

Document 1.5

THE COUNCIL'S ASSETS

(A Summary)

Review by January 2019

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council manages a number of properties, allotments and closed churchyards. It also holds an impressive collection of civic silver and various artefacts.

2 Buildings and Land

Allotments

- 2.1 The Council owns allotments sites in:

▶ Bengo	56 plots
▶ Cromwell Road	176 plots
▶ Folly Island	40 plots
▶ Hertingfordbury	84 plots
▶ North Road	77 plots
▶ Sele Road	12 plots

The number of plots fluctuates and depends on the size of plot let. For example, a large plot may be divided and smaller plots may be combined when they become vacant.

Management of the plots at North Road is devolved to the North Road Plotolders Group.

The Council also owns a plot of land adjacent to 81 Sele Road, currently used as a community allotment.

Buildings

- 2.2 The Council looks after a number of historic buildings in the town. It leases Hertford Castle, a Grade I listed building and owns the Seed Warehouse in Maidenhead Yard, a Grade II listed building.
- 2.3 The Council had been a sub-tenant of the Castle for some years and assumed the head lease of the Castle in 2007. The Council continues to sub-let parts of the Castle.
- 2.4 The Town Council bought the Seed Warehouse in 1983. The Hertford Museum uses most of the ground floor for storage and to house the Roman corn-drying oven found during excavations at Foxholes Farm in 1975. Part of the building is let on a commercial basis to a local charity and a local business.
- 2.5 The Seed Warehouse also houses the Millbridge Rooms, which are hired to local organisations for meetings and events.
- 2.7 The Town and Tourist Information Centre is run from a shop unit at 10-12 The Wash rented by the Council.

Cemetery

- 2.7 The town's main Cemetery is located at North Road and is managed by the Council.

Closed Churchyards

- 2.8 The Council maintains the following closed churchyards:

- ▶ All Saints Churchyard
- ▶ St Leonards
- ▶ St Andrews
- ▶ Holy Trinity

Other Land

- 2.9 Crawleys Field – Pasture land let out to rent
- 2.10 St. Leonard’s Garden, Bengoe – a community garden for the benefit of local residents.
- 2.11

3 Civic Regalia

Mayor’s Badge of Office and Gold Chain

- 3.1 In the year 1880, Earl Cowper, K.G., High Steward, and the then Member of Parliament for the Borough and Arthur James Balfour, (afterwards Earl Balfour, KG) presented to the Corporation a gold badge to be worn as a symbol of Office by successive Mayors. The badge bears a replica of the Borough of Hertford seal and is inscribed “Borough of Hertford”, intersected with acorns and surrounded by open strapwork.
- 3.2 The Gold Chain from which this Badge is suspended consists of 54 links and a clasp, which has been presented by, or in memory of, past Mayors, Town Clerks and others, and which is engraved with the names of the persons they commemorate.
- 3.3 With the Chain and Badge is worn the Gold Pendant, enamelled and jewelled with Amethysts, which was presented by members of the Corporation in 1897 in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The smaller Gold Chain from which the pendant is suspended was presented by Alderman Alexander Purkiss-Ginn in 1926, the Chain having been a Christmas gift to him from members of his family during his Mayoralty in the preceding year.

Deputy Mayor’s Badge of Office

- 3.4 This is a gold circular medallion depicting the Borough of Hertford seal, mounted in silver and glass pendant with chain.

The Mayoress’s Jewel

- 3.5 This is a gold pendant of openwork heart-shaped outline, the centre depicting the Borough of Hertford’s seal flanked by a shamrock and foliage inset with diamonds, rubies and emeralds and surmounted by the Imperial Crown. The Jewel is suspended from a gold circular chain engraved with foliage.

The Mayor’s Consort’s Badge

- 3.6 This is a silver gilt and enamel brooch of shaped oval outline, the circular centre with the arms of Hertford Town Council inscribed.

The Badge of the Mayor’s Chaplain

- 3.7 This is a renaissance style silver, enamel and rock crystal oval locket, each side inset with a convex oval rock crystal with enamel scroll borders, containing an enamel group of St. Hubert dismounted from his horse and kneeling before a stag beneath a tree on rockwork.

The Standard of Honor (Honour)

- 3.8 The written record of the Herald's Visitation in 1634 shows both the seal and the arms. In 1925, during the mayoralty and on the initiative of Alderman Josiah Wren, JP, the Borough obtained a grant of a Badge in view of its having been designated an "Honor"¹ in an Assignment by King Edward I in 1304, and in several subsequent royal grants.

- 3.9 The Warrant granting this badge describes it as, "Within a chaplet of roses Gules a stag's head caboshed² proper; between the attires an escocheon or, charged with three chevronells Gules" and authorises it to be borne by the Corporation and their successors upon their Standards or otherwise according to the laws of Arms. The chaplet of red, that is Lancastrian roses, exemplify that Hertford is an Honor of the Duchy of Lancaster The escutcheon or shield of arms between the horns of the stag is that of the Earls of Clare and Hertford, a title which lapsed on the death of Gilbert, the 8th Earl who was killed at Bannockburn. So the Standard of Honor of Hertford, which is carried before the Mayor on State occasions, bears this badge thrice repeated, the arms, "Argent, a hart lodged in water proper", and the legend "Pro Hertfordae Honore".

- 3.10 The Standard is of figured white silk damask, 7ft. 6in. long, with a blue and white fringe, on which the Arms and Badge are painted in correct colours, the legend being in gold lettering on a blue ground.

