, Schlanker, Knight, Chicken and Hudson.
Also: West Berkshire District Cllr James Cole
Representatives from Penny Post, Newbury News, Police
Members of public: Jerry Keates
In attendance: Claire Barnes (Town Clerk)

Police Report: The Police reported cases of motorbikes speeding over the Common and Hare Coursing on the outskirts of town. 2 criminal damage incidences occurred in October including a car window being smashed on the High St. There was also a report of someone viewing a vehicle parked on a driveway and pushing the owner to sell it and another of a male offering gardening services for cash and targeting the elderly. There has been some drug dealing at Smitham Bridge Trading Estate.

Issues highlighted to the police by Councillors included the use of E-scooters and drug dealing at licensed premises. The Police were interested to learn more about the latter and explained they were educating riders of E-scooters, which should be registered and insured. The Police advised they would provide an update on the outcome of the break in at the Coin shop.

As CCTV has been enhanced in town it is hoped HTC may receive a larger donation from the Police to support the costs.

Member of public: Jerry Keates introduced himself. He has lived in Hungerford for 5 years and is interested in joining the Council as he would like to give back to the community. He is now retired but worked in sales for the past 15 years and prior to that served 23 years in the air force as an engineer.

The Mayor invited him to attend some committee meetings in November followed by the December Full Council meeting when we will consider co-option.

FC202100176 Note apologies for absence – Councillors Shatford, Yakar-Wells and Mills

(also, District Cllrs Rowles and Benneyworth, and Mr Mayer were unable to attend)

FC202100177 Declarations of interest – Cllr Knight (Hungerford Hub/Library – FC202100186)

FC202100178 Approval of Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council meeting of 4th October 2021

Proposed: Cllr Knight

Seconded: Cllr Schlanker

Resolution: To approve minutes of 4th October 2021 as a true record. 2 abstentions

Outcome of actions: Complete

FC202100179 Receive Mayor's Report – The report had been circulated (**see attached**). The Mayor added she is attending with her Deputy a tour of the Fire Station. Also, two new 'Tommys' have been installed at the Bridge St War Memorial Gardens in time for the Remembrance Service which the Deputy Lord Lieutenant ... will be attending. The service will be recorded so if you do not wish to attend you can watch it online. There will be restricted access to the Memorial gardens to allow 1m social distancing.

FC202100180 Receive District Councillor's Reports – DC Cole reported all 3 District Cllrs visited John O Gaunt School and met the new Head. They were impressed by the improvements. A teams meeting is planned with Sovereign on Wednesday regarding the Chestnut Walk application. Cllr

Downe would like to know what the brief was from West Berks Council. The application has been called in but DC Cole would be happy to withdraw this if the planning can satisfy certain criteria. DC Cole met with Peter Joseph (Constable of Town & Manor (T&M)) via Zoom to explain the importance of Conservation Areas. A team of 4 is required. HTC, T&M and a member from Hungerford Historical Assoc. are on board.

ACTION: Clerk to put a request on social media for a fourth member to join the Conservation area team.

DC Cole advised a consultation on Adult Care has just gone out.

A 30mph limit will be effective through the Common from December 2021. DC Cole has spoken with T&M who are interested in Speed Indicator Device (SID) training and may contribute towards the purchase of a device.

Notes from the District Parish Conference have been circulated which included info on speeding devices. SIDs work on 30 or 40mph limits and the more expensive models can display messages such as 'beware of cattle'. The equipment can be loaned for 3 weeks, by a trained user who would also be responsible for the insurance and for moving it to different locations. The kit records data that you can download as evidence which would be required if applying for traffic calming measures. If we wished to purchase a hybrid SID, the cost is approx. £6K. We have an option to sign up to speedwatch for £160.

ACTION: Debate this further at H&T Committee and invite Town & Manor to attend.

- FC202100181 Health & Safety – Any complaints or concerns, including Impact of Coronavirus** – The temporary speed sign outside Dobbie's on the A4 has been effective in slowing drivers down. Speeding is a concern of many residents.
The Mayor advised she has written to West Berks Council following the change to the accessibility of lateral flow tests. Public are requested to obtain a code prior to collecting tests from Boots now and people were being turned away because they didn't have one. She has also asked for the testing station to return to Hungerford. Concerns were voiced over the lack of information and confusion over how to get a booster jab or 3rd jab. Hungerford surgery aren't promoting it. **ACTION:** Clerk to promote the relevant government link online.
- FC202100182 Hungerford 2036 – Receive a report from the Project Team** – H2036 are in the process of analysing the recent housing sites consultation and have nothing further to add to the last report submitted early October.
- FC202100183 Receive Committee reports (no more than 3 minutes per report)** – Committees have not met.
- FC202100184 Propose authorisation of payment run (circulated with copies of invoices) for October**
Proposed: Cllr Winser
Seconded: Cllr Simpson
Resolution: Agree payment run for October totalling £22,099.55
Councillors were reminded that each Committee will consider 2022-23 budgets during their next meeting in November and were encouraged to review the Action Plan and bring forward any ideas.
- FC202100185 Propose year to date accounts** – refer to circulated Income/Expenditure Report.
Proposed: Cllr Winser
Seconded: Cllr Knight
Resolution: Agree accounts with positive variance of £70,610.
- FC202100186 To discuss and agree 2022/23 library grant request for £9000** – Cllr Knight talked through his report (**see attached**). The projection was to reduce their grant request from £10k to £6k over 5 years. They hope to do this but are a year behind due to Covid He added they are having a survey of the control systems of the library (13 zones) to consider how they can reduce energy consumption. During lockdown the energy costs only dropped by 20%. They will consider getting a smart meter. On Wednesday the Curve will be opening selling gifts to raise money. Future opening days will be Tuesdays and Fridays.
Proposed: Cllr Winser
Seconded: Cllr Simpson

