

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the **Full Council Meeting** held on Monday 2nd March 2026 at 7.00pm in the Library, Hungerford.

Present: Cllrs, Simpson, Winser, Mulholland, Alford, Day, Keates, Brunning, Armstrong, Fyfe, Carlson, Hall and Terry.

Also present: Members of the press, District Cllrs: Gaines (DG), Benneyworth (DB) and a member of public.

In attendance: Town Clerk (TC)

The minutes of the meeting are recorded in order they were discussed at committee meeting.

Police Report: The police were unable to attend but provided a report. **Please see attached.**

Presentation on new dementia unit - James Wilcox (JW) presented plans via a power point (**see attached a selection of the slides**) for a new dementia unit in the grounds of West Berks Community Hospital. He advised between now and 2030 there will be a 50% increase in the number of people with dementia. Many families are struggling with the issue falling between health and social care. Greenham Trust (GT) have funded research to develop a new model which could be rolled out across the country. A year ago, an organisation was set up of which James Wilcox is the lead. A new dementia unit is planned to be built by GT on land adjacent to the hospital. They will buy the land owned by the NHS, and part fund. The target to raise is £4 million of which £1 million has been raised already subject to planning. The large challenge will be the cost of sustainability. The unit will be purpose built and offer a complete transformation in how dementia care is given. Tech will be an important part in tracking data. Many organisations are on board to support the project (see slide 9) and the aim is to launch by mid-2028.

JW advised the waiting list for the current mental health clinic has improved and it is working more efficiently. The new dementia unit will consist of a core team of 9 or 10 who will start conversations pre-diagnosis when changes are first noticed and medication can help. They will be supporting patients' individual needs and help them to live at home as long as possible, providing support to the families as well. Residential care will not be offered but daytime respite care will be available between 10am and 2pm. A busy day may require 25 to 30 parking spaces. The 'West Berkshire Dementia Hub' website should be live before Easter. Advice on care and care homes will be part of the service, and the building will include therapy rooms and all sorts of holistic attributes.

The mayor thanked JW for the presentation and confirmed the project had the full support of the Town Council.

FC20260036 Note apologies for absence – Cllrs Hudson, Reeves and Cole
Also noted from the District Cllrs Vickers

FC20260037 Declarations of interest - none

FC20260038 Approval of Minutes of the Full Council meeting of 2nd February 2026, and outcome of actions.

Proposed: Cllr Simpson

Seconded: Cllr Carlson

Resolution: Minutes of the meeting of 2nd February 2026 were agreed. 2 abstentions. Rest in favour

Outcome of actions:

DG has spoken to Peter Walker who confirmed that if West Berks Council (WBC) do repair a pothole more than once in 18 months the cost is not down to them.

The pothole by John O Gaunt pub will be fixed on 24th March over 2 days with the use of traffic lights. Wales & West are responsible for it as it is a disused gas pipe.

DG advised the new managers in charge of the Sovereign garages are Jessica Livings and Molly Brooks. We wait to hear what work will be carried out and have requested a list of which garages in Hungerford belong to Sovereign and which are privately owned. Some of the garages will be taken down as they are past repair.

ACTION: Clerk to request a site meeting with the new Sovereign contacts about the garages.

Cllr Armstrong has reported a wobbly slab but has noticed quite a few more. Everyone was encouraged to use the Report a problem section of the West Berks Council website to directly report faults spotted around town including fly tipping.

ACTION: Clerk to chase The Adviser as details of printing glossy copies of the Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan are still awaited.

The office has checked and there is already plenty of signage at the station car park recycle centre advising, who to contact if the bins are full, not to fly tip and highlighting CCTV is in operation.

Volker have since been instructed to replace all the non-led lanterns on HTC owned streetlights with LEDs as it is more cost effective.

The streetcleaner is clearing school alley of debris. Cllr Armstrong has reported the potholes along school alley, but nothing is being done.

