

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF NEWBURY TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, MARKET PLACE, NEWBURY
ON MONDAY 31 OCTOBER 2016 AT 7.30PM.**

PRESENT

Councillors Howard Bairstow; Jeanette Clifford; Jo Day; Adrian Edwards; Miles Evans; David Fenn; David Fish; James Fredrickson; John Gardner; Mike Johnston (arrived 7.41pm); Elizabeth O'Keeffe; Anthony Pick; Kuldip Singh Kang; Julian Swift-Hook (Town Mayor); Martha Vickers.

In attendance:

Hugh Peacocke, Chief Executive

Tony Hiller, Corporate Services Officer

25. CHARITABLE DONATION TO THE VOLUNTEER CENTRE WEST BERKSHIRE

The Mayor invited Councillor David Fish to make a presentation of the proceeds raised at the inaugural Newbury Town Council Golf Outing to Mr Garry Poulson, Director to The Volunteer Centre West Berkshire. Mr Poulson expressed the gratitude of the Centre for the donation of £515 and thanked the Council for their continued support.

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Jeff Beck, Lynne Doherty, Dave Goff, Sarah Greenall, Arthur Johnson, Margo Payne, Andrew Steel and Tony Stretton.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chief Executive Officer declared that Councillors Howard Bairstow, Jeanette Clifford, Adrian Edwards, James Fredrickson, Mike Johnston and Anthony Pick are also Members of West Berkshire Council, which is declared as a general interest on their behalf and a dispensation is in place to allow them to partake in discussions relating to West Berkshire Council business.

28. MINUTES

PROPOSED: Councillor Anthony Pick

SECONDED: Councillor Martha Vickers

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of Newbury Town Council held on Monday 27 June 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

29. QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions or petitions from members of the public.

30. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

Question received from Councillor Kuldip Singh Kang:

“It was reported to the Community Services Committee on 26 September that a meeting would be arranged with West Berkshire Council’s CEO and other Councillors and Officers to come to an arrangement to provide parking for our Market traders, arising out of the proposals to build a new bus station at the Wharf.

Can the Mayor advise the Council of any progress in this matter?”

The Mayor of Newbury, Councillor Julian Swift-Hook responded:

“I believe the meeting between Newbury Town Council and West Berkshire Council took place last week on Friday. Unfortunately, I haven’t been informed of the decisions that have been reached and I will endeavour to find out more and provide a written response in due course.”

31. CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU

(Councillor Mike Johnston joined the meeting at 7.41 pm)

Members received a presentation from Jan Rothwell, Chief Executive of West Berkshire Citizens Advice Bureau. After a brief question round The Mayor thanked Jan Rothwell for her presentation and the services that West Berkshire Citizens Advice Bureau provide to the community.

32. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

The Town Mayor gave his report to the Council, a copy of which is attached to these minutes as Appendix 1.

33. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader gave his report to the Council, a copy of which is attached to these minutes as Appendix 2.

34. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Chief Executive Officer presented his report, a copy of which was published with the agenda.

35. COMMITTEES

The Minutes of the following meetings were received:

Grant Sub-Committee	6 July 2016
Policy & Resources	18 July 2016
Planning & Highways	01 August 2016
Planning & Highways	22 August 2016
Civic Pride, Arts & Leisure (Draft)	01 September 2016
Planning & Highways	12 September 2016
Community Services	26 September 2016
Planning & Highways	03 October 2016
Policy & Resources	17 October 2016

36. THE RENEWAL OF NEWBURY BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

PROPOSED: Councillor Anthony Pick

SECONDED: Councillor Martha Vickers

RESOLVED: That the Town Council supports the renewal of the Newbury BID for the next 5 years, to 2022.

37. THE TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGY

Members noted the progress report to 30 September 2016 on implementing the Council's Strategy and considered the proposals for review.

It was agreed to consider adding a medium term to longer term objective to re-enter Britain in Bloom and also to include an objective to provide training, as appropriate, to Members and Officers, to enable them to properly fulfil their roles with the Council.

PROPOSED: Councillor Anthony Pick

SECONDED: Councillor Martha Vickers

RESOLVED: That Members approve the Review of the Town Council Strategy 2017-2020, a copy which was published with the agenda and is attached as Appendix 3.

38. LOCAL DEMOCRACY WORKING GROUP

Members received a verbal report from Councillor James Fredrickson, Chairperson to the Local Democracy Working Group. The Councillors acknowledged the success of the programme over 2 weeks and thanked the Councillors and Officers involved for their contribution.

39. BUDGET FOR 2017/18

The information was received and noted by the Committee.

40. TO ADOPT THE GENERAL POWERS OF COMPETENCE

PROPOSED: Councillor Anthony Pick

SECONDED: Councillor Martha Vickers

RESOLVED: That from 9.00pm on 31 October 2016, until the next relevant Annual Meeting of the Council, that having met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011 and The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012, that this Council adopts the General Power of Competence.

