

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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DRAFT MINUTES of the **Annual Town Meeting** held on Wednesday 18th March 2026 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 welcomed everyone present and said it was a good opportunity for networking and for residents and organisations to meet in one place. She thanked the staff for putting together the event and gave the following update:
Hungerford now has an adopted Neighbourhood Plan which will give the community a greater say in the future development of the town. She is hugely proud of the team that worked on it and thanked especially Cllr Richard Hudson and the Town Clerk. The mayor thanked everyone who came out to vote.
Hungerford has purchased 6 new defibrillators and 4 new cabinets, thanks to a member's bid and matched funding from Greenham Trust. Thanks were expressed to Stu March who looks after all the equipment on behalf of the Town Council.
Hungerford's Community Shed (Men's shed) is nearly open at the Croft Field Centre thanks to the hard work of its trustees.
The Resource Centre is no longer under management consideration, and we hope it becomes more widely used and continues to go from strength to strength.
Town Council will be presenting 6 armoured close support battalion REME with the freedom of the town on Saturday 25th April. We hope everyone will come and support the parade. Thanks to Martin Crane who initiated the links with REME previously, we are now able to make it official.
- Approval of the minutes of the meeting held on 19th March 2025:** *Cllr Simpson proposed the minutes, seconded by Simon Hobden, no objections.*
The mayor confirmed that she and Cllr Claire Winser will be stepping down from the council from the end of April. She thanked Cllr Claire Winser for her support and friendship over the 10 years that they worked together. She believes the Council is in the best place it has ever been and is thrilled to announce Cllr Jerry Keates and Cllr Chris Hall have agreed to stand for Mayor and Deputy in May. She expressed what an honour and a privilege it has been to serve the community.
- Opportunity to browse, meet our exhibitors and ask any questions** – The Mayor introduced all the organisations present and invited everyone to enjoy the exhibitions and to reconvene at 7.45pm.
- Question and answer session – The meeting reconvened for any questions.**
There were no specific questions but those present fed back as follows:
Chris Scorey gave an update on the Wetlands project on behalf of Town & Manor. He advised planning permission was obtained last September, and they have been busy with the pre-commencement planning conditions. They will break ground in September once nesting season is finished and are currently fundraising. Next year they will be calling on volunteers to help with putting reed beds in etc.
Sovereign commented on what great feedback they had received during the meeting. They are currently carrying out retrofitting to improve their energy ratings.

The Twinning Association confirmed that Ligueil will be visiting Hungerford and attending Hocktide. They are raising money and developing links with John O Gaunt School. All were encouraged to welcome our French visitors.

The Theatre Company fed back how delighted they were that so many people came to see their last production.

The Foodbank are hoping for help. They consist of 10 volunteers and are open 1pm to 3pm on a Wednesday. They offer some fresh goods courtesy of Cobbs and Olio. All donations are sent to their warehouse, and they order weekly from there. Donations are down and it is not getting easier.

The Chamber of Commerce, who organise the Extravaganza, announced that they are keen for new members to join and help.

The RBFRS (Royal Berks Fire and Rescue Service) reminded everyone that they offer free 'safe and well' fire checks to homes if required.

Stu, a first responder for SCAS explained that there are still locations we would like to cover with defibrillators and if anyone wishes to sponsor one, please let him know.

PC Mike Greaves-Hurd introduced himself as new to the Hungerford and Lambourn Team. He encouraged the reporting of non-emergency crime via 101 or online.

Hungerford Shed advised they have fitted the workshop with benches, and the facility will soon be open for men and women.

Hungerford Hub announced that following the installation of solar panels and an air source heat pump, their next objective will be installing air conditioning.

Kofi (service lead on Climate Change) from West Berks Council (WBC) said how he enjoyed the lively engagement from Hungerford.

Youth & Community are looking for volunteers. They run sessions Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays for 9- to 18-year-olds and run young carer sessions.

Smarten Up Hungerford fed back that they had managed to recruit a few more volunteers tonight. They are planning spring and summer planting and litter picking.

CHAIN have a Handybus and Chairmans vehicle and some volunteers that use their own vehicles. They are looking for passenger assistants, bus drivers and office helpers. They are pleased to have found one bus driver.

Hungerford Rugby Juniors offer rugby training and match play at the Triangle Field for under 6s to under 18s.

The Rotary explained they have 15 members and hold two meetings a month, one with a speaker. They raised £8k last year for local charities.

HEAT (Hungerford Environmental Action Team) are offering a one-to-one chat on energy in the Hub this Sat from 10.30am to 12 noon and they are planning an EV car event on 27th May.

Hungerford Archers have been running for 32 years and from this Saturday they will officially be moving to the Triangle Field. They welcome anyone to come along and give it a try from 9.30am on Saturdays.

HAHA (Hungerford Allotment Holder Association) suggested now is the time to start growing and confirmed they have 6 free plots up for grabs. They are about to take on a third allotment site which will be for community groups and fully accessible. At Marsh Lane they are looking to change their petrol generator to solar powered.

Town Council entered Britain in Bloom (BIB) last year and achieved a silver award. This year the BIB team are going for gold and want everyone to grow their own and get involved. The competition is judged on horticulture, community and the environment. Come along and see the route the judges will walk.

Hungerford Food Community run monthly markets on the second Sunday of the month from April to September from 10am to 1pm. They will also hold their annual event in October. They urged anyone to come along if you love cooking or want to get involved, or if you know people who need help as they also offer teaching.

Everyone Active look after Hungerford Leisure Centre and are available to answer any questions.

The Adviser have a shop 'Hungerford Printing Co' in the high street but also do house visits. All were encouraged to take part in the Adviser's equivalent of desert island discs which is a regular article in the newsletter.

District Cllr Benneyworth (WBC) thanked Town Council for arranging the event and commented on how blessed we are to have so many volunteers.

Meeting closed 8.20pm