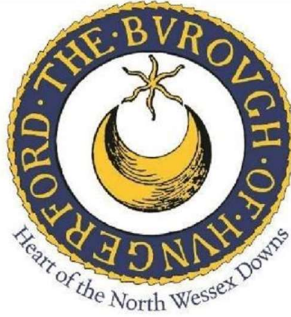


# HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

Cllr Simpson  
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](mailto:townclerk@hungerford-tc.gov.uk)  
[www.hungerford-tc.gov.uk](http://www.hungerford-tc.gov.uk)

**MINUTES** of the **Full Council Meeting** held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 at 7.00pm in the Library, Hungerford.

**Present:** Cllrs, Simpson, Winser, Fyfe, Keates, Cole, Knight, Coulthurst, Reeves, Alford, and Montgomery.

**Also present:** Representatives from Penny Post and the Adviser. Several members of the public including traders and representatives from Hungerford Men in a Shed. District Cllr Denise Gaines (DG) from West Berks Council (WBC) arrived later.

**In attendance:** Town Clerk, (TC)

**Police Report:** A report is awaited and will be circulated on receipt. Cllr Cole has contacted the Police Commissioner, and a meeting is being set up. The Mayor advised we are listening to the resident's concerns and are looking to support in any way we can.

**Announcements by the Mayor:** The Mayor had pleasure to announce there will be four Freedom of the Town Awards presented this year. The awardees are; Tim & Sandie Crouter (from Hungerford Town Band), Susan Mayes (Smarten Up Hungerford member and volunteer for many events including Jubilee and D-Day) and Barbara Barr (first lady Constable amongst many other voluntary roles). The ceremony will take place in the Corn Exchange on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October at 2.30pm and invites will go out shortly. All awardees will be invited to switch on the Christmas Lights.

The Mayor advised Cllr Cusack has resigned and she thanked him for his commitment to Hungerford Town Council (HTC).

**Presentation by Men in a Shed:** A power point presentation accompanied by a talk was received. **Please refer to the full report and information attached below.** The group are requesting that the gazebo at the Croft Field Centre be converted into a Men in a Shed workshop for use from 9am to 5pm or 10 till 4pm on weekdays. They advised noise would not be an issue and HTC would benefit from the conversion and also from the production of products in the workshop such as swift boxes. The gazebo is currently underutilised. It was noted Devizes council provide a workshop free of charge to their community. It was suggested Hungerford do the same.

The Mayor thanked Men in a Shed for their presentation. Whilst there was general support for the project by Council, she advised HTC needed to consider the proposal in detail, looking at how it might affect current usage and hire of the premises, and any loss of revenue.

**ACTION:** Add Men in a Shed to the F&GP agenda for further discussion.

**FC202400145 Note apologies for absence.** Cllrs Hudson, Carlson, Schlanker and Armstrong  
Apologies also from, District Cllrs Tony Vickers (TV) and Dennis Benneyworth (DB)

**FC202400146 Declarations of interest – Cllr Knight (Men in a Shed)**

**FC202400147 Approval of Minutes of the meeting of the Full Council of 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and outcome of actions**

**Proposed:** Cllr Coulthurst

**Seconded:** Cllr Reeves

**Resolution:** Minutes of the meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 were agreed as a true record. 2 abstentions.

**Outcome of actions:**

Cllr Fyfe advised Ramsbury Play Park grass had been cut but not cleared and the meadow adjacent is uncut. Two items have barriers around ready to be replaced. Paul Hendry (WBC) has suggested devolving the playpark to HTC. It is the only one (other than Lancaster Park Play Park) that is not owned by HTC. If that was to be considered, the play park would need to be brought up to an adoptable standard. The Mayor would like to consider this during budget discussions.

**ACTION:** TV (*not present*) to report back to a future Full Council meeting on underfunding, particularly of SENCO and Transport to School issues.

**FC202400148 Receive Mayor's Report - See attached report.** WBC since advised they did not have any authority to remove the traffic lights whilst the works were incomplete, despite them overrunning.

