

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

The Mayor
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MINUTES of the **Annual Town Meeting** held on Wednesday 19th March 2025 at 7.00pm in Corn Exchange, High Street, Hungerford, RG17 0NF

Present: Approx. 100 people (including those exhibiting). Members of press were also present.

- Welcome from the Mayor and introductions** – The Mayor took the opportunity to introduce all Hungerford Town Council (HTC) councillors and staff members present and invited people to come forward to fill the two councillor vacancies. She went on to explain the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan (representatives of the group are present here tonight) will be run past West Berks Council (WBC) at their full council meeting on 27th March. It should then proceed to Regulation 16 which consists of a 6-week consultation run by WBC followed by inspection and then to referendum hopefully by the end of the year. It has taken 7 years so far.
The Mayor announced that Britain in Bloom is looking for volunteers and financial support, but it is in its early days of planning.
She advised that the town has access to 10 defibrillators, 6 of which are publicly available, owned by HTC. We also have a Bleed Cabinet situated on the wall of the library. Thanks were expressed to Stu from SCAS who maintains these voluntarily. Simply ring 999 and ambulance will advise where the nearest defib is and talk you through how to use it including giving you the access code.
The Mayor went around the room and welcomed the organisations present as follows:
Hungerford Community Shed (part of the brand Men's Shed) - HTC is excited about the prospect of this group which is preparing to set up at the Croft Field Centre. It will make good use of the venue. Their ethos is about friendship, combatting loneliness and learning new skills. They have made their own beautiful noticeboard for display under the railway bridge.
Twinning Assoc are celebrating 45 years this year and are looking for new members. They have a cyclist arriving in May who is cycling from Ligueil to Portsmouth and then onto Hungerford.
The Theatre Co welcome new members for their production Matilda including helpers for behind the scenes. Rehearsals start in September. Please buy more tickets.
Foodbank thanked Hungerford for their generosity. They need tinned or long-life foods and asked for help spreading the word by displaying a poster.
Chamber of Commerce has a new Visit Hungerford website up and running and a 5-year marketing contract in place for maintenance. Great West Way are involved. Do get in touch if you want to promote any events.
Resource Centre – The Mayor emphasized the importance of the venue which is well used and loved. We do not wish to lose this service. A petition is available if you wish to sign it.
Police, Fire and SCAS – The Mayor thanked the services for attending and the Police for coming on their day off.
West Berks Council – Jon Winstanley (Environment Service Director, Paul Hendry from Countryside and District Cllr Denise Gaines were present. Other District Cllrs are at the Western Area Planning meeting. The Mayor explained HTC were considering managing Ramsbury Play Park as part of devolution which would ensure it is looked after for the future.
Youth & Community Centre is going from strength to strength and now has a new member.

Hungerford Environmental Action Team (HEAT) are here with information on how to reduce your carbon footprint. EV chargers are now up and running in the library car park.

Smarten up Hungerford do a fantastic job and are looking for more volunteers.

Town & Manor – Chris Scorey explained that although the planning application for the wetlands project was submitted a year ago, they are still waiting for permission. This is due to a statutory consultee having stalled the project. Their application ticks every box of permitted development, so they are unsure the reason why. He wished to reassure everyone that the project was not on hold, and they are continuing to press for progress. Trustee elections will be held at the end of May if you wish to stand.

Hungerford Allotment Holders Association (HAA) has a new committee. They have only a few allotment plots available which are going fast so please act quickly if you would like one.

Community Markets will be at the Croft Field on the second Sunday of the month from 10am to 1pm from April to October. They are passionate about cooking real food, focussing on cooking sustainably and using up everything. Tonight, they are cooking soup and bhajis using cauliflower leaves and nettles.

Everyone Active has recently opened their new dance studio.

Hungerford Hub thanked everyone who has supported them to reach their fundraising target. The work to install solar panels to the library roof will start in May.

CHAIN welcome new volunteers.

2. **Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 20th March 2024:** *Cllr Simpson proposed the minutes, seconded by Cllr Winsler, no objections.*
3. **Opportunity to meet our exhibitors, ask any questions and view new project plans** - The Mayor encouraged everyone to mingle and view the exhibits. She advised the meeting would reconvene later for a question-and-answer session.
4. **Question and answer session – The meeting reconvened for any questions.** It was asked what plans were in place to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day. The Mayor advised that Town & Manor are organising a dance in the town hall and HTC will be decorating the high street with flags and soldiers on trees. HTC held a large event last year to commemorate the 80 years of D-Day and therefore won't be holding another this year. Aldbourne are however doing an event.

Meeting closed 8.25pm