Resolution: Agree a grant of £9,000 for Hungerford Library & Community Trust for 2022-23. One abstention.

The Mayor thanked the Hub team and wished them the best for the opening of the Curve.

- FC202100187 Receive update on progress with Croft Field improvement project** – Planning permission has been granted for our project. Kennet Design are arranging for building contractors to view the site. HTC will invite tenders in due course.
- FC202100188 Christmas lights Switch on Event** – The Christmas trees are all arriving on Friday. The Switch on, by Roger Beard, will take place on Sunday 28th Nov from 4pm to 5pm outside the Town Hall. The schools, Town Band, Community of Hungerford Theatre Company and Academy of Vocal Arts are forming the entertainment. Kennet Radio will be providing the sound system. The Mayor was delighted to announce Rotary are bringing back Santa's Sleigh to Hungerford.
- FC202100189 Any other Reports (3 minutes each) not to include any proposals** – In June, HEAT ran an electric vehicle event. Cllr Downe advised HEAT is planning an event on home heating, to take place in May 2022. They may look for support from HTC and WBC. Hungerford Carnival will take place next year on Sunday 17th July 2022.

PART 2

Confidential

The public and press may be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity might be prejudicial to the public interest as per the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960.

- FC202100190 Triangle Field Management Agreement – Receive update** – A draft Lease has been received today from our solicitors.

ACTION: Clerk to arrange a meeting of the Working Party to consider the draft.

- FC202100191 Leisure Strategy update** – The next AMG meeting is set for 26th Nov.

ACTION: Clerk to escalate as there has been no response from WBC to our land proposal at JOG School for 3 months.

Council wishes to proceed with considering designs for a new skate park and pump track which would go on the existing site. Cllrs Schlanker, Fyfe, Winsler, Lewis and Alford volunteered to join a working party led by a member of public who will set up site meetings with contractors.

- FC202100192 Swimming Pool House – Consider options following correspondence with letting agent - Proposed:** Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Winsler

Resolution: Agree expenditure of £648 for electrical inspection

Proposed: Cllr Knight

Seconded: Cllr Fyfe

Resolution: Agree expenditure of £864 for new consumer unit

ACTION: Appoint electrical contractors

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Lewis

ACTION: **Resolution:** To deconstruct Marc Allen with immediate effect and appoint Nye and Co to manage the letting of the property for a 10% fee.

Meeting closed 8.58pm

Cllr Helen Simpson
Mayors Report Full Council 1st Nov 2021

Croft Field Activity Centre

HTC has just heard our planning application for improvements to the croft field centre have been approved, we will now seek to obtain quotes to undertake the required works.

Remembrance Sunday 14th November

This year's remembrance parade will go ahead as usual, we will socially distance the wreath layers to be 1m apart, the war memorial area will be managed so that we can ensure a safe space, we will enjoy having Hungerford Town Band and 6th Armoured Close Battalion Support - REME involvement once more.

Opening of Judiciary – Reading

I attended this event with Cllr Knight. The event was well attended by Civic leaders and is always such a lovely service to attend.

Mindfulness Garden Opening

I was delighted to attend the opening of the mindfulness garden at Hungerford Primary School. The garden has been beautifully put together with lots of help from the children. I think it will be a lovely addition to the school and really help to create a quiet reflective area for the children to sit and read. I can't wait to re-visit the garden as the planting becomes more established.

Meeting with Bewley Homes

Cllr Downe and I met with representatives of Bewley Homes including Managing Director Andrew Brooks and their PR consultant Chris Wotton. We were given a guided tour of the new development and discussed concerns from both sides. It was agreed we would issue a joint statement which was published in the local press. The welcome pack we had produced for new residents previously will now be jointly sent out with Bewley's own welcome/new home pack.

Opening of the Volunteer Centre Newbury

I was invited to attend the opening of the new volunteer centre in Newbury High Street. MP Laura Farris and High Sherriff Willie Hartley-Russell were also in attendance along with civic Mayors and invited guests. It was nice to hear from individuals who have been helped by the volunteer centre and nice to meet some of the volunteers working hard to help the community.