**ACTION:** Clerk to ask WBC to clarify if they have fined Thames Water.

The Mayor reported that she and DG had met with Croft Hall trustees and learnt that there are considerable works required to the building. They are looking for HTC to support their WBC CIL Bid. The Mayor has given her personal support to the cause and also to Claire Rowles who is applying for a WBC CIL bid for the Tennis Club. DB had confirmed both can be applied for without conflicting each other. HTC confirmed they were happy to offer a letter of support. Cllr Winsor suggested that we consider applying for a CIL bid.

**Proposed:** Cllr Winsor

**Seconded:** Cllr Simpson

**Resolution:** HTC look into applying for funding to install a piece of playground equipment specifically for disabled use.

**ACTION:** Write letter of support, and look into pursuing our own CIL bid.

**FC202400149 Receive District Councillor's Reports – (*taken after item FC202400152 on arrival of DG*)**

DG advised WBC has been informed by Government that as a district the housing numbers that they are expected to achieve have been increased from 492 per annum to 1027 per annum. This is an increase of 113%. Whilst this won't affect Hungerford's NDP we may need to hold back until after the NPPF and Local Plan have gone through. The Local Plan should be adopted hopefully by the spring. The consultation response to the NPPF closes on 24<sup>th</sup> Sept. DG thinks the NPPF will be adopted quickly. The Local Plan will run to 2041, and the inspector has advised WBC needs to find another 850 houses. At the moment this doesn't affect Hungerford. Four more sites in the HELAA are now to be developed in Thatcham. Long term (post 2041) a further 1000 houses will be needed in Thatcham to make new infrastructure viable.

DG is running a community forum for Planning on 11<sup>th</sup> Sept. Four councillors are attending. She advised WBC has employed staff to deal with the backlog in planning.

**FC202400150 Health & Safety – Receive any complaints or concerns.** None received.

**FC202400151 Propose authorisation of payment run** (circulated along with copies of invoices) for August.

**Proposed:** Cllr Winsor

**Seconded:** Cllr Keates

**Resolution:** Authorise payment run of £31,961.94 for August

**FC202400152 Propose year to date accounts – Refer to circulated Income/Expenditure Report.**

**Proposed:** Cllr Winsor

**Seconded:** Cllr Knight

**Resolution:** Agree year to date accounts, with a negative variance of £3,580.

## **FC202400153 Respond to Consultation 009749 Amendment 34 - Hungerford High Street Parking**

In order to respond to the consultation public can comment on the operational changes and not the increase in existing charges.

DG advised there were 4 WBC consultations on parking since last October. It was felt by all present that there had been a lack of transparency with the consultation processes and that the intended changes hadn't been made clear. HTC would absolutely have responded sooner had they been aware of the intention to charge on Sundays and in the evening.

Cllr Cole expressed his anger with the parking pronouncement from WBC. He commented that it is unfair to make High Street residents pay extra to have permits but not be guaranteed parking and suggested they should be allowed to park in any WB controlled carparking in Hungerford if they pay for a permit. He added that half of the meters are broken and some of the new ones don't take coins. Why should Lambourn have half an hour free parking when Hungerford does not? He argued that the new one size fits all approach is wrong for a small market town such as Hungerford. West Berks Classic Vehicle Club that brings 20-30 cars on a Sunday every May and September advised they will not come any more if they have to pay for parking.

Members of public present stressed the potential detrimental impact introducing parking charging on Sundays and evenings will have on their business and others. They also commented that the permit information on WBC website is incorrect, and the parking strategy is only shown in draft. Another complaint received from an angry resident advised as a family they would incur an increased cost of £2k annually. Hungerford is different to Newbury, and this will affect already struggling football. It was pointed out that Marlborough do not have any evening or Sunday charges and although in Wiltshire, they are still a source of competition for Hungerford.

The general consensus was that the whole process is confusing, and it is not easy to know how to respond to the consultation. Council had been advised that the decision to implement extra parking charges following the previous consultation (for off road parking) was delegated to Stuart Gourley as portfolio holder for highways. The Mayor questioned why we had not received any feedback from WBC on this. Are they just implementing the changes regardless? Council is particularly concerned about the effect on the hospitality industry and Sunday traders and pushing parking into residential streets.