ACTION: Send the code from the pothole report to DG and she will monitor.

The white railings attached to Cllr Armstrong's house will be discussed at H&T.

A second banner has been obtained to advertise the Town Meeting.

The fallen Sovereign fence has been included in Cllr Fyfe's report.

All other actions are complete or on the agenda.

FC20260039 **Receive Mayor's Report – See attached report.** The mayor added that a partial house closure implemented last year has now run out and Sovereign are not helping with reinstating it. Residents are concerned about anti-social behaviour.

FC20260040 **Receive District Councillor's Reports –** DG advised that the WBC budget was passed on Thursday. New residents will receive a card explaining what WBC do. DB confirmed that since last summer the Town Plan Grant is no longer in existence. There will be a new round of member's bids, of which £4k will be available per district councillor. Matched funding is not a requirement. DB has complained to WBC about the state of the Station Road car park. There is rubbish everywhere and the barriers and cash payment facilities have yet to be reinstated. It was noted there is anti-social parking taking place by Costa and the 3 Swans.

FC20260041 **Consider response to Department for Communities consultation on their proposal for two unitary councils: See link to all three proposals: [Home | Two Councils](#)**
Below is the link to the consultation [Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Oxfordshire - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - Citizen Space](#)
Council decided not to reply as a whole and instead individuals will respond independently. The consultation is open for another 24 days until 26th March. DB expects to receive an answer by June/July on the way forward.

FC20260042 **Health & Safety – Receive any complaints or concerns**
The following points were raised:
The mayor commented that the potholes are enormous. DG said there are four times as many this month compared to this month last year. The weather has not helped. Cllr Alford reported a pothole in Priory Road by the Catholic Church a while ago and it is still there. Another at Radley bottom has

been reported. Dog fouling on Fairview Road is appalling. We were advised that logging all these issues on the WBC 'report a problem' website is the best way to get them fixed.
John Garvey left the meeting.

- FC20260043** **Propose authorisation of payment run** (circulated along with copies of invoices) for Feb
Proposed: Cllr Winser
Seconded: Cllr Carlson
Resolution: Payment run authorised for February of £37,745
- FC20260044** **Propose accounts to date** – Refer to circulated Income/Expenditure Report
Proposed: Cllr Winser
Seconded: Cllr Mulholland
Resolution: Agree accounts to date with net income over expenditure of £99,177 with a positive variance.
- FC20260045** **Updates on arrangements for REME Freedom of the Town parade and budget – Event to be held on Sat 25th April 2026**
300 personell will parade from Hungerford Football Club to the Town Hall. A reccy is taking place soon. REME propose bringing two SDRs and a banner. Cllr Keates and our maintenance man will look at installing a banner on the bridge. The clerk is obtaining proposals for food in the Corn Exchange. Entry will be restricted to REME and ticket/ID only as numbers need to be limited and the area sanitised. REME will be responsible for security which may need to be stepped up. A military enactment group will be present in the high street displaying vehicles. If required HTC can have an official response ready for any public queries regarding REME bearing arms in the town.
- FC20260046** **Updates on arrangements for the Annual Town Meeting on Wed 18th March 2026 –**
There will be between 20 and 30 organisations exhibiting. Everyone was encouraged to attend.
- FC20260047** **Receive any reports** (no more than 3 minutes per report and not to include any proposals).
Britain in Bloom report - Cllr Brunning met with the judge from Britain in Bloom for some feedback from last year. The entrance to Hungerford was described as underwhelming. Work is needed to the streetlamps and bollards. Cllr Keates is speaking to WBC about having low level pollinating flowers on the Asda roundabout.
They have walked and timed the route they will take the judges on the day and will be adding the Resource Centre into the planned route of the town. The Men's Shed are going to create a large bug hotel. It was suggested the Heritage Trail should be put on display somewhere. Plant plugs are soon to be potted up at Marsh Lane.
ACTION: Cllr Day will email DG, and she will chase Daniel Warne at WBC about receiving some soil conditioner and Paul Henry about ridding of some turf.
Hungerford in Bloom report – HIB are meeting next Wednesday to finalise the competition plans. Cllr Winser will be involved this year, and Cllrs Day and Brunning will take on the running of it next year. The 12th July is likely to be the judging day. This year the judging will be split with two judges visiting the residential entries and two visiting the commercial.

