



Town and Manor  
of Hungerford

# What has the Town and Manor of Hungerford achieved in 2024?

## IMPACT STATEMENT 2024

### Introduction

*The purpose of this Impact Report is to share just some of the many activities undertaken by the Town and Manor of Hungerford and the Liberty of Sanden Fee in 2024, including the management and maintenance of the Land, the Fishery and the Buildings for which it is responsible.*

The Town and Manor is a charity (registered number 238379), which has its origins in the 13th Century following the granting of rights to hold markets and fairs, the Assize of Bread and Ale and rights of herbage and pannage and finally in the 14th Century fishing rights to the residents of Hungerford whose properties are owned by Commoners.

The Charity is governed by its Trustees, the Board of which is headed by the Constable, an ancient role going back to 1458. The Constable and Trustees are supported by the Clerk, two Fishery and Estate staff, Bellman, Hall-keeper, and Social-media and Events co-ordinators. The Trustees undertake the responsibilities of day-to-day management not otherwise delegated to its staff.

The Charity derives income from the management of its assets, and from such grants as are available from Government and other sources. By this means the Town and Manor can provide many benefits to the residents of Hungerford without making any charge.





# The Land and Commons Committee

Responsible for the management and maintenance of 420 acres of land owned by the Town and Manor, of which 75 acres are of Special Scientific Interest. Also, for the grant of leases to Hungerford Town Football Club and to Hungerford Cricket Club to use land on Hungerford Common.

## In 2024

- Provided managed grazing for approximately 200 cattle during the months of April to October.
- Appointed a new arboriculturist. Undertook the recommended work programme including pollarding of half the High Street trees, felling of diseased trees (notably those affected by ash dieback), planting of new trees on the Common and the planting of 20 disease resistant elm trees.
- Facilitated the installation of the D-Day 80th anniversary stone on Hungerford Common.
- Managed and maintained the public open spaces on the Common, the Croft and Freeman's Marsh.
- Took over payment for emptying of dog poo bins on Town and Manor land. Filled in and made safe the sink hole which appeared in the Croft.
- Hosted the Berkshire Cross Country Championship on the Common.
- Undertook the acquisition of additional land that adjoins and protects the existing Town and Manor estate and granted an easement to allow the construction of an electricity supply to EV charging points at Cobbs Farm.
- A survey of fungi specimens on Hungerford Common found a remarkable number of different species, including two of the rarest in the UK.



# The Fishery Committee

The Town and Manor owns approximately 5 miles of chalk stream fishing on the River Kennet and the River Dun. The right to fish, and ownership of the rivers over which the right to fish was granted, dates from the gift of fishing rights by John O' Gaunt to the 14th Century residents of Hungerford, a right exercised by Commoners to this day. The sale of annual rod licences to others provides income for the Town and Manor sufficient to fund much of its out-goings.

## In 2024

- Managed a continuous programme of work to maintain, repair and enhance the riverbanks, bridges, drainage ditches, weirs and sluices during a year of very challenging meteorological conditions.
- Monitored flows to ensure that flooding and pollution is controlled and the overall health of the rivers is maintained.
- Worked in partnership with Natural England, the Environment Agency and ARK (Action for the River Kennet).
- Appointment of an Assistant River Keeper.
- Maintained stocks as required despite the very challenging conditions in 2024.





## The Buildings Committee

The Town and Manor own the Corn Exchange and Town Hall Complex, the John O' Gaunt pub and the River-Keeper's house.

### In 2024

- Applied for, and obtained, Listed Building Consent for a variety of works to be undertaken to the Town Hall Complex, including repairs to the fabric of the building, redecoration of the Magistrates Room, the Town Hall and the hallway and stairs, improved heating and lighting, a comprehensive review to ensure compliance with current health and safety fire and building regulations, and further measures to prevent the fouling of the building and its immediate surrounding by pigeons.
- Sourced contractors to undertake the more complicated works specified, identifying firms with the appropriate experience to undertake the work on this Grade II building.
- Apart from the above, which are necessary to maintain both the internal and external fabric of the buildings, the refurbishment of these previously somewhat 'tired' areas is designed to make the Town Hall, the Magistrates Room and the Corn Exchange more suitable and attractive for community uses such as the weekly indoor markets, meetings of the many clubs and societies in the Hungerford area, weddings and private functions.
- Following extra advertising and positive feedback, bookings of the Corn Exchange and Town Hall for events increased by 38% over the previous year.