**ACTION:** DG to check what is shown on the WBC website is correct and why HTC had no feedback to their previous consultation response on the change to parking charges in the Station Road and Church St car parks. She will look into a better way of consulting with traders as contacting the Chamber of Commerce is not sufficient.

**Proposed:** Cllr Simpson

**Seconded:** Cllr Cole

**ACTION:** **Resolution:** Send in consultation response as previously drafted to object to the operational changes (for on street parking) being the introduction of charging in the evenings and on Sundays and also to object to the reduction to 3 hours for disabled parking. In addition, send our objection to leaders of WBC, Stuart Gourley (portfolio holder for Highways), Jon Winstanley (director for Environment), Emma Jameson, (Transport & Parking Services Manager), district ward members, Lee Dillon MP and Minister of State of DfT. *(Clerk to Circulate this list to the traders for their use)*

**Request the following information from WBC:** - How much will it cost to put these changes in place and enforce them. What is the potential revenue back. Is there any benefit.

Also query how much money WBC received from the government for fixing potholes. £200,000 extra is being spent to repair shallower potholes (depth reducing from 50mm to 40mm). How is this being funded.

**ACTION:** DG will check if the consultation date has been extended. Currently it is midnight on 13<sup>th</sup> Sept.

**FC202400154 Conservation area – Update.** Cllr Cole advised we have two areas as Eddington is technically separate. Cllr Fyfe has already done a lot of work looking at the Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area including producing a map showing the town divided into areas and slides of the listed buildings marked with their List number and Grade. Councillor Armstrong met with Sue Ellis who did the training of the original team and learnt it is a sizeable project. Cllr Cole hopes to restart the preparation work soon. Eventually the report will need to be acceptable as part of the formal planning

processes within Hungerford. West Berks does not have enough Conservation Officers, but they are trying to hire more.

**FC202400155 Consider additional flower tubs in high street** - Cllrs Keates confirmed the team have yet to consider the 3 or 4 areas that need tubs.

**ACTION:** Cllr Keates will report back to next Full Council with a costed plan of action.

He added he has spoken with several people that have parked on the pavement and asked them to move.

**FC202400156 Receive report from Neighbourhood Plan Project Team – Please see attached report.**

**FC202400157 Receive any reports (no more than 3 minutes per report which cannot contain any proposals).** None were received.

## **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.

**FC202400158 Ratify decision of Working Party to award the Christmas Lights installation tender.** A team of councillors had considered the tender responses against a matrix of criteria, with a weighting of 40% on pricing.

**Proposed:** Cllr Fyfe

**Seconded:** Cllr Montgomery

**ACTION:****Resolution:** Award Shield Electrical the 3 year contract at a cost of £106,749 ratifying the decision of the working party.

**Meeting closed 9.07pm**

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**Hungerford Men's shed** [info@hungerford-shed.co.uk](mailto:info@hungerford-shed.co.uk)

Thank you for allowing us to tell you about the Hungerford Men's shed.

What I am going to tell you is, where the idea comes from, where there are sheds locally, why we need one in Hungerford, and where we think is ideal location for a shed in Hungerford.

We are not after money at this stage, just the site for a shed or a shed

First of all, what is a shed .....show pics

There are 1000's of sheds in the world the idea having originated in Australia and there are 100's in this country and you can read more about it on [menssheds.org.uk](http://menssheds.org.uk)

Nick Wedgewood, over there, came up with the idea that we should have one in Hungerford and he is the Chairman of the Hungerford-Shed.co.uk. We have a committee

Why a shed in Hungerford....The shed is useful for men and women, in fact Calne shed is run by a woman and is the best shed we've seen. Sheds are also invaluable for people with mental problems and in Hungerford we have 100's of people with depression and mental problems in fact there are 428 out of 7500 in our local surgery with mental problems 1 in 18. 428 out of 6000 adults = 1 in 15. So there is a crying need for one in Hungerford.