41. UPDATE ON THE REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO VICTORIA PARK

Members received a verbal update from Councillor David Fish, Chairperson to the Victoria Park Working Group regarding the repairs and improvements to Victoria Park.

42. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

PROPOSED: Councillor Anthony Pick

SECONDED: Councillor Elizabeth O'Keeffe

RESOLVED: That under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, that is, the financial affairs of Newbury Bowls Club.

43. LOAN FOR PROPOSED CAFÉ IN VICTORIA PARK

PROPOSED: Councillor Anthony Pick

SECONDED: Councillor David Fish

RESOLVED: That Members approve the application for a Public Works Loan of £250,000 to help finance the construction of the new café.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE TOWN MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.09 PM

TOWN MAYOR

**Newbury Town Council
Mayor's Report for Full Council Meeting on 31st October 2016**

Fellow councillors, ladies and gentlemen...

In the four months since the last Full Council meeting on 27th June 2016 my Mayoress and I have attended a total of 70 events on your behalf.

Aside from the regular Saturday morning coffee mornings, there have been openings and unveilings, official dinners, fundraising events, fetes, formal church services, and the funeral of a former Mayor of Newbury.

I won't subject you all to a detailed report of every event, but there are a few things that I think are worthy of specific mention.

I would like to start by paying tribute to Chris Hall, a respected artist and a former Mayor of Newbury who died at the age of 85 and whose funeral I attended a couple of months ago.

Former Councillor Hall lived in this area for most of his life and gained a formidable reputation both as a talented oil painter and a keen political activist.

After completing his national service in Malaya in the late 1940s, he studied at the Slade School of Art in London during the 1950s, before returning to live in Newbury.

He was elected to the prestigious Royal Society of British Artists in 1988 and the Royal Cambrian Academy in 1994, and he maintained a passion for his art right up until his death, with his latest exhibition opening at The Gallery in London just days after he died.

As well as being known for his art, Chris also developed a reputation in local politics, representing the then Liberal Party on the former Newbury Borough and Newbury District councils for several terms and many years.

He served as mayor of Newbury in 1967 to 1968, when he was just 36-years-old, becoming one of the youngest men to hold the post in the 420-year history of this town's Charter.

As a councillor in the 60s, Chris worked to preserve many of Newbury's old buildings, and he was responsible for the planting of the avenue of poplar trees at Stroud Green.

He was a staunch local campaigner, always ready to put shoe leather in service of his principles. Known for his dry humour and sound advice, he has been a huge support to many who have followed in his footsteps as councillors and candidates here in the Newbury area. I am one of many who has benefitted from his wise counsel and relentless campaigning, and I am proud to have known him.

Chris will be missed, and our thoughts are with his wife, Maria, and his family.

[One Minute Silence]

In his later years, Chris often worried about how to get younger people more interested and active in politics.

I know that he very much approved of the Town Council's now annual activities supporting Local Democracy Week, and it was a particular pleasure for me to be able to attend nine of the presentations that took place here in the Council Chamber to groups of young students from local schools. There were some very interesting questions asked, by both the students and their teachers.

We'll be hearing a detailed report later on in the meeting from the Chair of the Local Democracy Week Working Group, so I won't say too much, but it was wonderful to see so many youngsters taking an interest in what we do. Who knows, among them may very well be some of the Newbury Town Councillors of the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks on behalf of you all to the Working Group, to the officers who supported it, and to Councillors Margo Payne, Jo Day and Martha Vickers in particular for their hard work and dedication. I know that many councillors supported several of the presentations as well, so thank you for that support, too.

All in all, another success of which Team Newbury Town Council can be justifiably proud.

Of all of the many other events that I have attended on your behalf in the last four months, all of which have been interesting and enjoyable in different ways, there is one more that I would like to pick out for special mention.

The Porch in Speen goes by the uninspiring label of Pupil Referral Unit. This is the place where challenging students between the ages of 14 and 19 go when mainstream education is unable to support them.

I was invited to attend Afternoon Tea at The Porch a couple of weeks ago, to mark the end of their celebration of British Values Week, which coincided with our own Local Democracy activities.

I confess to some apprehension before going, but it was an incredibly encouraging and inspiring visit. The students' work that was displayed throughout the building was of a very high standard, and the students themselves made me feel very welcome. There is so much talent among the students there, and seeing the dedication and caring of the staff who guide and help the students to fulfil their potential was truly inspiring.

On one of the walls was displayed a short poem written by students Ewan Greening and Hannah Crossey during The Porch's British Values Week last year (2015).

The poem had a huge impact on me. I would like to share it with you.

Oi listen!

I'm so frustrated
So isolated
Feels like I'm always being slated.

Hated.

Everything I do, they say it's wrong
but I'm trying to say strong;
Glass half-full

Trying to... Pull myself through.

People bringing up the past
but I can't move that fast.
I'm trying hard to be free from the bad

Can't you see... It's me... Underneath?
I do feel ashamed; I know I'm to blame.
I'm just trying to change.

Earlier in the week, our MP, Richard Benyon, had hosted a group of students from the Speen and Newtown Road Porch buildings at the Houses of Parliament, and some of the British Values work displayed was based on that theme.

