

**Minutes of the Meeting of Newbury Town Council  
Held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Newbury,  
at 7.30 pm on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023.**

**Present**

Councillors Phil Barnett, Vera Barnett, Alistair Bounds, Jo Day, Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot (Town Mayor), Jayne French-Drayton, David Harman, Chris Hood, Roger Hunneman; Ian Jee, Pam Lusby-Taylor; David Marsh; Steve Masters, Vaughan Miller; Andy Moore; Gary Norman; Elizabeth O’Keeffe and Sarah Slack.

**Officers in Attendance**

Hugh Peacocke – Chief Executive Officer

**Remembrance Sunday**

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Members received a briefing on remembrance Sunday (12<sup>th</sup> November) from Ms. Virginia Robinson (Civic Manager) and Barry Digby (Town Marshal)

**Mr. Rod Thomason, R.I.P**

At the outset of the meeting, the Town Mayor told members of the sad passing of former macebearer, Mr. Rod Thomason and invited Councillor Phil Barnett to pay tribute to him.

The CEO, speaking on behalf of Rod’s colleagues on the civic team and all the staff of the Council, supported the tributes to Rod.

The Council then observed a minute’s silence in his memory.

The CEO was requested to extend the Council’s sympathy to Rod’s wife, Wendy and all of Rod’s family.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies received from Councillors Sam Dibas, Meg Thomas, Martha Vickers and Tony Vickers.

**2. Declarations of interest and dispensations**

The CEO told the meeting that Councillors Phil Barnett, Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot and David Marsh 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.

**3. Minutes of the meeting of Newbury Town Council held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023.**

**Proposed:** Councillor Elizabeth O’Keeffe

**Seconded:** Councillor Steve Masters

**Resolved:** To approve the minutes of the meeting of Newbury Town Council held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023 as a true record of the meeting.

**4. Minutes of the Special Meeting of Newbury Town Council held on Thursday 21 September 2023.**

The draft minutes were amended to record apologies from Councillors Phil Barnett and Vera Barnett.

**Proposed:** Councillor Elizabeth O’Keeffe

**Seconded:** Councillor Steve Masters

**Resolved: To approve** the minutes of the Special meeting of Newbury Town Council held on Thursday 21 September 2023, as amended, as a true record of the meeting.

**5. Berkshire Youth**

The Mayor invited Ms. Kelly Leach to make a presentation on the youth outreach work that Berkshire Youth provided in Newbury. She also thanked the Town Council for their ongoing support for Berkshire Youth, which had encouraged West Berkshire Council to enlist their services across other areas in the district.

Members discussed the presentation before the Mayor thanked Kelly for her very informative and helpful presentation.

**6. The Climate Emergency Grant made to the Loose Ends/ Newbury Cricket Club Partnership**

The Mayor welcomed John O’Sullivan and Paul Monger of Newbury Cricket Club and Caroline Billington from Loose Ends to the meeting. They gave an update on how the partnership between the Cricket Club and Loose Ends was working.

They also told the Council about the benefits from solar panels, including the savings and the reduction in their carbon footprint.

**Proposed:** Councillor Nigel Foot

**Seconded:** Councillor Jayne French-Drayton

**Resolved: That the Council ratify** the grant of £10,000 made towards solar panels on the roof of Newbury Cricket Club.

**7. Questions and Petitions from Members of the Public**

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

**8. Members’ Questions and Petitions**

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

**9. Town Mayor’s Report**

The Town Mayor, Councillor Nigel Foot, presented his report on his mayoral engagements from 18<sup>th</sup> May to 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2023.

**10. Leader’s Report**

The Leader of the council, Councillor Gary Norman, presented his report to the Council.

Councillor Norman told the meeting that the CEO planned to leave his role on 31<sup>st</sup> December, with his last working day on 15<sup>th</sup> December, so this was his last meeting with Full council. He said that the CEO would assist the Council in the replacement/ recruitment programme, starting with a Staff subcommittee meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> October. He thanked the CEO for his advice and support since he became leader of the Council in May.

The CEO told the Council that his departure was for personal and family reasons and he thanked all of the Councillors for the support and respect which they had always shown to him over the past 8 and a half years.

#### **11. Chief Executive's Report**

The Council received the report from the CEO of the Council. He thanked Martin Kavanagh, Service Delivery Manager for the refurbishments being carried out in the council chamber (walls, lights, curtains and audio). He said that this work was opportune, as 3 weddings had taken place recently in the Chamber, for which the Council received very positive feedback. He thanked Kym Heasman for her successful management of these events.