We have been to look at 9 sheds which included Calne, Devizes, Blueberry, Newbury and many more. Here we witnessed the enormous benefit of a Men's shed, busy and buzzing with enthusiasm.

We have looked at 14 different sites in Hungerford, and to tell you about them all would take too long but we have come up with what in our opinion is the best in Hungerford. That is the open area at the end of The Croft Field Centre.

It is just about big enough, can be bricked in to make it secure, is central so within walking distance of Hungerford, has kitchen facilities, has a toilet, has electrics, is secure and has parking and it could be extended if we outgrew the present one. And we can make use of it NOW

We are asking HTC to allow us to make it into the Hungerford Shed.

## The Hungerford Shed

### What is a Men's (Community) Shed?

Men's Sheds (or just "Sheds") are a community place to pursue practical interests at leisure, to practice skills and enjoy making and mending. The difference is that garden sheds and their activities are often solitary in nature while Men's Sheds are the opposite. They're about social connections and friendship building, sharing skills and knowledge, and of course a lot of laughter.

If you looked inside one you might see a number of men restoring furniture, perhaps restoring bicycles for a local school or fixing lawn mowers or other household items like the Repair Café. You might also see a few young men working with the older men learning new skills and maybe also learning something about life from the men they work with. You will see teabags, coffee cups and a comfortable area where men can sit and talk. You will probably also see an area where men can learn to cook for themselves, or they can learn how to contact their families by computer.

The slogan for men's sheds is "'Shoulder To Shoulder", shortened from "Men don't talk face to face, they talk shoulder to shoulder", adopted after the 2008 Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) conference. The users of men's sheds are known as "shedders".

Sheds are whatever the members or "Shedders" want them to be. Although labelled sheds, they often aren't sheds at all. They can be empty offices, portable cabin's, warehouses, garages, and in at least one case, a disused mortuary. Some Sheds are purpose-built workshops, but they rarely start out that way. Many don't have premises at all in the beginning and instead form a group that meets regularly for the social connection, company and camaraderie until they can find somewhere to sit out with tools. Many Sheds get involved in community projects as well: Restoring village features, helping maintain parks and green spaces, and building things for schools, libraries and individuals in need.

Activities in Sheds vary greatly, but you can usually find woodworking, wood turning, metalworking, repairing and restoring, electronics, model buildings or even car building in a typical Shed. Sheds usually attract older men, but many have younger members and women too. Whatever the activity, the essence of a Shed is not a building, but the connections and relationships between its members.

### How did they start?

The Men's Shed concept started in Australia in 1993 by Maxine Chaseling. The first Men's Shed Association was founded in Australia in 2007. It then spread to New Zealand

and Ireland in 2011, and the in 2013. Canada and, more recently, Europe and the USA have followed.

The UK Men's Sheds Association (UKMSA) regard a Shed as the group, whether or not it has a base for activity. There are about 1130 today in the UK, 900 in England, 100 each in Wales and Northern Ireland, and 200 in Scotland. They estimate nearly 34,000 Shedders benefitting every week.

Sheds are mainly 'grassroots' community activities that come about in response to shared needs. These have mostly been for men to access tools, workbenches, skills and opportunities to make and mend in the company of others. Gardening, computing, electronics and other activities have been included according to members' interests. Whilst most Sheds are for men, about a third involve women. There are now also some all women Sheds.

## What are the benefits

Sheds fulfil multiple roles in the community. Clinical, educational, recreational and social. When Men's sheds thrive, they save lives.

Sheds bring health benefits by encouraging physical and mental activity, and improved wellbeing by providing an enjoyable way to stay socially integrated in local communities, by being creative, and learning or passing on skills. Members of Men's Sheds come from all walks of life - the bond that unites them is that they are people with time on their hands and they would like something meaningful to do with that time.

A good Men's Shed has a co-ordinator who has both the technical and social skills to develop a safe and happy environment where men are welcome to work a project of their choice in their own time and where the only 'must' is to observe safe working practices. All in a spirit of camaraderie.