Kennet Radio Mayor's interview

I have taken part in a recorded interview will be aired on Thursday this week. I covered some of the projects HTC is involved in, Christmas Light switch on and remembrance Sunday as well as why I joined HTC and my role as current Mayor.

Hungerford Town Council

Public Report to:

Full Council

Agenda Item No FC202100186

Hungerford Library & Community Trust Grant 2022

Background

The yearly application for a grant to support the Hungerford Library & Community Trust for financial year 2022-2023. Since June 2018 the trust has taken over the running of the Hungerford Library building (except for the Town Council Office and the public toilets). Hungerford Town Council have now leased the building from West Berkshire Council for 99 years at peppercorn rent of £5 pa and HLCT is sub-leasing the building from HTC.

I must point out that since the Library building has been taken over by HTC four significant financial benefits have occurred as follows:

- 1) The rent for the office of £5,000pa paid by HTC to WBC (since 2009) is no longer paid.
- 2) Since 2017 WBC required an annual levy to be paid for a continuation for the library service of £1.00 per resident which would be £6,000 per annum in the case of Hungerford. (Thatcham and Newbury Town councils pay £24,000 and £32,000 respectively) Due to the arrangements with Hungerford Library this levy has been waived by WBC.
- 3) All HTC committee meetings have been transferred from the Town Hall building (run by Town & Manor) to the library resulting in an annual hire fee saving of approx. £2,000
- 4) The electricity and gas heating usage by the Town Council is paid by the trust. The total running costs are nearly £4500 pa for the whole building.

The takeover of the building lease by HTC means that nearly £15,000 does not need to be paid to WBC. HTC does now pay for building insurance and exterior maintenance while HLCT pay for liability and contents insurance.

All other running costs and further investment for the interior of the building are now paid for by the trust. The trust fundraises and hires the building out to the community & local businesses to generate revenue for these running costs of approx. £7000 in year 2019/20. Whilst the revenue raised was increasing with regular booking established it is currently around 30% of the costs required. Since March 20 Covid 19 has had a dramatic effect on fundraising with the building being closed for a total of 9 months in two periods of lockdown and ALL bookings cancelled revenue fell by around £8000. The Library has been reopened since July 2021 with bookings and revenue are starting to return but not yet at previous levels. Currently the running costs are approx £23,000 PA. The hub employs a Hub manager who is seeking to increase fundraising and revenue opportunities.

Objective

To secure a grant for the financial year 2022/23 of £9,000 (last year a similar £9,000 was awarded) This grant if you take into account the £15,000 benefit that HTC now enjoy means that the council still have a significant gain with this arrangement. The trust is trying to manage its affairs in a prudent manner and has plans for a series of improvements to the building to help generate additional income and to improve the building environment. The financial strength of the Trust ensures that this long-term project does not fail.

Projects undertaken to date

- 1) New Kitchen has been installed into the building (this was paid for by a Tesco Grant)
- 2) A total of 40 new folding chairs have been purchased to enable the Hub to hold meetings and events in the building
- 3) New book racks on wheels have been purchased to enable the space in library to be opened up for events.
- 4) New LED lighting installed saving running costs. (a grant of £5,000 secured from WBC)
- 5) The rear garden has been landscaped (during summer 2020) with a new wooden fence, shed and seating at a cost of £4000
- 6) The internal layout has recently been changed which involved moving data cabling and power for the WBC PCs and acquiring some new furniture.
- 7) The outside lighting has been replaced with energy efficient LEDs during summer 2021 helping to reduce electricity usage.
- 8) Refurbishment of The Curve (room at front of library) New LED lights , racking and new furniture and decoration.(summer 2021)
- 9) Since reopening the trustees have offered The Hub building space to Hungerford based groups and charities at no cost. This currently is a one year trial until summer 2022. Subject to finance the trustees would like to make this permanent. (see future projects below)

Future Projects

- 1) Improving green footprint including adding solar panels on roof to generate electricity (savings in running costs) and a heat pump (replacing original gas boiler now 13 years old)
- 2) Install Air Conditioning in the building
- 3) Installation of a disabled toilet for users
- 4) To offer free rental space to ALL Hungerford based charities and groups on a permanent basis.

Options.

Agree/disagree with the objective above or award a different amount.

Financial and Legal implications

Awarding this grant from annual savings as described still leaves council with a surplus.

Other information

Risks:

- Trust would fail without access to sufficient grants resulting in Town Council having to run the building itself at greater cost.
- If building handed back to WBC approx. £15,000 of annual costs would be incurred/
- Flagship project held in high esteem by West Berkshire Council could fail resulting loss of reputation for Hungerford and the Town Council.

Benefits:

- Maintain Library and Hub community building in Hungerford to the benefit of all users and residents

Recommendation

Continue to provide grant to the trust for the year 2022/23 an amount of £9,000.

Signed: Keith Knight 1st November 2021