

Hungerford Town Centre Steering Group
14th of December 2023

Present: James Cole (Chair), Sam Robins, Alistair Fyfe, Julie Lloyd, Karen Salmon, Adrian Gilmour, Hugh Pihlens, Charlie Barr, Jehona Hansell.

1	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The consultation with the Town had produced 10 possible actions – the group had voted to prioritise these and the results of that vote were introduced, the top two options being the Town Hall and the Canal. The aim now was to start discussing some detail of what might be practical.</p>
2	<p>Discussion on Prioritisation</p> <p>The Town Hall</p> <p>A Piazza-type space in front of the Town Hall could better use the area in front of the Town Hall. The group explained there are a small number of parking spaces that could be lost but that the area is no longer used for coach pick-ups and drop-offs.</p> <p>It was noted that it would be good if this space was to be all on one level, which could improve future markets/town centre outdoor events, and that paving and signage improvements outside the town hall would benefit the public.</p> <p>Other notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To do a larger project like this at the front of the Town Hall involves a variety of parties.• Currently the Town faces issues in dealing with pigeon waste; maintenance and management of this area needs to be considered in any future plans.• It would be an opportunity to review the number of signs in the town which can be seen as cluttering the High Street. <p>Canal - Towpath and other Improvements</p> <p>The group stated that the canal towpath is currently in very poor condition in certain areas from the town bridge east to the sewage pumping station.</p> <p>The area is difficult to access as the towpath is very narrow and the canal edge is in need of repair.</p> <p>The group identified improving the canal towpath as a priority and a relatively deliverable project.</p> <p>Vacant Buildings</p> <p>New legislation called “High Street Rental Auctions” will be a permissive power for local authorities which will aim to tackle the problem of persistently vacant property on high streets by empowering places to bring vacant units back into use.</p>

	<p>Note that this scheme still needs to go through secondary legislation and West Berkshire Council officers are currently awaiting instructions from the high street auction team.</p> <p>The group will be updated as soon as there is more information on the outcome of this initiative.</p> <p>Station Road and Cuttings Project</p> <p>Action on Town Council members to take up the subject of maintenance with Network Rail and West Berks Council.</p> <p>Other Projects</p> <p>High Street Façade Improvements, Parking, and Church Lane will be discussed at the next meeting.</p> <p>Top Six</p> <p>The group agreed to continue to work on the top six projects from the original ten.</p>
5	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>In the next meeting two young local architects who are interested in community projects will be joining the group.</p> <p>Next Steering Group meeting scheduled for February 1st at 6:15pm.</p>