Because men don't make a fuss about their problems, these problems have consistently been either ignored or swept under the mat by both the health system and our modern society. It's time for a change and the Men's Shed movement is one of the most powerful tools we have in helping men and women to once again become valued and valuable members of our community.

Academics are now using men's sheds as a research venue and research partner in exploring men's health and social needs. There have been several studies around the world on the benefits of Men's sheds. Most recently in a presentation to a Commons select committee in 2023 on Health and Wellbeing. NHS Primary care practitioners now refer patients to their local Men's sheds via Social prescription or community referral. <https://menssheds.org.uk>

## Mayors report September 2024

Welcome back everyone, I really hope you've all had a lovely summer break.

### **Parking**

This topic has been filling my inbox for the past month.

In WBC's last budget, it was agreed parking charges throughout the district would be increased. HTC felt parking increases are a normal part of budgeting and therefore did not see the need to strongly object. Instead, we suggested they consider the option of a free, first 30-minute stay for on street parking.

At some point, parking increases merged into major parking operational changes. HTC learnt that operational changes were going ahead without public consultation. WBC are now consulting. Unhappy with suggested changes. HTC drafted a list of objections and suggested alternative ideas for consideration. The first consultation response for off street parking was completely ignored and went through regardless. No further correspondence with us or indeed any explanation was forthcoming. The second consultation is now live, this is for on street parking. HTC will be submitting a response after agreement at Sept Full Council, hopeful this time that it won't be ignored.



I would urge all businesses in Hungerford to complete the live consultation if they are unhappy with the suggested changes.

I have contacted several retailers who were completely unaware of the changes and were extremely concerned at the impact these changes could have on their trade. Hungerford is a small market town; our pubs and restaurants need the evening trade. Volunteers (including Town Councillors) use the off- street parking when attending meetings. I believe these changes could give another obstacle to volunteers.

Tesco Hungerford have also announced changes to their parking. After the store closes a 15-minute parking restriction will be active.

Hungerford will find it much harder to suck up these changes, like larger towns can. High Streets have been a big focus for WBC, ensuring they continue to thrive and grow through a difficult post covid period. I urge our ward members to support the town and ensure Hungerford's voice is heard.

I would also be interested in the associated costs required to implement the suggested changes. I am sure this will be a hot topic of conversation.

### **Croft Hall & Hungerford Tennis Club**

I met with the trustees of the Croft Hall who are at the start of considerable renovations and looking to apply for CIL funding. I hope HTC will support them in their aims to renovate the building for continued community hire.

The tennis club are also looking to apply for CIL funding and have requested our support when they apply for funds for essential repairs to the courts.

### **GWW**

Stella, Fiona Hobson, Claire B, James and I held a zoom meeting to discuss a way forward, to ensure HTC is getting good value from our ambassador status, also to look for ways to optimise our reach to new visitors. The meeting was useful, we will look to delve a bit deeper with key personnel from GWW in due course.

### **Traffic Chaos**

Most of you will have felt the frustration caused by the three-way traffic lights in the town, whilst a water leak was attended to by Thames Water. I completely understand that these measures are necessary, however the area which needed the tarmac to finish the job was on the pavement, not on the road. I hope that WBC will address this with Thames Water and fine them for their unacceptable overrun. This cannot be allowed to happen again! Thames Water's should be ashamed by their poor planning and failure to address concerns immediately. I dread to think how badly Hungerford businesses suffered because of their inefficiency.

### **Hungerford in Bloom & Grant Awards ceremony**

I'm really looking forward to the events being hosted this Saturday. I hope councillors will support the event if they can. Congratulations to everyone who entered our Hungerford in Bloom competition. I know from previous years the efforts made by residents; I've heard this year's event was equally as spectacular.

I also love hearing from groups and charities on how HTC's grant funding helps to expand and continue the work undertaken by volunteers within the community and beyond.

### **Hungerford Skate Park**

I have received some lovely comments from residents who have witnessed how loved and used our skatepark is, and how much use it's had throughout the summer holidays. It's always nice to hear good feedback. This was an important project for the council, and I'm thrilled to see it used and appreciated by the local community.