- 3.11 In 1986, the Town Council was advised that the original Standard had become too fragile for use and should be laid up. The Mayor, Councillor G H Sexton, launched an Appeal for funds for a replacement on Remembrance Day, and on 17th May 1987, the replacement Standard of Honor was dedicated in All Saints Church before a congregation of dignitaries, donors and local citizens.

The Hertford Mace

- 3.12 The Charter of Queen Elizabeth I in 1589 granted the Borough the right to appoint a Sergeant-at-Mace. The Mace is silver gilt, 38" in length, and weighs 930z. It is decorated with oak leaves, the rose, thistle and harp.

- 3.13 The Town Mace is the symbol of Royal Authority in Hertford, as the Sword is the symbol of Royal Justice but, whereas the Sword is well-documented as regards date of making, the Mace is older and less well-documented so that some of what follows is based on reasonable conjecture.

- 3.14 Hertford's early beginnings were as a Saxon burgh (some evidence of a mint of the time of Alfred the Great has been found) and with the development of town life a 'burgh bailiff' emerged. A bailiff was an individual who was chosen by some sort of election to be a leader and spokesman for the burgh and probably was able to act as an arbitrator in local disputes. Under the Tudors, the bailiff's position was

¹ According to Coke on Littleton, an Honor in its general significance, implies "a more noble sort of seigniority on which other Lordships depended by the performance of some custom or services".

² Caboshed, i.e. facing front, not sideways

formalised and, as some burghs became "boroughs", the bailiff became the "Mayor". By this time, the bailiff had been elected annually with all freemen having a vote (in Hertford's case this meant all adult males living within the boundary). It had evidently become customary for the bailiff to receive a robe or gown by public subscription on taking office. When Henry VIII created Hertford a Borough, a Council would have been in existence to aid the Mayor, and the Mayor would have received a staff of office from the Crown (there is documentary evidence to support this). That part of the shaft of the present Mace, furthest from the Crown, is of a slightly different design from the counterpart. It is possible that the old staff of office was incorporated into the Mace when this symbol of authority came into use.

- 3.15 Hertford certainly had a Mace at the time of the Civil War. How it was treated in those revolutionary times is not known but, with the Restoration, those Boroughs which had been Parliamentary and which had a Mace had a Crown imposed upon their Maces at Royal Command. Hertford was a parliamentary town and had a Crown imposed upon its Mace. However, there is an oddity in the Royal Cypher on the Hertford Mace. The cypher is 'CR' with a rose interposed, not 'CIIR' as would be expected if Charles II had imposed a Head and Crown on an extant shaft.
- 3.16 Therefore, the Hertford Mace is at least pre-Civil War and might contain an element, which relates directly to the time when the ancient office of bailiff was transformed into Charter Mayor in the sixteenth century.
- 3.17 In 1980, the Mace was repaired and re-gilded, the necessary monies being provided by businesses and companies operating within the town. The Mace was again re-gilded in 2015

The Hertford Sword

- 3.18 The Corporation records show that in 1678 Sir Charles Caesar, Member of Parliament for the Borough, gave "one hundred pounds towards renewing of the Charter and purchasing of a sword and any such other things for the good and credit of this Corporation."
- 3.19 The sword itself was made by one Andreia Farara, an Italian craftsman working at his trade during the period 1550-1600. It has a Silver gilt hilt with cross guards and a straight double-edged blade 36" in length.
- 3.20 The scabbard is also of Italian workmanship and dates around the time of presentation, probably 1680. The ornamentation includes the Royal Arms of the Duchy of Lancaster.
- 3.21 The privilege of carrying a sword before the Mayor in addition to the Mace was granted by the Charter of Charles II in 1680.
- 3.22 The sword was repaired and restored to its present condition, the funds being provided by businesses, associations and citizens of, or having connections with, the Town. This restoration was carried out in 1981. Further restoration was carried out in 2015, with a new handle fashioned in the exact style of the original. The original handle is in the Council's possession and can be re-fitted to the sword if required, but is in a delicate state.

4 Military Memorabilia

- 4.1 These items are housed in various locations.

Volunteer and Local Militia Colours of the Napoleonic War Period

- 4.1 In 1845 the will of Henry Allington of Bayley Hall, Hertford, bequeathed to the Hertford Borough Council five flags of the Napoleonic period, which had belonged to Volunteer, and Local Militia units in the area that were raised in succession. The Colours are the only known complete set of Colours for Hertfordshire Units at the time of the Napoleonic Wars and are said to be of great historic value.
- 4.2 Where the Colours were housed between 1845 and 1980 has not been established but they could have been hanging in the Committee Room at the Shire Hall for much of that time. They were certainly there in 1909 and in 1980 had to be taken down when Hertfordshire County Council redecorated the building. They were then stored at the Castle rolled up on their poles until funds were raised in 1985-86 for a special display case designed and built by the area Museums service for South Eastern England. The cost of constructing the display case (£941) was met entirely from donations.

The Hertfordshire Regimental Collection

- 4.3 This interesting collection contains many operational items, uniforms, medals, personal and other objects reflecting the Regiment's history.

5 Other Objects

- 5.1 These are located in various places and include:
- Drawings
 - Furniture
 - Manuscripts
 - Pictures
 - Porcelain
 - Prints
 - Sculptures
 - Paintings housed at Shire Hall
- 5.2 The Council also owns or leases miscellaneous vehicles and plant, office furniture and equipment associated with the running of a modern local authority.