

HENLEY-IN-ARDEN WAR MEMORIAL TRUST  
RESPONSE TO THE DOCUMENT CIRCULATED BY THE PARISH COUNCIL 13.09.16  
**WHERE NOW TO SECURE THE FUTURE OF OUR IMPORTANT SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS?**

**RESPONSE OF THE MANAGING TRUSTEES OF HWMT.**

1. The trust agrees with the parish council that there are concerns over the sustainability of the HWMT.
2. The solution is complex since the trust has many facets, some operating well where income matches expenditure, where the club or organisation is outward looking and is planning for the medium and long term. An example of this would be the Shooting Club, the Scouts, the Tennis Club and the Memorial Hall. Other aspects of the Trust would be on the yellow list of endangered groups and some are closing in on the red zone.
3. Although option three suggesting a handover to the council with the Trust diminished to a land holding group seems attractive at the moment. The real problem is that the Trust is struggling to find volunteers prepared to carry out the essential management “nitty gritty” required to breathe life into the trust and ensure good governance. There is also no apparent prospect of volunteers stepping up to replace the ageing group presently struggling to maintain legality, efficiency and sustainability. Even so the complex nature of its constituent parts with the range of levels of success make it difficult to see how wholesale takeover might work.
4. The trust urges the council to consider a modified option 2 starting from a position of a stronger working relationship between the council and the Trust by increasing the number of councillors on the Trustees. This would be to create a shared responsibility between the trust and the parish council. Follow this up by two levels of funding. Firstly a greater subsidy of the Sports Grounds to ensure a much better standard of maintenance, professionally delivered, removing the need for hard pressed volunteers to undertake routine maintenance work of a variable standard and not always when maintenance is required. Secondly funding a paid Chief Exec role for the trust. The duties, as an example, would include secretary to the management committees and trust’s meetings, preparing reports on the delivery of budgets, policies and projects, maintaining a review brief over the work of the volunteers ensuring the volunteers’ policy of the trust was carried out, acting as building manager for the Memorial Hall, having the capacity to advise and direct the Trustees as they review the progress of the trust at their regular meetings plus other reasonable duties decided by the Trust. The Trustees would be able to relinquish most of their time consuming clerical and basic administrative activities in support of the trust. This would make it more likely that the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified and experienced persons from the town as Trustees became easier. The trust would then be in a position to work towards improving the standards of provision and to provide an essential, consistent, administrative structure to empower the wonderful volunteers to undertake their valuable work for the trust secure in the knowledge that it was financially secure and strong and effective in its governance. Finally we would look to the council to support changing the existing trust to a Charitable Incorporated organisation this will have the effect of removing individual trustee liability as the new trust would have a pseudo company status.
5. The financial implications of these decisions are estimated to be as follows:
  - 5.1. Existing regular grant funding to be transferred to a commissioning contract £5,000, this mainly supports the Scouts.
  - 5.2. Contribution to contract maintenance of the Sports Field along funds provided by the fees paid by affiliated clubs £6,000.
  - 5.3. Cost of employing a Chief Exec 12 hours per week £18.00 per hour plus on costs estimated at £12,500.
  - 5.4. Estimated total of cost of a negotiated commission with the HWMT £23,500. This will be seen as the expression of the parish council that our citizens should be encouraged to engage in physical activities and their contribution towards ensuring good opportunities exist for all.
6. The council is asked to consider this order of funding paid annually over a three year period as a fee for an agreed commission set out by the council in consultation with the trust. This commission would set out the requirements of the council in the maintenance, development and advancement of the Memorial Hall and the Sports Grounds and the service they give to local residents. The Trustees would be accountable to the parish council for the delivery of the targets set out and annually reviewed.
7. This solution provides the assurance of accountability and long term planning the council would require. It takes account of the challenge of recruiting suitable volunteers at all levels. It sustains the existing dedicated group of volunteers whose contribution the trust would not want to lose. The trust believes that the above proposal creates the stability and sustainability required for it to be true to the longstanding ideals while maintaining the accountability to the town that has been its strength for over 50 years.