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.

- FC20260048** **Consider request for burial – details provided.** HTC do not offer reservations for full burials. A request for our consent for a funeral director to take on the responsibility of collecting payment for a future burial was received.
Proposed: Cllr Keates
Seconded: Cllr Simpson
Resolution: HTC do not object. Details would need to be confirmed.

FC20260049 Consider renewal of contract – see spreadsheet

Proposed: Cllr Winser

Seconded: Cllr Simpson

ACTION: Resolution: Appoint James & Co to continue with their contract at an annual cost of £21,435 from April 2026.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm.

POLICE REPORT

Just for your meeting I thought I'd send a brief rundown of what we have done this month and any other issues we've identified.

- NHPT have now got an ID for the male who broke into BELOW STAIRS on the 8th Feb, the same individual is believed to have committed the damage to the nail bar door and WHITE COCO. This male is currently detained in a mental health setting but when released will be arrested and interviewed in relation to these offences.
- There have been issues at a property on Lancaster Close that we are aware of. Police have conducted a joint visit at the property with Sovereign housing and will be looking to take further action against the occupiers.
- We are aware of drugs and ASB around Freemans Close. Officers have attended and issued warning to the subjects involved and we have not had any further reports made to us.
- We are aware of cars raising around the trading estate at the end of Smitham Bridge Road in the evenings. This is being addressed as we will be looking to contact the owners of the estate to put in measures to 'target harden' it meaning the cars won't have access.
- The break in of a van on TARRANTS HILL has been passed to us. It is under investigation and officers have been completing enquiries to attempt to identify the suspects involved.
- Officers seized two vehicles for road traffic offences on Sunday 1st March which were being used illegally around Hungerford.

If there are any concerns raised, please feel free to flag to us at the Hungerford and Downlands NHPT email or to us personally.

Many thanks,

Mike

Michael GREAVES-HURD

Police Constable 4798

Mayor's Report to Full Council

March 2026 – Cllr Helen Simpson

1. Introduction

With the arrival of March, we officially welcome the beginning of spring. It is always a positive time of year, bringing renewed energy to our community initiatives, and I very much hope we will soon see more sunshine to accompany it.

2. Britain in Bloom & Hungerford in Bloom

Preparations for both Britain in Bloom and Hungerford in Bloom are progressing well under the leadership of Cllr Day and Cllr Sutton. It is particularly encouraging to see the strong level of community interest and engagement. There are some inspiring plans taking shape, and I would like to thank everyone involved for their commitment and enthusiasm. These initiatives continue to showcase pride, and the value of collaborative working with the public and key partners.

3. Hungerford Archery Club

Hungerford Town Council is pleased to have formally signed a tenancy agreement with Hungerford Archery Club. The club will be relocating from the John O'Gaunt School field to the Triangle Field.

I am delighted that the club will now have a permanent base from which it can develop and grow its membership. Supporting local clubs and societies in securing sustainable facilities remains an important part of our work in strengthening community life. I'm sure the club have many plans to strengthen numbers.

4. Policing and Community Safety

A meeting has now been arranged with local MP Lee Dillon and Police and Crime Commissioner Matthew Barbour to discuss policing matters in Hungerford.

Over the past month, I have been made aware of several retail break-ins. The impact of these incidents on our small, independent retailers can be significant and, in some cases, deeply damaging. It is vital that we continue to raise these concerns and work collaboratively with our partners to ensure appropriate support and visible policing in the town.