### **Thanks**

Thank you to Deputy Mayor James Cole for filling in for me in August whilst I was hosting visitors. Very appreciated.

**FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES REPORT FOR FULL COUNCIL MEETING ON 2<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER  
2024  
MONTH 5 INCOME & EXPENDITURE REPORT FOR AUGUST 2024**

**101 FINANCE:**

No Income received this month.

**102 ADMINISTRATION:**

Net Income over Expenditure is a £2,701 positive variance. Income of £694 was the Insurance Claim payment for the Bulpit playground railings damage.

**103 GRANTS & DONATIONS:**

Net Expenditure is a £5,156 negative variance this month due to phasing issue with the Library Grant payment.

**104 POOL HOUSE:**

Net Income over Expenditure is on budget.

**105 CONTINGENCY:**

No Expenditure this month.

**106 TOURISM SUPPORT BUDGET:**

No Expenditure this month.

**109 HUNGERFORD 2036 PROJECT:**

No Expenditure this month.

**201 RECREATION & AMENITIES:**

Net Income over Expenditure is a £452 positive variance.

**202 WAR MEMORIAL GROUND:**

Net Expenditure is a £52 positive variance this month.

**203 ST SAVIOURS:**

Net Income over Expenditure is a £412 negative variance. Burial Fee income down.

**204 CROFT FIELD:**

Net Income over Expenditure is a £239 negative variance. No Income recorded this month.

**205 LIBRARY MAINTENANCE COSTS:**

No Expenditure this month.

**206 TRIANGLE FIELD:**

Net Income or Expenditure is a £791 negative variance this month. A phasing issue on the Grounds maintenance costs.

**301 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS:**

No Income or Expenditure recorded this month.

**302 HIGHWAYS:**

Net Income over Expenditure is a £447 positive variance. No Income received this month.

**303 CCTV:**

Net Income over Expenditure is a £93 positive variance.

August's Net Income over Expenditure is a £3,580 negative variance.

The Year-to-Date Net Income over Expenditure is a £35,170 positive variance.





## September 2024 Update on Hungerford Neighbourhood Plan (HNP)

30/08/24

Some steady progress this month:

- Highways and drainage have been submitted and we have an updated with a tracked changes version of the plan. There are quite a few small changes and the proposed housing allocations remain.
- Looking like a mid 2025 date for adoption.
- The emerging West Berks Local Plan is not proposing changes in Hungerford, which is a relief as it could have meant going back quite a few steps again.
- Key next actions are:
  - Meeting for the steering group on Sept 25<sup>th</sup>.
  - Complete the Consultation comments version.
  - Add detail to some of the proposed Local Green Spaces.
  - Produce a report of Consultation.
  - Update plan and submit to West Berks for Reg 16 Consultation with associated support documents.

Neighbourhood Plan Programme				DRAFT																							
				2024												2025											
Ref:	Activity	No of Weeks	Start date	End date	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun				
1	Review by Cttee & Council Consultations	14 weeks	18/09/23	08/01/24																							
2	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	8 weeks	11/12/23	16/02/24																							
3	Publish Draft for Consultation (Rule 14)	6 weeks	16/02/24	29/03/24																							
4	Update Plan following consultation	16 weeks	04/04/24	31/08/24																							
5	Submit to WBC prepare for Reg 16 Consult	8 weeks	01/08/24	30/09/24																							
6	2nd Consultation (Reg 16) (carried out by WBC)	6 weeks	01/10/24	30/11/24																							
7	Finalise Plan and prepare for Examination	8 weeks	01/12/24	31/01/25																							
8	Examination	1 week	01/02/25	07/02/25																							
9	Inspectors Report Preparation	7 weeks	08/02/25	28/02/25																							
10	Moifications	2 weeks	01/03/25	30/03/25																							
11	Prepare and carry out Referendum	8 weeks	01/04/25	30/05/25																							
12	NP comes into force	2 weeks	01/06/25	30/06/25																							
key on colour coding:																											

Richard Hudson