When the Local Democracy Week Working Group is planning its activities for the autumn of 2017, I would urge that The Porch is included in those plans.

For those of you who didn't get to the Murder Mystery Ball a couple of weeks ago, you missed a fabulous event. Everyone was in 1920s dress, trying to solve a mysterious and unexpected murder that had apparently taken place just before we all arrived. It was my pleasure to award Councillor Margo Payne the prize for the Best Dressed Lady of the evening, and I'm pleased to say that the mystery was indeed correctly solved by one table of guest detectives. Those of us who got it wrong were able to console ourselves with the knowledge that during the evening over £4,000 was raised for my charity, West Berkshire Mencap.

Coming up as we head into November, I'm looking forward to attending not one but two Diwali celebrations as Mayor this coming weekend, and I would take this opportunity to remind you all of the Newtown Road Cemetery Welcome Day on Saturday 12th November.

The following day, Sunday 13th December is Newbury's annual Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service, one of the most important civic events of the year. I do hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend.

Finally, since we won't meet again as a Full Council before the New Year, may I be the first to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous 2017.

Thank you very much, and I am of course happy to answer any questions.

Julian Swift-Hook

Mayor of Newbury

31st October 2016

Draft

Leader's Report to Council 31st October 2016

Mr Mayor, Councillors, ladies and gentlemen, this is my seventh report to Council and I will bring you up to date with developments since our last Full Council back in June.

Toilets at the Wharf

We are looking to take this on important public facility. We have resolved to negotiate the long-term transfer of the toilets from West Berkshire Council and legal documents for the transfer are being prepared. We have invited tenders from qualified contractors, due by 14 November. The aim is for the chosen contractor to install turnstiles, run the toilets, absorb the running costs and retain all the revenue, as well as a contract sum, to be agreed. A capital contribution of £10,000 is available from WBC towards the turnstile installation.

Market Traders' parking

This is one of the key issues facing the Town Council at the moment. As Mr Mayor has mentioned, a meeting took place last Friday between West Berkshire Council and Newbury Town Council to consider the principles of a settlement. In consequence of that meeting, I am confident that parking facilities can be agreed which will be acceptable to the market traders and cost neutral to WBC. The details of the settlement will be discussed in further meetings between the officers of the two Councils.

Newbury in Bloom awards

These took place for the first time this year and are our preparation for a future entry into Britain in Bloom. Judging took place week commencing 11th July and the awards took place on 13th September in St Nicolas Church Hall. We had a total of 28 entries from local businesses, schools, places of worship, pubs & restaurants and allotments. The standard of entry was very high.

I would like to offer my thanks to Cllr Sarah Greenall and her working group & panel of judges for the work they have done on this project.

Allotments to adjoining parishes

Demand for allotments has its peaks and troughs. We are now in a "trough" and this has resulted in a number of vacant plots at several sites. Vacant plots cost us money to maintain as well as lost rental income. We agreed at our last Community Services meeting that out of parish applications will be welcomed subject to an increased charge in line with other services we provide for non-residents. We will keep this under review as our priority is to provide allotments for our residents.

WBDC and devolution of services, etc. The Council's Strategy includes an objective to explore devolution options with the District Council and we met with West Berks Council on 24 October to progress this. We discussed a range of assets owned by West Berks, in the parish area and which are relevant to the parks and leisure services provided by this Council. We also discussed devolution of services, such as environmental issues relating to A Boards, fly posting and Town Centre environmental issues.

Any devolution would be voluntary and require the agreement of both Councils. There will be a further update at the next Community services committee on 12 December.

Town Hall: Lights improvements, Heritage Open Day, Wedding Licence

You may have noticed some improvement to lighting levels in the Council Chamber. We have lowered the globes so that we can now safely reach them from our step ladder in order to clean them or replace bulbs. This will save us money in the future, as last year we had to hire a tower scaffold in order to do this. This should also improve their effectiveness. In addition, we have installed a number of spotlights to ensure we have a suitable level of lighting for the coming winter months.

As part of this year's Heritage Open Days, the Town Hall was opened to the public on Friday 9 September 2016 between 4pm and 8pm. The event went well and we had a total of 40 visitors in 4 hours.

During our April Policy & Resources meeting we decided to apply for a Wedding Licence. I am pleased to say that in August we were granted our licence and have already been receiving enquiries and secured our first booking. We hope that the Town Hall will be a popular choice for local people.

Grants and Contributions (following resolution re Find me a grant at last council meeting)

This is our first year of Find Me a Grant, now known as The Good Exchange. This has enabled us to turn this year's Grants budget of £10,550 into £ 21,100 through matched funding from Greenham Common Trust. This benefits the good causes that we give grants to and is something we will continue next year. We will also be looking, as recommended by the Grants Sub-Committee, to see if we can channel our other grant funding to various organisations through this same route.

Thank you, Mr Mayor. I'm happy to take any questions.
David Goff,
Leader

Presented by Councillor Anthony Pick – Deputy Leader.