## The Kennet Valley Wetland Reserve

A development by the Town and Manor of 40 acres of derelict former water meadows and Grade 4 agricultural land acquired in 2018. Supported by West Berkshire Council, Natural England, the Environment Agency, North Wessex Downs Natural Landscape, Hungerford Town Council, ARK and Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).

### In 2024

- A Master Plan for the Reserve produced. Application for full planning permission for change of use and to create the wetland landscape, and outline planning permission for the Education and Information Centre (EIC), submitted to West Berkshire Council in April.
- Work on further surveys then required by WBC and other statutory agencies undertaken.
- Estimated costs of development calculated at £1.5 million. To be raised by an Appeal when planning permission granted. A Fundraising Prospectus drafted.
- ARK agrees to move to the EIC when completed, to provide education and information on wetland ecology, conservation and climate change.
- Many visits to the site including Lee Dillon MP, Hungerford and Kennet District Councillors, Hungerford Town Council, Berkshire Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, Young Farmers and local schools.
- Attendance at Newbury Show. Proposals very well received.
- West Berkshire Community Infrastructure Panel make £100,000 grant towards the construction of the new entrance and car park off Charnham Park Road.

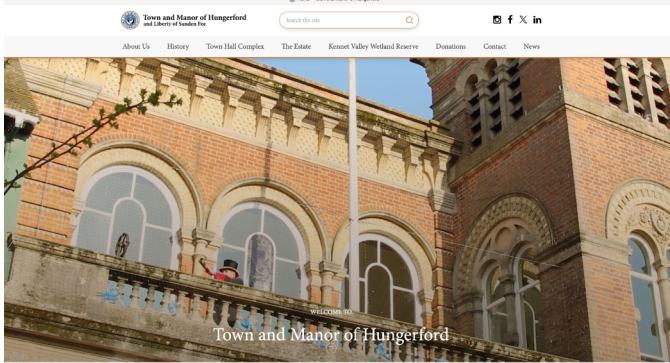


# Public Relations, Communications and Marketing

Through social media, local publications, meetings and events to increase public awareness and understanding of the purpose and achievements of the Town and Manor.

## In 2024

- Continuous updating and improvements to the Town and Manor website.



- Increased reach and engagement. Sent out press releases on activities undertaken by the Town and Manor to local media including Newbury Weekly News, Penny Post, BBC, ITV, the Bridge and the Adviser.
- Attracted a strong press and television presence at the annual Hocktide event, and also keen interest and a site visit from Meridian Television following our broadcast on Kennet Radio regarding the danger to the cattle on the Common caused by speeding motorists.
- Refurbishment and the provision of new notice boards in the town centre.
- Organised tours and presentations on the new Wetland Reserve and Hocktide workshops in schools.
- Contributed to the D-Day activities in the Corn Exchange.

## Donations

Every year the Town and Manor makes donations to support local charities, clubs and societies in Hungerford.

## In 2024

- The Town and Manor made 20 donations to local organisations including support for Sports clubs, Older People, Youth and Children, the Christmas lights, the Poppy Appeal, the Arts, the Virtual Museum and the Extravaganza.
- In July the Constable and the Bellman visited Buckingham Palace to present a red rose to the King. The presentation of the rose to the reigning monarch, who is also Duke of Lancaster, occurs on the noteworthy royal occasions such as weddings, coronations and jubilees: also, every time the monarch comes to Hungerford.

The rose, symbol of the House of Lancaster, is presented in gratitude by the residents of Hungerford for the grant of Commoners' rights and the gift of the Common lands to the people of Hungerford by John O' Gaunt, the fourth son of King Edward III.

## In Conclusion

This report summarises the most significant achievements of the Town and Manor in 2024.

If you would like to find out more about the history, the charity, the Trustees, the estate and the 2025 Trustee Election, please visit our website at

[www.townandmanor.co.uk](http://www.townandmanor.co.uk)

Protecting the beautiful  
countryside and the ancient rights, for the  
Commoners and people of Hungerford.



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of Hungerford

The Town Hall, Hungerford, Berkshire, RG17 0NF  
T: 01488 686555 W: [www.townandmanor.co.uk](http://www.townandmanor.co.uk)  
E: [admin@townandmanor.co.uk](mailto:admin@townandmanor.co.uk)