Cllr Fyfe will attend the meeting to raise ongoing concerns regarding repeated parking breaches in the High Street. It was also noted on social media this weekend that two vehicles were seized due to incorrect documentation. While enforcement action is welcome, continued proactive engagement and visible presence will remain key to addressing wider concerns.

5. Sovereign Housing – Resident Concerns

I was recently contacted by a resident of a Sovereign Housing property who has expressed serious concerns regarding outstanding repairs and the level of service received.

The issues reported include:

- Debris falling from the lounge ceiling
- Significant cracks appearing in living room walls
- Absence of guttering and felt on a flat roof
- Ongoing disrepair to a rear entrance door, previously described by an engineer as the worst he had ever seen, still waiting for the repair since June 2025

Despite these concerns having been raised previously, the resident reports that repairs have not yet been completed. I have advised the resident that I will contact Sovereign directly this week to seek urgent clarification and request that the necessary remedial works are undertaken without further delay. It is deeply disappointing to hear of situations such as this, particularly where safety and property integrity may be at risk.

6. Street Cleaning & Potholes

Slippery paving and potholes continue to be all anyone is talking about at the moment. I believe the Pothole at JOG pub is now out of the hands of West Berks. A date is now scheduled for early March. This will mean further disruption, hopefully for a short period of time while permanent repairs can take place. I've been informed of several near misses at this sight. Please be cautious in the meantime.

7. Charlie & the chocolate factory – Hungerford Theatre Company

I was thrilled to attend the Town show through half term; I was in awe of the talent we have in the town. The children were playing lead roles and were word perfect, they must have really put in the hours. I loved the Oompa-Loompas with their bright coloured wigs and flashing glasses. Well done to all the cast and crew, it was a great show.

8. Freedom of the Town - 6 Armoured Close Support Battalion REME

HTC's next teams meeting with REME will be held on the 18th of March. Correspondence has been a little challenging in a busy world, but I think we are nearly where we need to be.

9. Annual Town Meeting

Just a little reminder that the town meeting will be held on Wednesday 18th March in the Corn Exchange. I look forward to seeing you there.

**FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES REPORT FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON 02 MARCH 2026
MONTH 11 INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2026**

101 FINANCE:

Bank interest of £629 has been received.

102 ADMINISTRATION:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £3,028 positive variance.

103 GRANTS & DONATIONS:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £3,500 positive variance this month. Phasing issue with the Library Grant.

104 POOL HOUSE:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £171 negative variance.

105 CONTINGENCY:

Net Expenditure is a £1,112 negative variance this month. An office laptop and CCTV NVR were purchased.

107 ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING:

No Expenditure this month.

109 HUNGERFORD 2036 PROJECT:

No Expenditure this month.

201 RECREATION & AMENITIES:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £1,107 positive variance.

202 WAR MEMORIAL GROUND:

Net Expenditure is a £25 positive variance this month.

203 ST SAVIOURS:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £281 negative variance. No Burial fees received this month.

204 CROFT FIELD:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £146 negative variance. Croft Income was £336 below budget.

205 LIBRARY MAINTENANCE COSTS:

No Expenditure this month.

206 TRIANGLE FIELD:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £220 positive variance.

301 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS:

No Expenditure this month.

302 HIGHWAYS:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £4,691 positive variance. £2,964 received from the Good Exchange to match fund the purchase of Defibrillators.

303 CCTV:

Net Income over Expenditure is a £1,157 positive variance this month. £1,000 invoiced to the Police but not yet received.

901 RESERVES:

Transfer of £13,076 from EMR to help purchase £5,100 for the CCTV NVR & £9970 for Defibrillators.

February's Net Income over Expenditure is a £568 negative variance.

Year to date Net Income over Expenditure is a £99,177 positive variance.

Claire Winser

Chair of F&GP, 28 February 2026

West Berks Dementia Hub





Slide 9

 Friends, Partners, and Finding Inspiration

			
			
			

WEST BERKSHIRE
DEMENTIA HUB