#### **12. Committees**

The Council received the minutes of the following Committee meetings:

- Community Services Committee 10 July (Draft)
- Planning & Highways 19 June, 17 July, 14 August, 11 September, 9 October (draft)
- Civic Pride, Arts & Leisure 3 July (Draft)
- Policy & Resources 24 July and 16 October (Draft)

#### **13. Local Democracy Working Group**

The Council received an update on this year's Local Democracy programme from the Chair of the Working group, Councillor Jo Day. She reported that 7 primary schools had visited the Council Chamber, with 500 children attending. She thanked all of the Councillors, the Civic team, the Civic Manager and Amy who had supported these events. There were also plans to give presentations to secondary schools, the Waterside Centre, Wash Common Scouts and Newbury College.

The Working Group was due to meet again at 2.00 pm on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October.

The Council congratulated Councillor Jo Day and all involved in the successful programme.

#### **14. Climate Emergency Working Group**

The Council received a report from Councillor David Harman, the Chairman of the Working Group. He told the meeting that the Council had achieved a 44% reduction in the baseline carbon footprint set in 2018/19 and was on target to meet its objective to be carbon neutral by 2030.

It was expected that the additional solar panels on the Town Hall roof and insulation improvements in the Town Hall would achieve further reductions. The council would also benefit from the carbon offset which was part of the agreement with the Cricket club when grant aiding their solar panels on the roof of the refurbished pavilion (see minute 32 above).

Further plans included meeting Greenfest to explore collaboration and inviting Nikki Coome to carry out a plastics audit for the Council.

The Council thanked the Climate Emergency Working group for the progress made and also Mr. David Ingram for his continued excellent support for the Working Group.

**15. External Audit report for the financial year ended 31 March 2023**

The meeting heard that the Audit Working group and the Policy and Resources Committee had considered this matter in detail. The Council noted the recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and received the External Audit Report for the financial year ended 31st March 2023.

**16. Budget for 2024/25**

The meeting noted the budget production plan with a target to produce a draft budget for e-mail distribution before Christmas, so that full discussions can take place at the Policy & Resources Committee meeting on 15 January 2024 and at the subsequent Council meeting on Monday 23 January 2024.

It was agreed that the CEO would invite members of the Council to submit proposals to officers for consideration by the relevant Committee for inclusion in the draft budget and the Council's Strategy when they consider their budget needs for 2024/25. Such proposals should be submitted with as much detail as possible by the 3rd of November 2023.

It was noted that each Committee/Sub-Committee would be asked to consider their budget needs for 2024/25, in time for inclusion in time for the draft budget (and/or revised Strategy) being prepared for January 2024.

**17. Forward Work Programme for Full Council meetings 2023/24**

The meeting noted and agreed the Forward Work programme.

Agreed that Citizens' Advice West Berkshire, Community United West Berkshire and the Newbury Bid be invited to make a presentation to the January meeting of the Council.

Agreed that the Council's representatives on outside bodies and the School Link Councillors be invited to report to the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

**18. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**Proposed:** Councillor Nigel Foot

**Seconded:** Councillor Gary Norman

**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 items of business because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential personal business to be transacted.

**19. Approval of Absence**

Councillor Elizabeth O’Keeffe told the meeting that Councillor Meg Thomas had apologized for her inability to attend several meetings lately, due to issues arising from the health of her husband. She told the meeting that Councillor Thomas continued to attend to her business as a ward Councillor but was unable to attend meetings at the moment. It was noted that this was likely to continue for several more months. She asked the Council to consider using the provisions of paragraph 8.6 of the Council’s Standing Orders to approve a period of absence from meetings for Councillor Thomas.

**Proposed:** Councillor Elizabeth O’Keeffe

**Seconded:** Councillor Nigel Foot

**Resolved: To Approve** a period of absence from meetings until 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024 for Councillor Meg Thomas (in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 8.6 of the Council’s Standing Orders).

Councillor Roger Hunneman agreed to substitute for Councillor Thomas at Policy and resources Committee meetings and Councillor Andy Moore on Civic Pride, Arts and Culture.

The council sent best wishes to Councillor Thomas and her husband.

**There being no further business, the Town Mayor declared the meeting closed at 8.58 pm.**

**Town Mayor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_